HOW SURE CAN WE BE THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH OF ISRAEL?
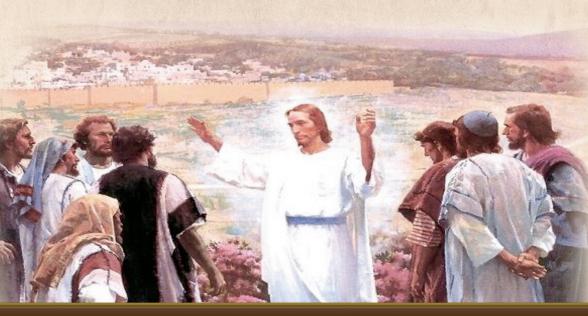
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LetUsReason

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Christians are often criticized for holding beliefs predicated on blind faith. This study will aim to demonstrate that you do not have to (and should not) rely on "blind faith" in order to believe in God and His Word. To the contrary, we as Christians have an incredibly firm foundation on which to base our faith. The Bible is a valid basis of faith – a claim this study intends to strongly demonstrate.

As we begin our study, the first thing we need to do is examine three epistemological anchor points that form the basis of our belief in the supernatural origin of the Bible. But first, what is epistemology?

Epistemology: The theory of knowledge, its method, its scope, and its limits. Epistemology is the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion. It defines what we can actually **know.**[1]

So, let's examine the three points that form the basis of our epistemology.

-The Basis Of Our Epistemology:

1. The Bible is a highly **integrated message system.**

2. The Bible contains an astonishing amount of **prophecy.**
3. The Bible contains **intricately hidden subtleties encoded into the very text itself that clearly transcend the knowledge and intent of the human authors.**

Note: We can't fully describe each of the following three points here, but to better understand what we mean by each, please consult the companion study entitled "The Basis Of Our Epistemology".

During this study, we will mainly be investigating Biblical content having to do with Points #1 and 2 – involving **integration** and **prophecy.** These two points help support each other. Biblical prophecy proves integration, and Biblical integration involves prophecy. One of the primary ways you can validate the Bible's extra-dimensional origin is through its continual use of prophecy. Let's discuss this further.

As we mentioned, Biblical prophecy proves the integration of the Bible. Integration is a proof of extra-dimensional authorship because of the following reason – the Bible is one continuous story written over a period of almost 1,500 years, by many human authors who mostly didn't know each other and weren't alive at the same time, and yet, we find that the themes and events in scripture are woven together as one unified story. This points to a common Author who is behind it all, influencing and inspiring the human penmen who wrote down what they were inspired to say.

In other words, imagine your favorite novel or storybook...imagine you one day found out that the chapters were written by different people who mostly didn't know each other and weren't alive at the same time, over a period of 1,500 years … yet, the storyline was flaw-less, or, to use our term, integrated. Obviously, this is impossible – especially when the earlier chapters predict how the later chapters would turn out with amazing precision – and its predictions align with the record of human history. This points to a common Author outside of time who was guiding and inspiring the human writers to compose this unified story. This is what we mean by integration.

Let's talk more about prophecy for a moment before continuing. What exactly do we mean by prophecy, and how exactly does this prove anything?

The Bible repeatedly demonstrates its uniqueness by making a habit of describing history before it happens. This is what we mean by prophecy. And if this statement is true, it would require then that the author knew what was going to happen ahead of time, which obviously the human writers couldn't. This characteristic of prophecy is a method of authentication that is unique to the true Author (God), because He exists outside of the dimension of time altogether and enjoys a one hundred percent success rate. In other words, we know the Bible cannot come from man – it must come from a Being outside of time itself.

So, we will find that prophecy is not just an odd curiosity – it's a demonstration that God is real, that He cares, and that He has chosen to reveal to us in advance what His plans are for the world, and for you and I personally. As we go through this study, keep in mind how the content we will examine demonstrates our epistemological anchor-points.

Let's now begin an exercise that concerns the most important theme in the entire Bible: was Jesus actually the Messiah of Israel, and if yes, how confident can we be that He was? Peter Stoner, in his book *Science Speaks*, suggested an interesting approach to this issue.[2] The following exercise is based on an adaptation of his approach, done by Chuck Missler in *Cosmic Codes*.[3]

This will involve taking a brief sampling of some of the prophecies which were recorded in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New, and attempt to examine them quantitatively. In other words, this will be an exercise in composite probabilities. You will see what we mean as we begin. But first we must make another introductory detour, as we anticipate the criticisms of the skeptics who will claim that none of this matters unless the prophecies were provably written well prior to the supposed fulfillments they anticipate. We completely agree, so before beginning to examine these prophecies, let's establish our prophetic perspective by examining this issue.

The first point we must recognize is that the Old Testament was translated into Greek around 270 BC – called the Septuagint.[4] In those days, even a Jew generally didn't have much proficiency in Hebrew, but instead likely spoke Aramaic and Greek. Greek – following the spread of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great – became the international language of commerce. Hebrew, instead, became similar to the way Latin is for a Catholic. The Jews of that time may have had some understanding of it for religious uses, but in general the average person would not have been skillful enough to read it fluently. This background established the need among Jews for a copy of the scriptures readable in the common language.[5]

So, around 285 BC, Ptolemy II Philadelphus commissioned around seventy-two of the most eminent Hebrew scholars to Alexandria to translate the Hebrew scriptures into Greek. The result of that effort, as we mentioned, is known as the Septuagint version of the Old Testament.[6] The purpose of recognizing this for the sake of this study is simply to point out that the Old Testament prophecies were already in print several centuries *before* the birth of Christ – which establishes it as valid prophecy.

Another point of evidence that shows the Old Testament prophecies were in existence long before their fulfillments in Christ involves the incredible discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. This archaeological find included Biblical scrolls and fragments that contained at least some part of every Old Testament book, with the exception of Esther – with many of these dating to hundreds of years prior to the life of Christ.[7]

If these manuscript copies of Old Testament books found in the Dead Sea Scrolls pre-dated Christ, then the original Old Testament books must have been written far earlier still. At any rate, no serious scholars doubt that the Old Testament – including its prophecies – pre-dated Christ.

The next objection we must anticipate goes as follows:

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

But there are several reasons to believe that the gospel authors reported Jesus's life and words accurately. They wrote the truth even at risk of persecution, and they did not play to what their audiences might expect. Let's take a few moments to break this down further.

In their book *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh and Sean McDowell make the following points:

> At the time the Gospels were written, the Christian church was undergoing considerable persecution. Many Christians were martyred for their faith in excruciating and inhumane ways – such as by crucifixion, being burned alive, and being fed to wild animals. Since the gospel writers had nothing obvious to gain from inventing a "new religion," and everything to lose, this suggests they recorded what actually happened and what Jesus really said and did.[8]

> The Gospels demonstrate restraint on the part of their writers, since Jesus is conspicuously silent on many of the controversial topics that were debated in the early church – including whether Gentile Christians had to undergo circumcision, the role of women, etc. If the gospel writers were in the habit of making things up, it seems likely that they would have "made" Jesus "address" such issues.[9]

> The Jewish understanding of the Messianic prophecies emphasized a coming king, so that in the time of Jesus they hoped for a Messiah who would evict the Roman occupation. If the New Testament writers' motivation was to persuade people who longed for a conquering hero, they could have omitted or downplayed the crucifixion to craft a convincing presentation. But they didn't. Since instead they gave it emphasis, they wrote a truthful amount, and in doing so they revealed in a far deeper way the saving role of the Messiah.[10]

In summary, the gospel authors passed every test of validity that

we would ascribe to any modern writer in any objective test. They – in every way – had every reason to write the opposite of what they actually wrote. Every one of them – except John – died horrific and gruesome deaths directly due to their advocacy of the truth of their testimonies of Jesus. They all faced excommunication from everything they knew in the Jewish culture and religion of that day – all due to their testimonies about Jesus. They all stood to lose everything – and they all pretty much did – due to their testimonies about Jesus.

Furthermore, authors Norman Geisler and Frank Turek in *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, identify ten reasons why we should believe that the gospel writers told the truth.[11] The following are just several.

First, the New Testament writers included embarrassing details about themselves. Writers – especially fraudulent ones – tend to embellish their own importance and cover up embarrassing details that may make them look bad. For example:

- They are dim-witted (Mark 9:32; Luke 18:34; John 12:16).
- They are rebuked strongly (Mark 8:33; et al.).
- They are cowards (Matthew 26:33-35; et al.).
- They are doubters (John 2:18-22; 3:14-18; Matthew 12:39-41; 17:9, 22-23; 28:17).

Second, the New Testament writers included embarrassing details and difficult sayings of Jesus. So, they not only included self-incriminating details about themselves, but also record details about their leader – Jesus – that would seem to portray Him in a negative light. For example:

- Jesus is initially considered "out of His mind" by His own family (Mark 3:21, 31).
- Jesus is initially not believed by His own brothers (John 7:5).
- Jesus is thought by some to be a deceiver (John 7:12).
- Jesus is deserted by many of His followers (John 6:66).

- Jesus is called a "drunkard" (Matthew 11:19).
- Jesus is called "demon-possessed" (Mark 3:22; et al.).
- Jesus is called a "madman" (John 10:20).
- Jesus is crucified by the Romans, despite the fact that "anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse" (All four Gospels; Deuteronomy 21:23; cf. Galatians 3:13).

Third, the New Testament writers included events related to the resurrection of Christ that they would not have invented. For example:

- Women (in a very male dominated society and time) were recorded as being the first ones to reach the empty tomb after the resurrection.
- A woman's testimony carried little to no weight in courts of law during that time, yet it was women who first testified of the empty tomb.
- Women were often depicted as being the brave ones, standing near the cross, while the disciples were in hiding for fear of the Jews .

Fourth, the New Testament writers were stoned, beheaded, thrown in boiling oil, crucified upside down, and killed in a number of ways for their eyewitness testimony. They abandoned their long-held beliefs and sacred practices (practically overnight) and adopted new radical ones all under penalty of death. They could have saved their lives by recanting, but they went to the death for their eyewitness testimonies.

What about for instance, Muslim terrorists willing to die for their beliefs? There is one big difference – the New Testament writers were **eyewitnesses.** They knew it was the truth because they had verified it with their own senses. While current martyrs are certainly sincere, they don't have eyewitness proof that their beliefs are true, and therefore their deaths are critically different.

So then, throughout this introductory chapter, we have established

two key points: that the prophecies we will be examining were written well before the fact, and that we have reason to believe in the validity of the gospel writers' accounts of Jesus's life. There is certainly much more information available to prove those two points, which we certainly encourage you to explore. But at this point, we should have sufficiently countered the potential objections of the critics, and will now continue on with our study.

So then, with that background in place, let's review several of these Old Testament Messianic prophecies and attempt to estimate the likelihoods that they were just mere coincidence or accidents of chance.

CHAPTER 2
EIGHT PROPHETIC PROBABILITIES

Messianism in the Old Testament is the anticipation of the prophesied coming leader who will save, liberate, and redeem Israel. One scholar, J. Barton Payne, found as many as 574 verses in the Old Testament that somehow point to, describe, or reference the coming Messiah. Alfred Edersheim found 456 Old Testament verses prophetically referring to the Messiah or His times. **Conservatively, Jesus fulfilled at least three hundred of these prophecies in His earthly ministry, according to theologians who have catalogued them.**[1]

For the sake of this example, we have selected only eight of the three hundred. The New Testament gospels, the historical records of the life of Jesus, record specific fulfillments to these prophecies as attested to by numerous witnesses. We will examine each of these eight, and if legitimate, we will then mathematically apply them to an exercise in calculating composite probabilities.

By analyzing the circumstances surrounding each one, you can come up with an estimated probability of each one taking place by assigning an approximated numerical value to its probability. The chance that a single person could fulfill all eight is an exercise in what

is termed composite probabilities. Bear in mind, all of the following probability estimates are extremely conservative!

#1 – Born in Bethlehem

> But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
>   -Micah 5:2

This passage describes the exact place the Messiah would one day be born. It specifies this location as Bethlehem Ephratah. In fact, this comes into play in the New Testament when the Magi arrived in Judea and inquired to King Herod about the location of the newly born king of the Jews. Herod inquired of the religious leaders about the location the Messiah was prophesied to be born, and they supplied this passage as the answer.

The gospels of Matthew and Luke both record the birth of Jesus, and agree that He was born in Bethlehem.

What then can we say is the likelihood that anyone – from the time of Micah until the present – has been born in Bethlehem? Would you agree that an *extremely* conservative estimate would be one in 100,000? Missler writes:

> The best estimate which we might make would be to estimate the average population of Bethlehem, from the time of Micah to the present day, and to divide it by the average population of Earth during the same period. The population of Bethlehem has averaged less than 10,000, and assuming that the population of Earth has averaged about two billion, a reasonable estimate could be expressed as 2,000,000,000/10,000 or about one in 200,000 having been born in Bethlehem. To be really conservative, let us cut that in half, and adopt an assumption of less than one in 100,000 for our analysis.[2]

Probability: 1:100,000

#2 – Death by Crucifixion

> For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.
>   -Psalm 22:16

The passage refers to the unique death of crucifixion, which involved the piercing of the hands and feet. Psalm Chapter 22 as a whole includes some of the most incredible Messianic prophecies in the entire Bible – specifically concerning the Messiah's future death by crucifixion. This chapter comes across as if it was being spoken by Jesus Himself as He hung there on the cross. The detail is that vivid.

Astonishingly, it was actually written around eight centuries before He was born! What makes this even more incredible is that the official form of execution in Israel (coming from the Mosaic Law) was always stoning; nothing else. So if you were predicting how some future person would die in ancient Israel, you would choose stoning, not crucifixion (which at the time of the writing of Psalms, probably wasn't even invented yet, but certainly wasn't common practice – especially in Israel.[3] Of course, all four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), agree that Jesus was crucified, which fulfilled this prophecy.

So then, what is the ratio of Jewish men, taken at random, to have died by crucifixion? We will assign an extremely conservative estimate of one in 10,000.

Probability: 1:10,000

#3 – Hailed As a King While Riding a Donkey

> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:

behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

   -Zechariah 9:9

Here in Zechariah 9, we're given a prophecy that specifies exactly how the coming Messiah would one day present Himself as a Messianic King to Israel. It says He would do so by riding a donkey into Jerusalem. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all agree that Jesus entered Jerusalem while being hailed as a King, riding on a donkey – fulfilling this prophecy.

   What then can we say is the probability that any man who has entered Jerusalem as a King, has done so while riding on a donkey (from the time this prophecy was given up until the present)? While we have no record of anyone but Christ doing so, let's allow for the possibility of there being unrecorded instances of this happening. We will assign an estimate of one in one hundred – again, an extremely conservative estimate.

Probability: 1:100

#4 – Betrayed for Thirty Pieces of Silver

And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

   -Zechariah 11:12

Matthew 26:15 records that this was the exact amount Judas received for his betrayal of Jesus Christ. So then this one seems straightforward. One in how many people who have ever lived since this prophecy have been betrayed or sold for exactly thirty pieces of silver? Let's assign an extremely conservative estimate of one in 1,000.

Probability: 1:1,000

#5 – Transaction Took Place in the Temple/Silver to the Potter

> And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that
> I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast
> them to the potter in the house of the Lord.
>   -Zechariah 11:13

Within this prophecy, there is a tremendous amount of specificity and detail. We are told the exact **amount** of the transaction (thirty pieces of silver), the exact **location** of the transaction (the house of the Lord, or the Temple), and the specific **person** who would ultimately end up with the silver (a potter).

Matthew 27 records that after betraying Jesus, a remorseful Judas attempted to renege on the deal and return the thirty pieces of silver. When the priests would not accept them, Judas cast the silver coins down on the floor of the Temple. He then left to go and hang himself, leaving the silver with them.

Since the priests were prohibited from putting "blood money" into the Temple treasury, they had to come up with a way to put the money to use. What they came up with was to buy a potter's field for the purpose of the burial of foreign travelers who may die within their jurisdiction (as was their responsibility).

We now need to estimate a probability of all of this being fulfilled. One man in how many – since this prophecy was given – has:

- been paid off to betray a close friend
- immediately become remorseful
- tried to renege on the deal and return the money
- gotten turned down by the other party
- threw the money down on the floor of the Temple
- the coins end up in the hands of a potter

Since there are so many specific components to this prophecy, we

would certainly be justified in assigning a very large number here. But instead, we will assign an extremely conservative estimate of only one in 100,000.

Probability: 1:100,000

#6 – Wounded In His Hands In the House of His Friends

> And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.
>   -Zechariah 13:6

When first reading this verse, it may seem difficult to visualize a group of Roman soldiers crucifying Jesus, as being considered "in the house of my friends." However, you may recall an event recorded in John 20:25, in which after His resurrection, Jesus first appeared to the disciples. On this occasion, Thomas was not present. When the disciples later told Thomas of the resurrected Christ's visit, Thomas said:

> Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.
>   -John 20:25

Eight days later, when they were all assembled again – but this time, including Thomas – Jesus again appeared and granted Thomas the opportunity to do exactly what he had demanded. Missler writes:

> Now, when we go back and review the provocative glimpse given us by Zechariah, we realize that it wasn't the nails that are the wounds being referred to, but Thomas' unbelief. Ouch![4]

Jesus's true wound was the unbelief of one of His closest friends and followers, as Thomas stuck his fingers into Jesus's freshly crucified hands.

So, we need to assign an estimate. How many men (since this prophecy) have been wounded in both hands while in the house of their friends? Let's assign an extremely conservative estimate of one in 1,000.

Probability: 1:1,000

#7 – Made No Defense Though Innocent

> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.
> -Isaiah 53:7

This prophecy is found in Isaiah Chapter 53, which, like Psalm 22, provides incredible prophetic detail concerning the future crucifixion of the Messiah. When reading the New Testament, we do find that this precisely profiled Jesus's experience as He was arrested and put through six illegal overnight trials by the Jews and Romans.[5]

After falsely accusing Jesus by the testimony of a number of false witnesses (who, despite prearrangement, couldn't even get their stories to line up), and then putting Jesus through significant physical and emotional torture, the whole ordeal ended up with Pontius Pilate sentenced Jesus to be executed, despite the fact that he pronounced Him to be blameless.

Let's assign an estimate. Since this prophecy, one man in how many – while on trial for his life – and although innocent – will make no defense for himself? We will assign an extremely conservative estimate of one in 1,000.

Note: Many wonder why Jesus made no defense. He couldn't! He was in *our* shoes! His mission was to be our substitute, and we *are* guilty!

Probability: 1:1,000

#8 – Died With the Wicked, Grave With the Rich

> And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.
> -Isaiah 53:9

This prophecy makes it clear that the future Messiah figure would be killed among the wicked and would be buried with the rich. According to the Gospels, Jesus fulfilled this precisely. They say He was crucified between two thieves and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, apparently one of the richest and most influential individuals in the region. Joseph was somehow able to secure a personal secret meeting with Pilate in which he requested the body of Jesus, indicating his stature in society.

So then, one in how many men since this prophecy died among the wicked yet were buried with the rich? While this one could have some definite candidates, let's assign a probability of one in 1,000, if for no other reason than the unlikelihood of the average person taken at random being "buried with the rich."

Probability: 1:1,000

Before going on, let's further clarify what we mean by these probability estimates. A helpful way of doing this is to try to visualize what we mean by using a physical example.

"1:100" - A suitable example would be taking 100 silver dollars,

marking one, and putting them all into a bucket, mixed. You would then reach into the bucket blindfolded and your chances of randomly selecting the marked coin would be 1 in 100 chances.

We hope this makes sense, as it will be crucial to understand as we go forward.

CHAPTER 3

THE PROBABILITY OF ONE MAN FULFILLING
ALL EIGHT PROPHECIES

Now that we've determined individual probability estimates for each of the eight prophecies we've selected, our next task is to determine a probability estimate that one person could fulfill them all! To do this, we need to combine these eight separate estimates into a composite probability.

In mathematics, to determine composite (or compound) probabilities (the chance of *all* of the events occurring), you calculate the **product** of each individual probability. In other words, you simply multiply the probabilities.[1]

(e.g. 1:1,000 x 1:1,000 = 1:1,000,000)

So, let's now apply that to our current exercise. In order to calculate the **composite probability of all eight Messianic prophecies being fulfilled by a single person, you would take the product of the 8 assigned probability estimates.**

Consider the following chart:

Eight Prophetic Probabilities
(out of over 300 OT prophecies, all fulfilled by Christ)

Prophecies:	Probabilities:
1. Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)	1:100,000
2. Death by Crucifixion (Psalm 22:16)	1:10,000
3. Hailed as a King Riding a Donkey (Zechariah 9:9)	1:100
4. Betrayed for 30 Pieces of Silver (Zechariah 11:12)	1:1,000
5. Transaction Took Place in the Temple / Silver to the Potter (Zech. 11:13)	1:100,000
6. Wounded in His Hands in the House of His Friends (Zechariah 13:6)	1:1,000
7. Made No Defense Though Innocent (Isaiah 53:7)	1:1,000
8. Died With the Wicked, Grave With the Rich (Isaiah 53:9)	1:1,000

The probability that one man would fulfill all eight →

$$10^5 \times 10^4 \times 10^2 \times 10^3 \times 10^5 \times 10^3 \times 10^3 \times 10^3 = 10^{28}$$

/ 8.8×10^{10} (the estimated number of people who have lived between the time these prophecies were given, until now)

= 1 chance in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10^{17})

or: 10^5 x 10^4 x 10^2 x 10^3 x 10^5 x 10^3 x 10^3 x 10^3 = 10^{28}

After doing the arithmetic, the composite probability that a single person would fulfill all eight prophecies turns out to be an enormous number: $1:10^{28}$ (that is, 1:10 with twenty-eight zeroes after it, or 1:100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). Missler writes:

> This answers the question of one man in how many men could have fulfilled these eight prophecies. But what we really want to know is, what is the chance that any **particular** man might have lived from the day of these prophecies down to the present time and have fulfilled **all** of these specific prophecies? To estimate this we must divide our 10^{28} by the total population of the people who have lived since the time of these prophecies.[2]

The estimate of the total number of people who have lived during this time period is thought to be approximately 8.8 billion (or 8.8 x

10^{10}).[3] To simplify this calculation, we will round up to 10^{11}. The chance of one actual person in history fulfilling all eight prophecies is 10^{28} divided by 10^{11}, which equals 10^{17} or 1:1,000,000,000,000,000,000 – still an astronomically huge number.

In order to appreciate just how huge of a number 10^{17} is, we must come up with an imaginative way to visualize it. Here's one way. If we took the entire state of Texas and filled it completely with 10^{17} silver dollars, the depth of silver dollars on the ground would equal two feet anywhere you walk.[4] If you then mark one of the silver dollars at random and bury it anywhere in that two-foot "ocean" of silver dollars, the chances of a blindfolded person being dropped anywhere in the entire state and successfully picking up that same silver dollar would be one chance in 10^{17}.

I hope you'd agree that it would be completely irrational to imagine this could happen by chance. This is the same likelihood that one man fulfilled all eight of the prophecies we examined.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROBABILITY OF ONE MAN FULFILLING SIXTEEN PROPHECIES

Now let's say we want to expand our exercise to include 16 of the available three hundred prophecies instead of just eight. To simplify our analysis, let's assume that the likelihoods of the eight we are adding are essentially the same as the first eight. If you apply the same arithmetic, the chance of one man fulfilling all sixteen prophecies comes to $1:10^{45}$!

$$(10^{28} \text{ x } 10^{28}/10^{11} = 10^{45})$$

Well how big of a number is this? Let's come up with another imaginary model to help us appreciate the largeness of the number 10^{45}.

Again, we will use silver dollars as an example, but this time Texas isn't big enough to accommodate 10^{45} – in fact, the entire United States isn't big enough. Instead, to represent 10^{45} silver dollars, we'll need to make a ball of silver dollars with a diameter sixty times the distance from Earth to the sun![1]

We now need to mark one of the silver dollars at random, and then mix them up so as to give ever silver dollar an equal chance of being selected. We will then commission a blindfolded astronaut, launch

him into this ball of silver dollars, and have him select one at random. The chance that he successfully picks the marked silver dollar is the same chance that the Messiah had in fulfilling each of the sixteen prophecies.

But again, we have only utilized sixteen of over three hundred prophecies we can pick from. Let's try this exercise once more. This time, we will explore three times as many, a total of forty-eight prophecies.

CHAPTER 5

THE PROBABILITY OF ONE MAN FULFILLING FORTY-EIGHT PROPHECIES

We will now increase our calculation to include forty-eight Messianic prophecies. As before, we will assume that none of these additional prophecies are any more specific than the original eight. In other words, we will assume each of the likelihoods are the same as the first eight. If you apply the same arithmetic, the chance of one man fulfilling all forty-eight prophecies comes to $1:10^{157}$!

$$(10^{28} \text{ x } 10^{28} \text{ x } 10^{28} \text{ x } 10^{28} \text{ x } 10^{28} \text{ x } 10^{28}/10^{11} = 10^{157})$$

Our problem now simply becomes comprehending the magnitude of the numbers we're working with. 10^{157} is such a large number that silver dollars won't work for this example. In fact, it's difficult to even imagine a model we can relate to that will express an example of such a large number. To do it, we would need to imagine a ball composed of the smallest things we can imagine: atoms. This ball will be composed of every single atom in the entire universe. And it may surprise you to know that the widely accepted guess by scientists about the total number of atoms in the universe is "only" 10^{66}.[1] That should give you a clue as to the largeness of these numbers. And still, we're still nowhere near our necessary amount of 10^{157}.

In order then to accommodate this, we will need to make a ball of all the atoms in the universe **for each atom in the universe.** When we do the arithmetic, we come up with 10^{132}.

$$(10^{66} \times 10^{66} = 10^{132})$$

And even with this, we're still a long way from the necessary figure of 10^{157}! **In order to reach it, we'll need to perform this same exercise once for every second since the secular estimation of when the universe began.** Assuming that to be about ten billion years for the purposes of this example, that's equivalent to about 10^{17} seconds. When we do the arithmetic, we're still only to 10^{149}. (10^{132} x $10^{17} = 10^{149}$)

$$(10^{132} \times 10^{17} = 10^{149})$$

As you can see, we're still short of our goal by 10^8. In other words, we would still have to perform this exercise 100 million times more in order to reach our desired sample size of 10^{157}! Once we do that, we need to somehow "mark" one of these atoms and then select one at random. As you can see, this is absolutely beyond human imagining. We've literally run out of quantitative ways to even conceptually express this degree of magnitude. And remember, we've only dealt with forty-eight of the available hundreds of specific Messianic prophecies!

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Interestingly, there was a French mathematician named Émile Borel who developed a law about probabilities, that said "events with a sufficiently small probability never occur". He defined this as one chance in 10^{50}.[1] In other words, when you approach numbers of this magnitude, you're no longer dealing with possibilities that are at all realistic; and by definition they are mathematically absurd. They can't and don't happen. Now obviously, 10^{157} is literally exponentially larger than 10^{50} by a degree our minds can barely even comprehend. 10^{157} is so far beyond absurd that we basically have no way of even expressing it.

So what's the point of all of this? As we discussed, we have around three hundred authentic Old Testament prophecies that are proven to have been written before the time of Christ. We then find that in the New Testament, there are multiple eyewitness accounts thoroughly documenting Christ's literal fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies. But here's the point, which we will summarize in two separate insights:

1. To attribute the fulfillment of all the specific Messianic

prophecies by Jesus Christ to the coincidence or "chance" alone is mathematically absurd by definition.

2. You can demonstrate mathematically that you can be more certain that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel than you are of basically any other fact in the history of the universe. And you have quantitative data to prove it.

So, as we conclude, we need to recognize that the fact that Jesus Christ is the Messianic fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy can be established with overwhelming certainty. This recognition acts as definitive proof of the extraterrestrial source of the Bible – meaning a source beyond our space-time – a proof so large that the universe itself is not able to hold the evidence, as we've seen! And to reject the supernatural origin, ministry, and destiny of Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel – and everything that He accomplished in His First Coming – is to reject a fact established, maybe more absolutely, than any other fact in the universe!

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Merriam-Webster, entry "Epistemology," *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistemology - Retrieved 11/11/18)
2. Peter W. Stoner, *Science Speaks*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1963.
3. Chuck Missler, *Cosmic Codes: Hidden Messages from the Edge of Eternity*, Coeur d'Alene, ID: Koinonia House, 1999, pp. 219-230.
4. The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, article "Septuagint," May 12, 2020, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (https://www.britannica.com/topic/Septuagint - Retrieved 8/9/18)
5. Missler, p. 220.
6. Ibid.
7. John Salvo, *Dead Sea Scrolls: Their History and Myths Revealed*, New York: Metro Books, 2013, pp. 59 and 82.
8. Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, updated and expanded version, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017, p. 208.
9. Ibid., p. 209.
10. Ibid.
11. Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004, Ch. 11.

Chapter 2

1. "How many prophecies did Jesus fulfill?" *GotQuestions.org*. (https://www.gotquestions.org/prophecies-of-Jesus.html - Retrieved 10/11/20)
2. Missler, pp. 220-221.
3. The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, article "Capital Punishment, Crucifixion," Sept. 8, 2022, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (https://www.britannica.com/topic/crucifixion-capital-punishment - Retrieved 5/10/21)
4. Missler, p. 223.
5. John W. Lawrence, *The Six Trials of Jesus*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1977.

Chapter 3

1. Missler, pp. 225-226.
2. Ibid., p. 226.
3. Ibid., p. 226.
4. Ibid., p. 227.

Chapter 4

1. Ibid., p. 228.

Chapter 5

1. Ibid.

Chapter 6

1. Rupert Taylor, "Borel's Law of Probability," Mar. 11, 2024, *Owlcation.com*. (https://owlcation.com/stem/Borels-Law-of-Probability - Retrieved 10/15/24)

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