

# DIGGING DEEPER

## How Can I Know the Bible is God's Word?

INTRODUCTION: Every major religion has its own "holy book."

1. Judaism - Tanach and Talmud
2. Sikh - Adi Granth
3. Hinduism - Vedas and Bhagavad-Gita
4. Buddhism - Pali Canon and Sutras
5. Islam - Qur'an
6. Christianity - Bible

How can we know that ours, the Bible, is the Word of God?

### I. WHAT IS THE PROPER TEST FOR VALIDITY?

#### A. The test is not sincerity.

1. Sincerity is a good quality.
2. But anyone can be sincerely wrong. An engineer may be as sincere as a person can get and declare, "That bridge I designed will never collapse due to the weight of vehicles upon it." But if he miscalculated the amount of steel to be used in the structure or the density of the concrete, the bridge will fail. The bridge does not stand or fall based upon his sincerity but upon his accuracy.
3. For instance people may be genuinely sincere in proclaiming or following a certain path as one which leads to heaven, but their sincerity is not what determines where the path ultimately leads. What determines their destination is the path itself. Does it actually lead to heaven?

#### B. The test is not devotion.

1. Devotion also is a noble quality.
2. Devotion may well be a factor in whether a person following a given path ends up at the path's destination. If a person is following a path that does indeed lead to a desired destination, but he does not stay the course, he will not get where he wants to go. Therefore, devotion is important; but devotion still does not affect the destination to which the path leads. Just because people walk a path with great devotion does not say anything about the path's destination. It just means that those devoted people will get to the place the path leads, good or bad.

3. People can be very devoted to their “path to heaven,” but their devotion does not guarantee the path goes to heaven.

**C. The test is not the opinion of one person or a group of people.**

1. No person innately knows how to get to heaven. None of us are born with that knowledge.
2. Any person who proposes a path cannot know experientially if they are right or wrong until they die. Unless they return from the dead to give a report, the validity of their assertion cannot be confirmed. Therefore, opinion is of little value.

**D. The test is not tradition.**

1. Tradition is the accumulation of the practices and opinions of people across the years.
2. Tradition by itself is neither good nor bad. If what is being believed or practiced traditionally was good originally, the tradition is good. If what was believed or practiced was bad, the tradition or practice continues to be bad.
3. If a belief about “the path to heaven” was initially wrong, it will still be wrong, even if it is now passed down by tradition.

So, how do we tell? How can we evaluate the validity of these key religious books?

**E. Of all the holy books of all the religions of the world, only the Bible offers a test whereby its reliability can be verified.**

## II. THAT TEST IS THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.

Two passages declaring this test were in our reading this last week.

Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is no other*; I *am* God, and *there is none like Me*, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.’

Isaiah 48:3–5 <sup>3</sup> “I have declared the former things from the beginning; They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did *them*, and they came to pass. <sup>4</sup> Because I knew that you *were* obstinate, And your neck *was* an iron sinew, And your brow bronze, <sup>5</sup> Even from the beginning I have declared *it* to you; Before it came to pass I proclaimed *it* to you, Lest you should say, ‘My idol has done them, And my carved image and my molded image Have commanded them.’

Another passage offering this test was given through Moses.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’— when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has

not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

- A. **Only the Tanach of Judaism (which is our Old Testament) and The Bible (which is the Old and the New Testament) dares to offer prophecies of future events.**
- B. **In fact, the Bible offers hundreds of prophecies of the future at the time they were written by the Biblical author.**
- C. **While some of these prophecies are still in the future, many of the prophecies have been fulfilled in exact detail, and their fulfillment is a matter of historical record.**
- D. **One such prophecy is the declaration of Ezekiel concerning the ancient city of Tyre.**

Ezekiel 26:1–14

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first *day* of the month, that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, ‘Aha! She is broken who was the gateway of the peoples; now she is turned over to me; I shall be filled; she is laid waste.’

<sup>3</sup> “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I *am* against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. <sup>4</sup> And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. <sup>5</sup> It shall be a *place for spreading nets* in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,’ says the Lord GOD; ‘it shall become plunder for the nations. <sup>6</sup> Also her daughter *villages* which *are* in the fields shall be slain by the sword. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.’

<sup>7</sup> “For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. <sup>8</sup> He will slay with the sword your daughter *villages* in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. <sup>9</sup> He will direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. <sup>10</sup> Because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, the wagons, and the chariots, when he enters your gates, as men enter a city that has been breached. <sup>11</sup> With the hooves of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. <sup>12</sup> They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water. <sup>13</sup> I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. <sup>14</sup> I will make you like the top of a rock; you

shall be a *place for* spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,' says the Lord GOD.

<sup>15</sup> “Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: ‘Will the coastlands not shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded cry, when slaughter is made in the midst of you?

<sup>16</sup> Then all the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and take off their embroidered garments; they will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble every moment, and be astonished at you. <sup>17</sup> And they will take up a lamentation for you, and say to you:

“How you have perished, O one inhabited by seafaring men, O renowned city, Who was strong at sea,

She and her inhabitants, Who caused their terror *to be* on all her inhabitants!

<sup>18</sup> Now the coastlands tremble on the day of your fall; Yes, the coastlands by the sea are troubled at your departure.” ’

**This prophecy makes seven specific predictions:**

<p><b>Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the mainland city of Tyre. (26:8)</b></p>	<p><b>In 585 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar began a 13 year siege of the city. But when he broke through the gates in 573, he found the city almost abandoned. Most of the people had moved by ship to an island about a half mile off the coast and fortified that city. In effect it became the New Tyre. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the old city, but New Tyre on the island continued for several hundred years.</b></p>
<p><b>Many nations would come against Tyre like waves. (26:3)</b></p>	<p><b>More than two centuries later, Alexander the Great attacked the new and now only city of Tyre as he marched in conquest toward Egypt. Because he had no fleet, Alexander had his troops scoop up the debris from the destruction of the original city and dump it in the water, thus building a 200 ft. wide mole or causeway from the shore to the walls of the city. He then built siege towers on the causeway, but the Tyrians fought back with their navy. They set fire to the towers and landed raiding parties to drive away the workers.</b></p> <p><b>Finally, Alexander conscripted ships from cities already conquered until he could control the seas around the island city. Then in a matter of months, his forces broke through the walls and killed 8,000 inhabitants and sold another 30,000 into slavery.</b></p> <p><b>Alexander moved on, and the island city began to</b></p>

	<b>rebuild and recover, although never attaining the same strength as before. It remained the object of attack for every force moving along the coast. Waves of armies continued their assaults for 1600 years.</b>
<b>Other cities would be so filled with fear at the destruction of Tyre that they would not resist her conqueror. (26:14-18)</b>	<b>After Alexander completed his butchery and humiliation of Tyre's citizens, other cities along the coastlands opened their gates to him and surrendered, seeking to avoid a similar fate.</b>
<b>Tyre would be made flat and bare like a rock. (26:4)</b>	<b>The secular historian Philip Myers wrote of Tyre, "The larger part of the site of the once great city is now bare as the top of a rock."</b>
<b>Fishermen will spread their nets on the site. (26:5)</b>	<b>Nina Jidejian writes, "There is a city of Tyre today, but it is not the original city, but is built down the coast from the original site....The port has become a haven today for fishing boats and a place for spreading nets."</b>
<b>The debris of the city will be thrown into the water. (26:12)</b>	<b>Fulfilled by Alexander.</b>
<b>The city will never be rebuilt. (26.14)</b>	<b>The original city of Tyre on the mainland has never been rebuilt.</b>

### **III. THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECIES SUCH AS THE DESTRUCTION OF TYRE DO NOT HAPPEN MERELY BY CHANCE.**

**A. A college professor of mathematics name Phillip Stoner used his classes in probability to calculate the probability of certain prophecies fulfilled in the Scriptures. His work was certified as accurate by the American Scientific Affiliation and his findings published in a book named *Science Speaks*.**

#### **A Summary Classroom Calculations Of The Probability**

1. Ezekiel had one chance in how many of knowing, or being able to predict, that Nebuchadnezzar would take the city of Tyre? Since Nebuchadnezzar was conquering many cities, and since Tyre was besieged four years after the prophecy was made, it must have been a reasonable thing to predict.

<b>Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the mainland city of Tyre. (26:8)</b>
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<b>1/3</b>
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Nebuchadnezzar might have tried to take Tyre and failed, or he might have succeeded, or he might have never tried. An estimate of one in three was chosen.

2. What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that Nebuchadnezzar would, in his conquering of Tyre, not completely fulfill the prophecy of destruction, but other nations would later come in and complete the fulfillment?

<b>Many nations would come against Tyre like waves. (26:3)</b>	<b>1/5</b>
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The indications in the time of Ezekiel certainly were that when Nebuchadnezzar took a city he was quite capable of completing the destruction himself, so the estimate was placed at one in five.

3. What chance was there of other cities opening their gates to the conqueror of Tyre without resistance?

<b>Other cities would be so filled with fear at the destruction of Tyre that they would not resist her conqueror. (26:14-18)</b>	<b>1/5</b>
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The estimate was given as one in five.

4. What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that Tyre would be made flat like the top of a rock, after it was conquered?

<b>Tyre would be made flat and bare like a rock. (26:4)</b>	<b>1/500</b>
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How many cities have been made flat like the top of a rock after being conquered? The sites of nearly all ancient cities are marked by mounds of accumulated debris. I do not know of any other city where the ruins have been so completely cleared away, so the estimate of one in five hundred was chosen.

5. What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that after the city had been completely cleared away it would become a popular place for fishermen?

<b>Fishermen will spread their nets on the site. (26:5)</b>	<b>1/10</b>
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There is really no basis on which to make an estimate. However, taking this site merely as a little stretch of coast, and considering all sections of coasts that size, an estimate of one in ten was chosen.

6. What chance did Ezekiel have of knowing that when Tyre was made flat its building material, and even its dust, was to be laid in the sea?

<b>The debris of the city will be thrown into the water. (26:12)</b>	<b>1/10</b>
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Since the site was to be cleared, the debris had to be disposed of, but it would have been far more likely to have used this material in constructing the buildings of nearby cities, so the estimate was given as one in ten.

7. What was the chance that Tyre, after being made flat, should never be rebuilt?

<b>The city will never be rebuilt. (26.14)</b>	<b>1/20</b>
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Nearly all old cities which had great natural advantages were at some time rebuilt. Tyre is in an excellent location and has an abundant supply of fresh water, so valuable in this land. The estimate chosen for this part of the prophecy was one in twenty.

**B. Skeptics will say, “None of the fulfillments of any of these seven parts of the prophecy is impossible.”**

They only range in probability from 1/3 to 1/500!

That is correct.

But not just one of these seven parts of the prophecy came true. They all came true. So, what is the probability of all seven parts of the prophecy coming true by chance?

**To determine the probability of all of the parts coming true, we must multiply the probabilities of each part with the other parts.**

$$1/3 \times 1/5 \times 1/5 \times 1/500 \times 1/10 \times 1/10 \times 1/20 = 1/75,000,000$$

**One chance out of 75 million!**

But even that is not impossible! No it is not, but it is the equivalent to putting an X on the bottom of the shoe of one of the 75 million residents of the ten states of the Southeast United States and telling you that you could pick the right person. Your chance of being right is the same as Ezekiel's chance of being right just by chance alone.

**C. Professor Stoner and his class took 16 of the Bible's prophecies that have been fulfilled and calculated the probability that all 16 could have just happened by chance without any need for divine involvement. Their calculation was  $1/10^{45}$ .**

**That means one chance out of a 1 with 45 zeros behind it!**

- 1. If we enlisted every person on earth as a penny stacker, and if each person could stack pennies from here to Pluto and back again every second (that's 7.4 billion miles round trip), it would still take us 800 billion years to stack  $10^{45}$  pennies.**
2. Now suppose you marked just 1 of those pennies. The chance a blind man would have of picking the right one is the same chance as 16 of those prophecies given in the Bible could have come true just by chance.

**3. The fact that they did come true, they and many hundreds of other specific prophecies, is overwhelming evidence that God, Who knows the end from the beginning caused the Bible to be written as it is, making it and it alone, the very Word of God.**

**D. No other so called “holy book” or any book can substantiate such a claim!**