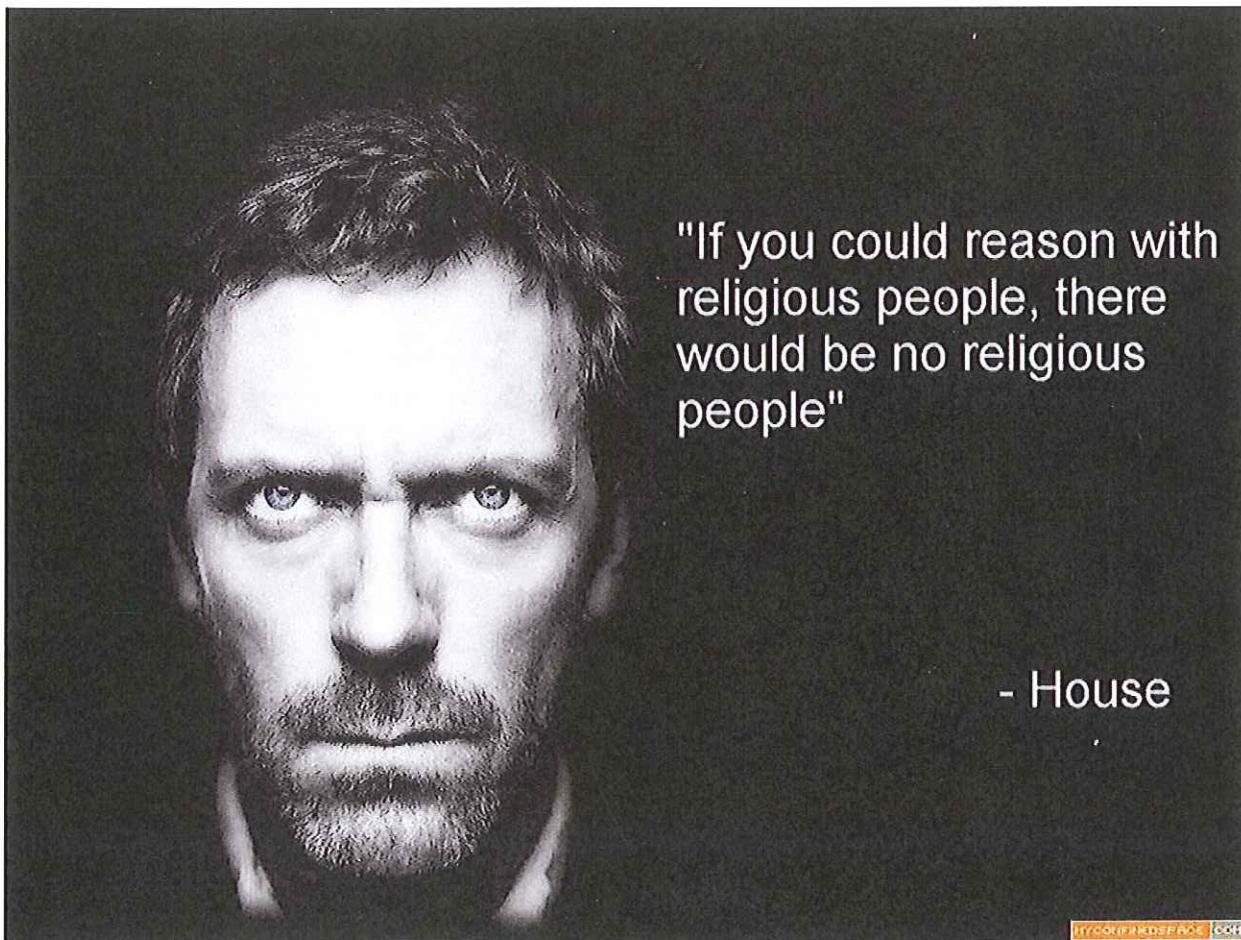


# “A REASON FOR THE HOPE YOU HAVE”

*A Study on the Foundational Beliefs for Understanding Truth*  
by Dr. Harley Ihm

“But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...”  
(1 Peter 3:15).



"If you could reason with religious people, there would be no religious people"

- House

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*Is House correct or can you prove him to be misled? It is my prayer that this study will build a wealth of reasons so no one will be able to cast doubt in your life. I pray you are always ready and even hopeful for the opportunity to share the reason you have a blessed hope from God. You may just be God's instrument to reach them for His glory because you were wise and chose to gather reasons for the hope you have. – Harley Ihm*

*These quotes point to some of the reasons people cannot present the basis of their hope:*

**Blaise Pascal:** “People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive.”

**Winston Churchill:** “Men stumble over the truth from time to time, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened.”

If there is one basic idea that is fundamental to life, it is the right and the need to discover truth. When I was a boy I could have told my grandpa that people had flown to the moon and walked on it. That would have been a lie before July 20, 1969. After that time, the video footage proved it to be true. We had eyewitnesses to the fact. What once was a story without fact to support it was now established as truth.

Why do you think people are so afraid of searching for ultimate truth? Many Christians rely on their emotions when looking at Scripture or what they have been handed down by family or friends. The important point in the journey for truth, reasons for your hope in Christ, is to find it for yourself. Make sure you understand it, believe it, and can defend it. Truth is the difference in where we will spend eternity. Bill Hybels was discussing religion with a taxi driver who had picked him up at the airport. As he was getting out, the driver, who had a different religious belief system, asked Bill, “Which one of us do you think is right?” Hybels answered, “We will know what is true a split second after our heart stops beating.” That makes me realize that I need to know now, not a split second after I die.

Norman Geisler went to visit a man who claimed to be an atheist. He said, “So you know for sure the absolute truth is that there is no God?” The man said, “Well, not for sure.” Geisler said, “Then you are not an atheist. They know there is no God. You are an agnostic. They say they don’t know if there is a God or not.” Geisler then says, “So you believe that you can’t know anything for sure?” The man says, “That’s right. You can’t.” Geisler says, “If you can’t know anything for sure, how do you know that for sure? How do you know that you can’t know anything for certain?” The man said, “Okay, I guess you can know some things for sure.” Geisler then replies, “So why don’t you know if God exists or does not exist?” The man said, “I’ve never had anyone show me any evidence.” That opened the door for Geisler to start the journey to present the road to truth. That’s where we need to start, on a simple journey to discover what is really true.

**Why do people believe what they believe? (James Sire)**

#### **Social Reasons:**

It was passed down from their parents as truth. They have close friends they trust who have told them the Christian faith is truth. They live in a society that shapes the acceptable belief systems of people who want to fit into that society. They live in a culture that believes they have a truth that is non-negotiable, such as in Islamic, Buddhist, or Hindu cultures. They move in a group where their belief system is seen as the only cool or politically correct belief system. Basing your idea of truth on social reasons opens the door for faith in ideas that will not leave this world.

### **Psychological:**

Some people believe in various ideas about truth to find comfort in times of trouble or stress. Other people believe various truths because they find a great inner peace in that belief rather it is true or not. This is a gold mine for self-help books or meditation without truth. Some people believe in their truth because they have used their mind and reasoned their way to what they believe or don't believe. That is important to all of us, but we must be willing to fully explore the reasons we are taught or come across. For instance, evolution is an unproven theory as of yet, but it is taught as absolute truth, even though not a single missing link between species evolution can be found. Still, people reason that many great minds believe it to be so, therefore it must be so. Many great scientists have kept questioning their findings and now many of them believe there must have been an intelligent designer at some point. Still others embrace a belief system simply because they need meaning, purpose, hope and identity in their life. Whatever seems to achieve that at some level is embraced.

### **Religious:**

Some people believe for religious reasons. They grew up in their parent's church and simply believe mom and dad must have known what was right. They may have had a pastor they were impressed with or were close to. Others had a Guru or a Rabbi or an Imam whom they followed and trusted. But they question must be begged, "Were any of those providing reasons for the hope they claimed was true?" Religion doesn't save anyone. There has to be a journey to discover truth. Truth delivered by our Creator is the gold beyond the rainbow we need to find. Anything less is not hope, it is merely wishing upon a star and believing that will make it come true (as long as I don't tell anybody my wish).

### **Philosophical:**

Then there are philosophical reasons to embrace something as truth. I need something to believe in to feel completeness. I also may need a consistency in my life that embracing some faith provides me.

James Sire is an Author and speaker. He conducts seminars at universities called *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything At All?* After asking that question he continues this conversation with his students.

**Sire:** I see many of you cited sociological factors for the reason for your beliefs. For example, many people have beliefs because their parents have those same beliefs. Do you think that alone is a good enough reason to believe something?

**Students:** No, parents can be wrong!

**Sire:** Okay, what about cultural influences? Do you think people ought to believe something just because it's accepted culturally?

**Students:** No, not necessarily. The Nazi's had a culture that accepted the murder of all Jews. That didn't make it right!

**Sire:** Good. Now, some of you mentioned psychological factors such as comfort. Is that a good enough reason to believe something?

**Students:** No, we're not comfortable with that! Seriously, comfort is not a test for truth. We might be comforted by the belief that there's a God out there who cares for us, but that doesn't mean he really exists. Likewise, a junkie might temporarily be comforted by a certain type of drug, but that drug might actually kill him.

**Sire:** So, you're saying that truth is important because there can be consequences when you're wrong?

**Students:** Yes, if someone is wrong about a drug, they might take too much and die. Likewise, if someone is wrong about the thickness of the ice, they might fall in and freeze to death.

**Sire:** So for pragmatic reasons it makes sense that we should only believe things that are true?

**Students:** Of course. Over the long run, truth protects and error harms.

**Sire:** Okay, so sociological and psychological reasons alone are not adequate grounds to believe something. What about religious reasons? Some mentioned in the Bible; others mentioned in the Qur'an; still others got their beliefs from priests or gurus. Should you believe something just because some religious source or holy book says so?

**Students:** No, because the question arises, "Whose scripture or whose source should we believe?" After all, they teach contradictory things.

**Sire:** Can you give me an example?

**Students:** Well, the Bible and the Qur'an, for example, can't both be true because they contradict one another. The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross and rose 3 days later (1 Corinthians 15:1-8), while the Qur'an says Jesus existed but did not die on the cross (Sura 4:157). If one's right, the other one is wrong. Then again, if Jesus never existed, both of them are wrong.

**Sire:** So how could we adjudicate between, say, the Bible and the Qur'an?

**Students:** We need some proofs outside those so-called scriptures to help us discover which, if either, is true.

**Sire:** From which category could we derive such proofs?

**Students:** All we have left is the philosophical category.

**Sire:** But how can someone's philosophy be a proof? Isn't that just someone's opinion?

**Students:** No, we don't mean philosophy in that sense of the word, but in the classic sense of the word where philosophy means finding truth through logic, evidence, and science.

**Sire:** Excellent! So with that definition in mind, let's ask the same question of the philosophical category. Is something worth believing if it is rational, if it's supported by the evidence, and if it best explains all the data?

**Students:** That certainly seems right to us!

*(Information from Norman Geisler and James Sire was taken from the book, "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist," Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL, 2004.)*

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This brilliant dialogue sets the stage for our journey to see if Christianity is rational, supported by the evidence and best explains all we will investigate.

God has proven that nothing on earth is more reliable than His recorded Word. Everything He has promised has taken place or will take place in the future. No other religion in the world can make that statement and back it up with such evidence. But the frightening fact is far too many Christians cannot give a reason for the hope they have. Let's change that fact and begin a journey to discover what is true and establish a solid reason for the hope we have in Christ.

*"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).*

**I. EVIDENCE (REASONS) FROM FULFILLED PROPHECY** (*This journey through the Scriptures begins in the Old Testament prophecies uttered by God to prove His Word and His faithfulness. Notice the date, place and events surrounding their writing and their fulfillment. This is a key to the Christian faith that no other religion in the world possesses. Every book in the Old Testament was filled with facts that pointed to our Savior who would come from God to deliver us. Minute details of His identity, His birthplace, where He would grow up and minister, His purpose, His life, His death and His resurrection were all accurately given to the prophets to write down from hundreds to over a thousand years before Jesus was born so the world would be without excuse. We could only be without knowledge of God if we chose to ignore it. These evidences from the basis for giving the reasons for the hope you possess in Christ.*)

- a. **MOSES** lived and wrote these words in Genesis 1500 years before Jesus was born.
  1. **Read Genesis 3:12-15. God has Moses record the story of creation and the fall of man from grace when sin entered a holy and perfect world.** God says that because man sinned, there would be a great war between those who follow Satan and the seed or offspring of a woman. The child would ultimately win the war. Satan would strike the child (Jesus') heel, but this child would crush the serpent's head (destroy him).

**Read John 12:23-24, 31-33. How did Jesus fulfill this prediction 1500 years later?** Notice that Jesus predicts that he will be crucified and it must happen to bring about life after He is lifted up on the cross. Satan thought that gathering the people, God's chosen and the Roman government together to crucify Christ and drive a spike through His heel during the Roman crucifixion would give Satan the victory over Christ. Instead, after Jesus walked out of the grave, the first to permanently rise from the dead. Jesus defeated death, the grave and Satan. He truly crushed Satan's head. The final battle was fought and Satan lost. There is no changing that fact. We are simply waiting for Jesus to return and send him out of this world forever.

2. **Exodus 12:1-13, 43-47. Describe the Passover lamb and what was to be done with it and why?** Israel was to take a perfect lamb that was a 1 year old male. Slaughter them at twilight. Put some of the lamb's blood on the sides and tops of your doorframe, your swelling. Eat the lamb with bitter herbs and bread without yeast. Eat all of it with your cloak tucked in, the way it is when you are going to run. Have your sandals on your feet and your staff in hand and eat it fast! Make sure that not a bone of the lamb is broken. The death angel would pass over them and save them through their obedience to God and the blood of the lamb. Only Egypt would suffer if they obeyed God.

**John 19:31-37. What does this Scripture teach us about the relationship between Jesus and the Passover?** John the Baptist saw Jesus coming at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. John said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Jesus was the Lamb provided by God. In order to fulfill the prophecy, not a bone on Jesus could be broken. That is part of the miraculous intervention we see from God. The convicted would suffer on the cross horribly gasping for air. At sundown, the soldiers would break the legs of the men on the cross. This prevented them from pushing up for air and they would

suffocate in a short time and die. A Roman soldier never, ever questioned a command. That would be suicide. You certainly would not risk death for a convicted Jew on a cross. When they came to Jesus the soldiers broke the legs of both thieves who were on each side of Jesus. Then the miraculous happened. For a reason that cannot be explained by simple logic, the soldiers decided Jesus looked dead, so they stuck a spear into His side at His heart and blood and water poured out. Not a bone was broken, which placed the soldiers in serious violation for no apparent reason. Only God could have placed such thoughts and actions in the mind of a loyal soldier of Rome. Isn't it amazing that this was written down as fact 1500 years before Jesus was born? I wonder how House would explain that away.

b. **KING DAVID** lived and wrote these words in the Psalm 1000 years before Jesus was born.

1. **Psalm 22:1.** *Read these words carefully and then see how they compare to the event recorded 1000+ years later in Matthew's record of Jesus' life.* Notice the words cried out from the cross in agony.

**Mathew 27:45-46. What similarities do you see?** Did David hear the words Jesus would cry out from the cross or was Jesus only quoting David? We do see the picture of a crucified man crying out in His agony and loneliness, feeling forsaken by God. Actually, as Jesus took on the sins of the world, He would have felt the weight of sin for the only time in His life. He is feeling the hopelessness of being separated from God, forsaken.

2. **Psalm 22:6-8. How do these people treat this man?** Notice they treat Him as a nobody, as worm of a man, worthless. He is despised by the people and even as He is dying on the cross there is no pity or compassion. Instead they pass by and insult and mock Him. There is nothing but contempt.

**Matthew 27:39-44. How does this scene relate to Psalm 22:6-8?** Now we see the historical account written by the Apostle Matthew. He records how those passing by mocked Jesus with a dripping sarcasm. They were joined by the highest Jewish leadership, the shepherds of God's flock. They were joined in mocking Jesus by the robbers who were on the cross beside Jesus who insulted our Lord.

3. **Psalm 22:12-16. What phrases help us see this is a crucifixion?** They have surrounded Him and pierced His hands and feet. This was definitely a picture of crucifixion of a man who was hated and who was crying out to the God of the universe as He suffered. Here is another great key to this mystery from God. This picture was recorded 1,000 years before Jesus was born. Britannica reports that the first historical record of Crucifixion was about 519 BC when "Darius I, king of Persia, crucified 3,000 political opponents in Babylon" (Encyclopedia Britannica, crucifixion). Wikipedia reports that crucifixion was in use particularly among the Persians, Seleucids, Carthaginians, and Romans from about the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD. Now here is the amazing discovery. How did David see and understand the crucifixion he writes about when it would be 500 years until the first one took place? That would be like me knowing the prison systems methods in the year 2510! David beheaded Goliath. The common

practice was to kill and behead your enemies. Then you place their heads on the city gate to terrify the enemies and put them on the run. David literally was shown a picture of the future of execution 500 years before it was developed.

4. **Psalm 22:17-18. What are people casting lots (gambling) for?** They are gambling at the foot of the cross for this dying man's garment. Roman prisoners were hung naked on the cross to further increase the humiliation and horror of the event. This was an added deterrent.

**John 19:22-24. What would be the odds of David's vision happening in such detail 1,000 years later?** After dividing the few clothes Jesus would have owned, they only had one piece left. It was a seamless garment. This would have been the tunic Jesus had worn. The tunic made of one piece would have been incredibly strong and worth far more than the other clothing. This piece is worth gambling for. Little did the soldiers know that David had seen them doing this over a thousand years ago. Without knowing it, the Roman soldiers were fulfilling the prophecy from God given that the Jewish people would see and believe.

5. **Psalm 41:7-9. Notice that the betrayal by a close friend is foretold 1,000 years before it took place.** Many people are saying that He is getting what He deserves and there will be no resurrection. Jesus will simply die. His close friend has obviously lost faith in Jesus alongside His enemies.

**Mark 14:10, 17-21.** Judas Iscariot was an Apostle who had spent the last three years traveling with Jesus and being the treasurer for the group. It may have been pride or jealousy, but for some reason Judas decides to go to the chief priests and betray His Lord. Jesus knows the prophecies and even knows exactly who it will be. Imagine having a close friend in your inner circle offer you up to be executed! Jesus knew the prophecy written over a thousand years ago and yet loved Judas anyway.

6. **Psalm 69:19-21. Notice the gall and vinegar used for the one being crucified.** Alone and dying, there is no sympathy, only the medication that was offered to a dying man near the end of his life.

**John 19:28-30. How was everything God intended to do completed in the crucifixion of Christ?** Jesus had now lived the sinless life as a man. He could now be the perfect Lamb of God who could take away the sins of the world. Everything written about Him was accomplished. All that was left was to say He was thirsty so David's vision of them offering Him wine vinegar would take place. At that point Jesus could say, "It is finished." The life and complete sacrifice for our sins was now done. After 3 days in the grave, God would raise Jesus to life, just as Jesus had told the disciples. Even this resurrection was prophesied. David wrote about Jesus' resurrection, "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let you Holy One see decay" (Psalm 16:9-10).

c. **ISAIAH THE PROPHET** lived and wrote these words 700 years before Jesus was born.

1. **Isaiah 7:10-14. What would be the sign that God would give to His people?** The king of Judah does not want to obey the Lord and ask for a sign. The Lord may have been being a little sarcastic with the king. The people were always demanding some sign from God so they could believe. God's prophet interrupts addresses God's people and the king. He tells them that they have tried God's patience and God is going to give them a sign, one last sign. The sign will be a virgin who will give birth to a child, as son who will be called Immanuel which literally means, "God with us," or "God in the flesh." This sign would be the coming of God's salvation, the Messiah the people longed to come and lead them.

**Matthew 1:18-25. Describe the event that takes place 700 years later.** Notice that Joseph and Mary are betrothed, engaged, the marriage is arranged but has not taken place. Mary becomes pregnant and Joseph has the right to have her stoned to death for adultery. He knows he has never slept with Mary. A miraculous pregnancy is impossible for man. He decides to send her away quietly and end the relationship. Who wouldn't believe immorality had been involved. An angel from God had to appear to explain the miraculous nature of the pregnancy and point out that this was the prophecy written 700 years ago being fulfilled by the miracle of God.

2. **Isaiah 9:1-7. A child would be born to sit on David's throne and deliver God's people. This would honor what region?** Galilee of the Gentiles. We know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. Why would Isaiah speak of the honor coming to Galilee rather than Judea? Let's look at Luke and see what we can find out.

**Luke 4:14-19. Jesus announces the beginning of His ministry in Galilee, the land He would bring honor to.** Jesus grew up in Nazareth of Galilee. It was the hometown of Joseph and Mary. After His baptism and 40 days being tempted in the wilderness, the desert, Jesus returned to Nazareth and there he began His ministry that would last for three years and bring all who believe back to a right relationship with their Creator.

3. **Isaiah 50:5-7. What events were attempts at disgracing the servant?** He was beaten; His beard pulled out, mocked, and spat upon.

**Matthew 27:26-31. What is happening to Jesus and how does it compare with Isaiah's words 700 years earlier?** Notice Jesus is scourged, beaten with a whip that has bone, glass and metal tied into it to rip the flesh. After Pilate has this done, and then Jesus is stripped and beaten by a whole battalion of Pilate's soldiers. The cruelty was beyond imagination. When you read all 4 gospels, you can see that Jesus was mocked and beaten by Pilate's men, then sent to King Herod whose men mocked and beat Jesus. Then he was sent back to Pilate and was scourged, beaten. He is then released to the battalion who beats Jesus a fourth time. Most criminals barely survived one Roman scourging. Jesus had four.

4. **Isaiah 52:13-15. How does this scene describe Jesus' crucifixion?** The four brutal attacks on Jesus would have left Him marred, swollen and bloody until no one could have recognized His face. Then He was lifted up on the cross to die. However, God would exalt Him by raising Him from the dead. 700 years before Jesus is born, Isaiah explains the nature of the brutality that would accompany the death and the resurrection of Jesus.

**John 19:1-22. How does this scene fulfill the suffering, the wisdom and the lifting up recorded by Isaiah 700 years before Jesus was born?** Jesus was the King of kings and the Lord of lords. No one could remove that fact in life or in death. Everything foretold happened as it was written. Little did the forces of evil know they were carrying out the plan of God for the salvation of all who believe in Christ as Lord.

5. **Isaiah 53:1-6. What scenes of the suffering servant fit Jesus' final days?** Many Jewish people are still waiting for this military genius from God that cannot be defeated. That is their concept of God's Messiah. However, their prophets all point to this very different warrior, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah shows us that the Messiah would be from an average family. No halo, no crown, no killer physique. His teaching on the true kingdom of God would turn many against Him. They would not want to be associated with Jesus. Even thought they would despise Him, the Messiah would take on the sins of the world once for all time. His crucifixion would be in our place. Our sins were placed upon Jesus and nailed to the cross. Our ability to be spiritually healed, made right with God, can only happen when we accept Jesus death in our place and proclaim Him the Lord of our life.

6. **Isaiah 53:7-8. Describe what is happening to this person.** He is silent before His accusers. Like a lamb led to the slaughter is a key image. The lamb has done nothing wrong. They are simply selected and led off to be killed. This prophecy points out that the Messiah would be like the lamb that was innocent but led off to be killed. He does not fight to defend His innocence. Who can speak of His descendants? No one. He came from God.

**Matthew 27:11-14. Jesus' mission was delivered in intricate detail. What's unique about Jesus' silence before Pilate that was foretold 700 years earlier?** The explanation of the mock trials and false accusations may have set Jesus free. They definitely would have started the trial war of trial wars. However, Jesus trusted the Father and knew this was God's will and the prophet's writings. It was meant to be. Jesus was fearless in the face of death.

7. **Isaiah 53:9. With whom would the Messiah be assigned a grave?** He would be assigned a grave with the wicked and the rich at death.

**Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:27. What facts validate Isaiah's prophecy?** Jesus was poor and had no place to be buried. Notice the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, was a believer in Jesus and evidently had enough political clout to ask Pilate for Jesus' body so he could properly bury Jesus in his own new tomb cut in the rock. Jesus was on the cross between two guilty thieves. So the prophecy

written 700 years before was another graphic detail. He was in a place with the wicked and the rich!

d. **THE PROPHET MICAH** lived and wrote these words **700 years before Jesus was born.**

1. **Micah 5:1-5.** *The ruler that restores Israel will come from where?* He will come from Bethlehem in Judah and this ruler of Israel will have origins from of old, from ancient times. This was literally the ages of the ages, which meant without beginning or end. How could that be? Only if this ruler were the Creator of life could this make sense. Here is another instance of the miraculous hand of God in organizing evidences for our hope. We saw earlier that the Messiah would bring a great light on Galilee and that Jesus was indeed from Nazareth in Galilee. However, the Messiah was to be both in Bethlehem of Judah. How could that be? Judah is not in Galilee. 700 years after this prophecy, Caesar Augustus (see Luke 2) decides there should be a census taken of the entire Roman world. It was the first census that took place while Quirinius was Governor of Syria. Everyone was required to go to their hometown to register. Joseph belonged to the line of David and was therefore required to travel to Bethlehem to register. Isn't it amazing that Caesar suddenly had the idea for this census while Mary was pregnant and ready to deliver? Remember, the journey was foretold 700 years before it was forced by the government to take place. How ironic that it happened at the very time of Jesus' birth! Actually, how very miraculous!

**Matthew 2:1-6.** *What was the common interpretation of Micah 5:1-5 in the days of Jesus' birth?* Some people might say that Micah's writing was not a prophecy of the Messiah's birth. The wise men were Persian astrologers. They probably studied many religions and held more to the stars than anything. However, we see that they knew the Jewish interpretation of Micah. They knew the prophet had predicted the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and that it was the common Jewish understanding. They saw a great star in the east and traveled to see this child. When King Herod questions the chief priests and elders, they site Micah's prophecy as the birthplace of the Messiah.

e. **THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH** lived and wrote these words **520 years before Jesus was born.**

1. **Zechariah 11:12-13.** *What was the price of the Lord and what happened to the money that was paid for His capture?* The price was 30 pieces of silver and it was paid for someone but then cast into the house of the Lord and then to the potter.

**Matthew 26:14-16; 27:1-10.** *How do the words of Zechariah enlighten us about Jesus' truth and mission?* Judas betrays Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. When he tried to give the money back, they wouldn't take it because it was blood money. Judas throws it on the temple floor, the house of the Lord. The chief priests cannot get caught with the blood money so they decide to buy a field with the 30 pieces of silver. The field belonged to a potter. There was no cemetery for the strangers who died and had no money, so they bought the field to make a cemetery. It is ironic that it is in the Field of Akeldema, the Field of Blood, which

is where Judas hung himself. How did Zechariah see this in such detail 550 years before the time of the actual event?

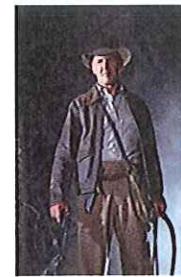
2. **Zechariah 12:10. *The crucifixion of Jesus would cause what to be poured out on the house of David? How would the people respond to the crucifixion of Jesus?*** It would pour out a spirit of grace and supplication (mourning for our sins). The people would look at Jesus crucifixion, realize it was in our place, and long for forgiveness.

**John 19:34-37. *Describe how the words of Zechariah that were written 550 years before the day of the crucifixion were fulfilled.*** Rather than walk away and forget it, they will instead look upon the one they have pierced. They would realize who Jesus was and what they had done. Their eyes would be fixed to Christ on the cross.

3. **Zechariah 13:7. *How is the desertion of Jesus' followers predicted?*** They will strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter.

**Matthew 26:31. *How does Jesus interpret the prophecy of Zechariah?*** Jesus quotes the prophecy of Zechariah to the disciples to let them know that as brave as they think they are, this night everything will change. When He, the Great Shepherd, is struck, they, His sheep, will run and hide. Their solid faith will be tested and they will become terrified.

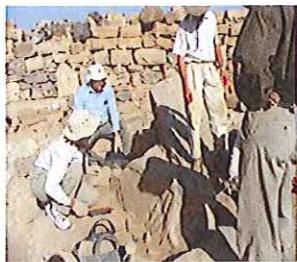
**Notes: (A place for you to record the most powerful reasons for your hope.)**



## II. EVIDENCE (REASONS) FROM ARCHAEOLOGY

### 1. What is archaeology?

*Archaeology does not have the excitement of Indiana Jones. Archaeology is quite simply digging through the garbage of people who lived a long time ago. In the layers of debris people carefully dig to find out who lived there and from what time period. They can interpret that by the types of materials used for eating, cooking and water supplies and the materials and styles of weapons found.*



2.

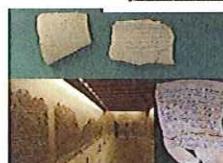
*This is one of the digs in Jordan. I wanted you to see the kind of work they do. They go out to the site before daylight. They have to quit about noon because of the severe heat. Notice the brush in the lady's hand and the dust pan in the man's. Digs are laid out in small squares and you slowly brush away dirt and scoop it up so you don't damage anything that might be*

3.



*This is a guffa, a rubber bucket that is used for collecting dirt to sift through. That is the exciting life of archaeology! It is not for everyone. However, when you find something, it is all worth it.*

4. *The Guffa is dumped into the screen to be examined*



5. *Archaeology confirms Bible texts.*

*Jeremiah began ministry in 627 B.C. and ministered until after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. He warned God's people but then didn't listen. When they were captured Jeremiah told them to go peacefully and be good citizens. The scene above is a library discovered at Lachish. There was a small room containing letters. Letter 3 was written by an official at an outpost to his superior, Yoash in the city. It mentions Koniah, the son of Elnathan making a trip to Egypt for help and to a letter by Tobiah, a royal official with a warning from a*

prophet. The other writings mention King Zedekiah of Jerusalem, who is mentioned in 2 Kings 24. The prophet mentioned in the Lachish letter therefore would have most likely been Jeremiah, God's prophet.



#### 6. It helps us understand the Bibles.

A team of archaeologists in Israel has unearthed what's believed to be the royal seal of an Old Testament prince who is said to have tossed the prophet Jeremiah down a well. Team leader Dr. Eilat Mazar of Jerusalem's Hebrew University says the imprint was found in clay, astonishingly well-preserved, bearing the name of Gedaliah, the son of Pashur. Gedaliah is mentioned by name in Jeremiah 38:1 as he served Judah's King Zedekiah in the final days before Jerusalem was conquered by Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

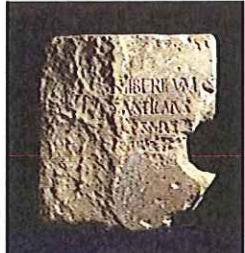
*The prophet's writings tell of the actions that Gedaliah and his fellow princes took against him:*

*"So they took Jeremiah, and put him into the cistern of Makijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud." (Jeremiah 38:6)*

*The prophet was rescued after an Ethiopian eunuch pleaded with the king on Jeremiah's behalf, saying, "They have thrown him into a cistern, where he will starve to death when there is no longer any bread in the city." (38:9) The king then ordered 30 men to hoist up the prophet before the city fell to the Babylonians*

*The letters on the seal are in ancient Hebrew, and Mazar told World Net Daily that the relic was recovered through a wet-sifting process. The wet sifting through the destruction debris from their excavations allowed them to uncover hundreds of different kinds of small finds such as tiny fish bones, Phoenician glass beads, Hebrew, Babylonian and Egyptian bullae and seals, pits and seeds, hematite and limestone weights, arrowheads, figurines, jewelry and more. This is actually the second recent discovery of an ancient bulla from the time of Jeremiah. In 2005, Mazar found another seal with the name of Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, who is mentioned twice in the prophet's book. That artifact was found in a stone structure Mazar believes was part of King David's ancient palace.*

#### 7. It shows the reality of Bible Characters (Abram, Pilate, Herod, Solomon)



Pontius Pilate - The Roman Procurator, Este  
dedicatory inscription, Roman Theater at  
Caesarea, 26-36 CE, Stone, H. 60cm, L.  
80cm, W. 20cm, Israel Antiquities Authority  
© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

*It reads like this:*

*Line One: TIBERIEUM,*

*Line Two: (PON) TIUS*

*Line Three: (PRAEF) ECTUS IUDA (EAE)*

*The Roman historian Tacitus mentions Pontius Pilate only in passing when noting "the execution of Christus, author of that sect, by the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius."*



### 8. Ostrakon of Cimon

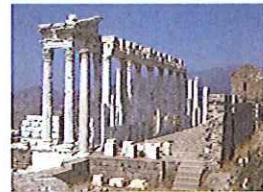
An ostrakon bears the name of a Greek statesman from Athens. He was a key politician in 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.

**The Bible is an historically and incredibly accurate book.** (16 specific archaeological confirmations of the Bible)

- a. *Over 40 Old Testament Kings known from both Bible and contemporary monuments are now placed historically in their correct dates and reigns.*
- b. *Babylon's destruction*
- c. *Nineveh's destruction*
- d. *Gezer's destruction and rebuilding*
- e. *King Jehoiachin given rations by King of Babylon*
- f. *Belshazzar, King of Babylon in the days of Daniel*
- g. *Masoretic Text from 70 A.D. – 150 A.D.*
- h. *The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947. An almost complete scroll of Isaiah dating 1,000 years before the oldest scroll of the letter previously found.*
- i. *Burning of Gibeon, King Saul's home town.*
- j. *Solomon's casting of bronze for the temple*
- k. *King Mesha's revolt against Israel*
- l. *Hezekiah's tunnel that saved the city and was an architectural marvel.*
- m. *Hezekiah's wall - The remains of this wall was discovered by Avigad in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City in 1970. It is about 23 feet thick and still stands up to 10 feet tall. It is believed that Hezekiah built this wall to enclose the western part of Jerusalem, including the Pools of Siloam. Prior to this wall, only The Ophel, the city of David, and the temple mount was inside the city walls. This wall and the Siloam Tunnel was built in preparation for an attack by Assyria because Hezekiah refused to pay tribute to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria.*
- n. *Patriarchal customs*
- o. *Pool of Gibeon built by Hezekiah when 4,000-6,000 people needed water.*
- p. *Gedaliah, son of Pashhur*
- q. *Jehucal, son of Shelemiah*

### 9. *The Bible is an full of accurate historical facts.*

*It is located in the modern city of Bergama. It was the first city in Asia to receive permission that a temple be built in Pergamum to "the divine Augustus and the goddess "Roma" (Tacitus, Ann iii.37). Being a god, Augustus could execute people anytime he felt like it. He thought he held the sword of justice.*



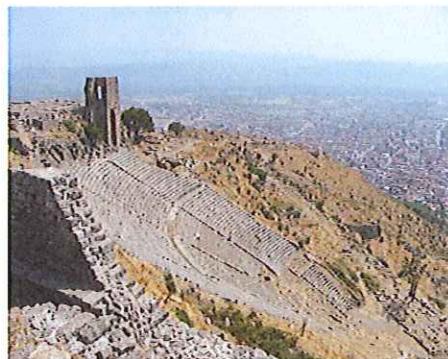
#### 10.. Asclepieum

The Asclepieum was a sanctuary and a healing center built for Asclepius, the god of healing. It was the first hospital in the world built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in Pergamon.



#### 11. The Pergamum ancient theater

The theater was across from the Temple of Athena in the Acropolis on the steepest hill and held over 15,000 spectators with 80 rows of seating.



12.



13.



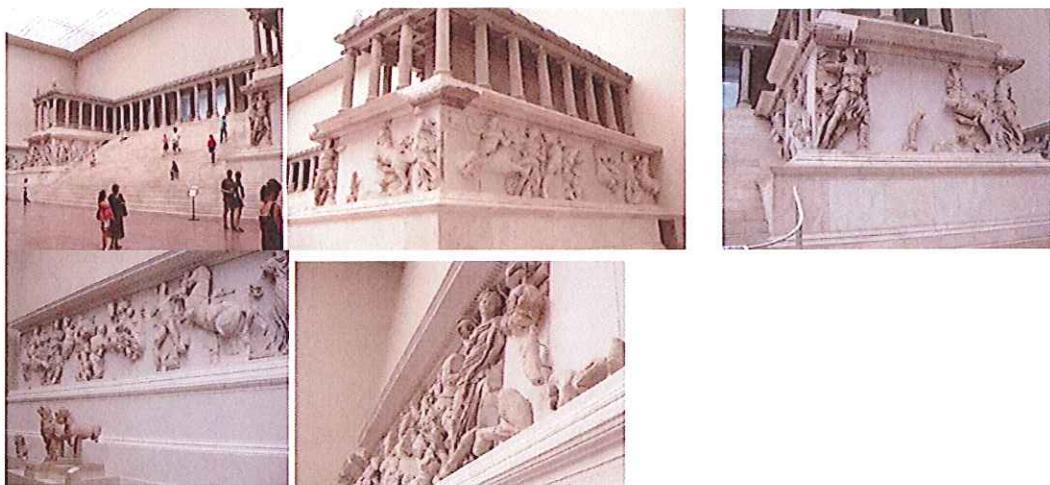
14.

#### 15. The Zeus Altar - Read Revelation 2:12-17

The finest altar (shrine) ever built is accepted as the in Pergamum in 180 BC. Its foundation still stands in Bergamum, the site of ancient Pergamum. Most parts of the Zeus Altar is now in the Berlin Pergamum Museum. The altar was on the acropolis with is 985' above the city. It depicts the gods of Greece in victorious combat against the giants of the earth



## 16.-20. Pergamum Altar Photos:

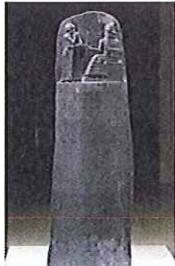


*Jesus begins the letter to the church at Pergamum by reminding them who it is that really holds the sword. It is not the emperor nor the great pagan religions nor Rome itself. Jesus Christ alone holds the sword of justice.*

*When you see the pagan altar to the false gods in the city that worshiped them along with the emperor as god, we can vividly see and understand why Jesus says that Pergamum is where Satan has his throne. As Rome was the center of Satan's activity in the West, Pergamum was his throne, the center of his power in the East. The great problem we can see for the church is the powerful influence this evil city was on all people.*

*Now I want us to see one of the more infamous cities, that ever existed on earth. It is the city of ancient Babylon. It was a city where the Jewish people were held captive for 70 years. It was a place of beauty, of wonder, of great wealth, of extreme cruelty and evil. It was situated on the Euphrates River about 50 miles south of Bagdad in what is now Iraq.*

*Hammurabi was the 6<sup>th</sup> king of Babylon. He ruled from 1795-1750 BC. During his reign Babylon became the world's first great metropolis. Artifacts from Hammurabi's reign have been preserved, and today we discover this remarkable King was a wise law-giver. How do we know that?*



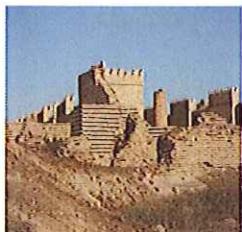
## 21. Code of Hammurabi.

*In the year 1901, this stone of black diorite was found not in Babylon, but in a city of the Persian mountains, to which some later conqueror must have carried it in triumph. The most remarkable of the Hammurabi records is his code of laws, the earliest-known example of a ruler proclaiming publicly to his people a set of laws, arranged in orderly groups, so that all men might read and know what was required of them. The code was carved upon a black stone*

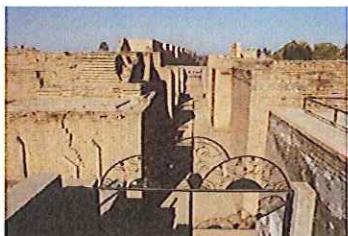
monument, eight feet high. It begins and ends with addresses to the gods. Even a law code was regarded as a subject for prayer in those days. The prayers are chiefly cursings of whoever shall neglect or destroy the law.

The code then regulates the organization of society. The judge who blunders in a law case is to be expelled from his judgeship forever, and heavily fined. The witness who testifies falsely is to be slain. Indeed, all the heavier crimes are made punishable with death. Even if a man builds a house badly, and it falls and kills the owner, the builder is to be slain. If the owner's son was killed, then the builder's son is slain. We can see where the Hebrews learned their law of "an eye for an eye."

These grim retaliatory punishments take no note of excuses or explanations, but only of the fact--with one striking exception. An accused person was allowed to cast himself into "the river," the Euphrates. Apparently the art of swimming was unknown; for if the current bore him to the shore alive he was declared innocent, if he drowned he was guilty. So we learn that faith in the justice of the ruling gods was already firmly, though somewhat childishly, established in the minds of men.

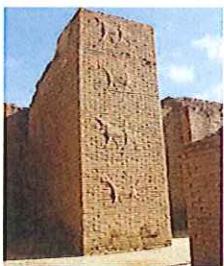
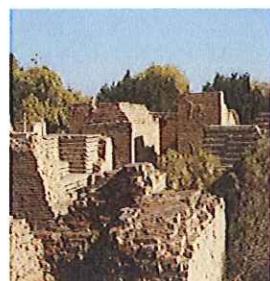


22. City Walls and Towers of Babylon



23. Modern and Ancient Walls of Babylon

24. Ancient Wall Carvings and foundations



25. Ancient Walls with mythical animals



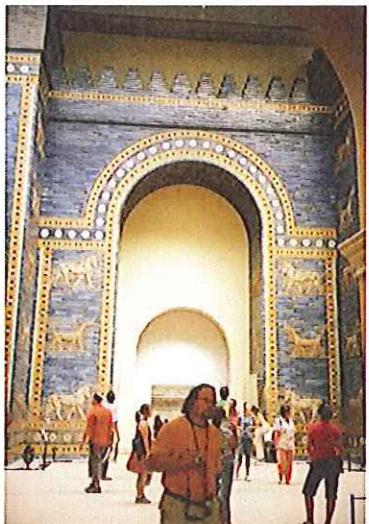
## 26. The Pergamum Museum in Berlin

The site was designed by [Alfred Messel](#) and [Ludwig Hoffmann](#) and was built from 1910 to 1930. The Pergamon houses original-sized, reconstructed monumental buildings such as the [Pergamon Altar](#), the [Market Gate of Miletus](#), and the [Ishtar Gate](#), all consisting of parts transported from the original excavation sites.

## 27. Same Animals on the Ishtar Gates



## 28. Ishtar Gates



In 1902, German archaeologist Robert Koldewey unearthed the fabled Ishtar Gate in the ruins of Babylon. The gateway dated from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar (about 600 B.C.) and was decorated with bas-reliefs. The animals depicted on the Gate were known to the Babylonians - two of the animals depicted were lions and rimi (aurochs, a type of wild ox). Of the three animals depicted, one could not be identified. It seemed to show a mythical animal.

The animal, which Koldewey recognized as a sirrush (dragon; the word mushrushu or mushhushshu is the commonly-accepted modern form, based on a retranslation of the original word) can be described as having

...a slender body covered with scales, a long slender scaly tail, and a long slim scaly neck bearing a serpent's head... [from the mouth] a long forked tongue protrudes. There are flaps of skin attached to the back of the head, which is adorned (and armed) with a straight horn.



29. Side wall of Ishtar Gate

**30. Processional Way**

*Read Jeremiah 39:1-10 – Imagine standing by the very gates and by the walls that lined the street called the Processional Way, the very stones that were there when Zedekiah the King of Judah was led as a prisoner.*

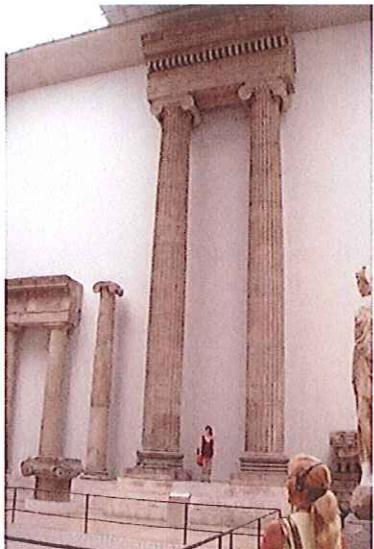


*We saw another breath taking site that let us see how incredibly advanced these early civilizations really were, except they were no match in the end for the Almighty God.*

*Read Acts 20:15-38 - Miletus was an ancient city on the western coast of Anatolia (in what is now Aydin Province, Turkey), near the mouth of the Maeander River in ancient Caria. It was just south of Ephesus. Evidence of first settlement at the site has been made inaccessible by the rise of sea level and deposition of sediments from the Maeander. Imagine standing with Paul and the Elders from the church at Ephesus as they are on the beach here at Miletus. These are the gates that once stood at the city entrance.*

**31. Miletus**





### 32. Gates of Miletus

*My wife is in the foreground and we are taking this picture of our friend standing by a building column from Miletus. Notice the height*

*I hope you have learned a bit more about the importance of archaeology to understanding the world and the historical accuracy of the Bible as it lays out these places and events that we can see thanks to God and some brilliant and dedicated archaeologists.*

**NOTE:** It is important to know that no other religious writings contain the evidences God revealed in the Bible. If all religions are evaluated according to substantial evidence, The Bible with the Old and New Testaments alone provides solid evidence for believing.

### Bibliography (Great Books to Build on the Hope You Have!)

*Uncensored Truth: A No-Spin Guide to the Christian Faith* by Jud Wilhite

*I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek

*Why I Am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe* by Norman Geisler

*The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel

*The Case for a Creator* by Lee Strobel

*The Case for Faith* by Lee Strobel

*Why Believe God Exists* by Dr. Terry L. Miethe & Dr. Gary R. Habermas