



Rock Point Church
Bill Bush | 8.10.25

BIG IDEA | Trust what's true, not what's trending.

Isaiah 40:8

⁸ "The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever."

Matthew 24:35

³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

We can trust the ...

- Reliability of the Manuscript

We can trust the ...

- Reliability of the Manuscript
- Historical Accuracy

We can trust the ...

- Reliability of the Manuscript
- Historical Accuracy
- Prophetic Fulfillment

Isaiah 46:9-10

⁹ Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰ Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.

We can trust the ...

- Reliability of the Manuscript
- Historical Accuracy
- Prophetic Fulfillment
- Archaeological Confirmation

Psalms 85:11

¹¹ Truth springs up from the earth, and righteousness smiles down from heaven.

Luke 19:40

⁴⁰ He replied, “If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!”

We can trust the ...

- **Reliability of the Manuscript**
- **Historical Accuracy**
- **Prophetic Fulfillment**
- **Archaeological Confirmation**
- **Transformational Power**

Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

1 Peter 1:23-25

²³ For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. ²⁴ As the Scriptures say, “People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades. ²⁵ But the word of the Lord remains

forever.” And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.

1. Trust the Reliability of the Manuscript

- Over 5,800 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin manuscripts, and over 9,000 manuscripts in other languages—totaling around 25,000 manuscript witnesses. Homer’s Iliad has 643 manuscripts; Plato’s writings have 7; Aristotle’s have 49.
- The New Testament outnumbers and outdates every other ancient work in documentary evidence, making corruption over time far less likely.

“In the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests, the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachably alone among ancient writings.” – F.F. Bruce.

Dead Sea Scrolls

- Discovered by Bedouin shepherds in caves near Qumran, in 1947.
- Over 900 scrolls, including a complete Isaiah scroll from around 125 BC. When compared to the next oldest Isaiah manuscript (AD 900), the text matched with over 95% exactness—the differences were mostly spelling variations.
- Confirms Old Testament text preservation for over 1,000 years.
- This demonstrates extraordinary accuracy in copying Scripture across centuries.

Rylands Papyrus

- Discovered in 1930 in Egypt by Bernard Grenfell. A fragment of John 18, dated to c. AD 125, within 25–30 years of the Gospel's composition.
- This short time gap between writing and surviving copy is unheard of in the ancient world and rules out long periods for legend to develop.

“This scrap of papyrus demolished the theory that John’s Gospel was written in the late second century.” – Dr. Bruce Metzger.

Codex Sinaiticus

- Discovered in the Mid-1800s by Constantin von Tischendorf at St. Catherine’s Monastery, Mount Sinai. Shows the New Testament text from only 250–300 years after the originals, with remarkable consistency.

Codex Vaticanus

- 4th-century Greek manuscript containing nearly the entire Bible.
- Known to be housed in the Vatican Library since at least the 15th century. Along with Codex Sinaiticus, it confirms the stability of the New Testament text well before medieval times.

Chester Beatty Papyri

- 2nd–3rd-century papyri containing large portions of the Gospels, Acts, Paul’s letters, and Revelation.
- Discovered in 1930s in Egypt. Pushes back large sections of Scripture to within about 100–150 years of the originals.

“These papyri demonstrate that the New Testament was recognized and circulated widely very early.” – Dr. Philip Comfort.

Bodmer Papyri

- Discovered in the 1950’s in Egypt.
- Includes most of John and Luke from around AD 175–225. Confirms the gospel content from very early on, countering the claims of late invention.

Patristic Quotations

- Early church fathers (e.g., Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp) quoted the New Testament extensively—over 1 million quotations.
- Even without manuscripts, the New Testament could be almost entirely reconstructed from these quotations.

Summary of Manuscript Reliability Evidence:

- Earliest New Testament fragment: within 25–30 years of writing.
- Complete New Testament manuscripts: within 250 years.

- Thousands of manuscripts in multiple languages.
- Confirmation from both manuscript tradition and quotations.
- The Bible passes the most rigorous tests historians use to evaluate ancient documents. No other text comes close.

2. Trust the Historical Accuracy

Pontius Pilate Inscription

- Discovered in 1961 by archaeologist Antonio Frova at Caesarea Maritima, Israel.
- A limestone block with a Latin inscription reading, “Pontius Pilatus, Prefect of Judea.”
- Luke 3:1; Matthew 27:2; John 19:1–16.
- Located in The Israel Museum in Jerusalem
- Confirms the existence, name, and official title of the man who sentenced Jesus to crucifixion, erasing claims that Pilate was a Christian invention.

Jericho’s Collapsed Walls

- Discovered in 1930s by British archaeologist John Garstang at Tell es-Sultan (ancient Jericho)
- Matches Joshua 6:20 – “...the wall fell down flat...”
- Garstang found that Jericho’s walls had collapsed outward, not inward—extremely rare in ancient sieges, where walls are typically breached inward by invading armies.

- The collapse left a ramp-like pile of debris, allowing attackers to go “straight up into the city” (Joshua 6:20), just as the text describes.
- Burned layers and ash confirmed a massive fire, aligning with Joshua 6:24, which says the city was burned with fire.
- Large storage jars filled with charred grain were discovered, indicating the city fell quickly, before a siege could deplete supplies—exactly as described in Scripture when Israel attacked shortly after harvest.
- This dig confirmed specific, unusual details in the biblical account—outward wall collapse, sudden destruction, and fire—all pointing to the authenticity of the Joshua 6 narrative. The grain also suggests the city wasn’t looted, consistent with God's command in Joshua 6:17–19.

“...the walls fell down flat, in such a way that attackers could clamber over them and into the city. This is a unique and remarkable find.”

—John Garstang, British archaeologist

Pool of Bethesda

- Discovered in the late 1800s by Conrad Schick in the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem.
- Large pool with five porticoes exactly matching John 5:2’s description.
- John 5:1–15.

- Accessible to visit at St. Anne's Church site, Jerusalem.
- Demonstrates that John's Gospel includes accurate local topography, countering claims it was written as late myth far removed from the events.

"Once thought to be an invention, the Pool of Bethesda was confirmed through archaeology to match John's description in remarkable detail." – Dr. James Charlesworth.

Belshazzar's Co-Regency

- Discovered in 1854, by J.G. Taylor at Ur.
- Records Belshazzar as co-regent with his father Nabonidus.
- Daniel Chapter 5
- Located at The British Museum in London.
- Confirms Daniel's accuracy in naming Belshazzar as king, despite historical skepticism.

"This discovery resolved what was once considered a biblical error." – Dr. John Walton.

Gallio Inscription

- Discovered in 1905 at Delphi, Greece.
- Stone inscription confirming Gallio as proconsul of Achaia in AD 51.
- Acts 18:12–17.
- Now located in the Delphi Archaeological Museum.
- Provides an external anchor for New Testament chronology.

“This inscription is a fixed point for dating Paul’s ministry.” – Dr. F.F. Bruce.

Sergius Paulus

- Inscriptions at Soloi, Cyprus, and Pisidian Antioch.
- Confirms the existence of Sergius Paulus as a Roman proconsul during the correct time frame.
- Acts 13:6–12
- Supports Luke’s accuracy as a historian.

“Luke’s precision in naming titles and officials continues to be confirmed.” – Sir William Ramsay.

Lysanias the Tetrarch

- Inscriptions in Abila near Damascus.
- Confirms a Lysanias ruled Abilene during Tiberius’ reign.
- Luke 3:1
- Refutes claims of chronological mistakes in Luke’s Gospel.

“Once dismissed as an error, this is now a striking example of Luke’s historical reliability.” – Dr. Colin Hemer.

Hezekiah’s Tunnel

- Rediscovered in 1838 by Edward Robinson.

- 1,750-foot tunnel bringing water from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam, matching 2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:30.
- Can still be walked today in Jerusalem.
- Confirms biblical engineering feats and Jerusalem's defensive preparations exactly as recorded.

“The engineering of Hezekiah’s tunnel is a marvel, precisely as the Bible describes.” – Dr. Ronny Reich.

In summary, there are over 100 named people, places, and events verified by non-biblical sources.

“The Bible is supported by an overwhelming amount of historical and archaeological evidence.” – Dr. Nelson Glueck.

3. Trust the Prophetic Fulfillment

- Destruction of Tyre – Ezekiel 26
- Date of Prophecy: ~586 BC.
- Prophecy: Tyre would be destroyed, its walls broken down, and its debris scraped into the sea.
- Fulfillment: In 332 BC, Alexander the Great laid siege to Tyre. He used the rubble from the old mainland city to build a causeway to the island fortress—literally scraping it into the sea. Tyre never regained its former glory.
- Remains of Alexander’s causeway are still visible; accounts preserved in writings of Arrian and Quintus Curtius Rufus.

- The detail of Tyre's rubble being thrown into the sea was too specific to be a coincidence. This is precise, fulfilled history hundreds of years after it was predicted.

Fall of Babylon – Isaiah 13:19–22; Jeremiah 51:37

- Date of Prophecy: ~700 BC (Isaiah); ~586 BC (Jeremiah).
- Prophecy: Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, would be permanently desolate, never to be inhabited.
- Fulfillment: Babylon fell to the Persians in 539 BC under Cyrus. Though inhabited briefly afterward, it eventually became desolate. Today only ruins remain in Iraq, despite repeated attempts to rebuild, including by Saddam Hussein.
- Ruins include Ishtar Gate and Processional Way; absence of modern city matches prophecy.
- Most ancient cities eventually get rebuilt, but Babylon's permanent ruin is unique in history, exactly as the Bible foretold.

Rebirth of Israel in a Day – Isaiah 66:8; Ezekiel 37

- Date of Prophecy: ~700 BC (Isaiah); ~586 BC (Ezekiel).
- Prophecy: A nation would be born in a single day; Israel's dry bones would come to life.
- Fulfillment: On May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence and was immediately recognized as a state, fulfilling the prophecy literally. Jewish people from over 100 nations returned to their ancestral land.

- United Nations archives confirm vote for Israeli statehood; mass migration records match Ezekiel's imagery of regathering.
- No other nation in history has been destroyed, scattered for nearly 2,000 years, retained its identity, and then been reestablished in its ancestral homeland.

Daniel's Prophecy of World Empires – Daniel 2 & 7

- Date of Prophecy: ~530 BC.
- Prophecy: Four successive empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome—followed by God's eternal kingdom.
- Fulfillment: History unfolded exactly as predicted:
- Babylon: 605–539 BC
- Medo-Persia: 539–331 BC
- Greece: 331–146 BC (rapid rise under Alexander)
- Rome: 146 BC–AD 476 (Western Empire)
- Inscriptions and coins confirm transitions; Dead Sea Scrolls copy of Daniel proves the prophecy predated fulfillment.
- Only a God outside of time could predict world history so accurately centuries in advance.

“Daniel's prophecies are so precise that critics date them later—but the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm they were written beforehand.” – Dr. Norman Geisler.

Destruction of Nineveh – Nahum 1–3; Zephaniah 2:13–15

- Date of Prophecy: ~650 BC.
- Prophecy: Nineveh, capital of Assyria, would be utterly destroyed and never rebuilt.
- Fulfillment: In 612 BC, a coalition of Babylonians and Medes conquered Nineveh. The city vanished from history until rediscovered in the mid-19th century.
- Excavations by Austen Henry Layard revealed massive city walls and palaces; the ruins matched ancient descriptions.
- Nineveh was the largest and most fortified city of its time—its complete and permanent destruction defied human probability.

“The utter desolation of Nineveh is one of the most dramatic examples of prophecy fulfilled to the letter.” – Sir Austen Henry Layard.

4. Trust the Archaeological Confirmation

Tel Dan Stele

- Discovered in 1993–1994 by Avraham Biran at Tel Dan in northern Israel.
- Aramaic inscription from the 9th century BC mentioning the “House of David” and “King of Israel.”
- Confirms King David’s historical existence (2 Samuel 7).
- Located in The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

- Refutes the once-popular claim among critical scholars that David was a mythological figure invented centuries later.

“The Tel Dan Stele is the first historical evidence of King David’s existence.” – Hershel Shanks.

Cyrus Cylinder

- Discovered in 1879 by Hormuzd Rassam in Babylon (modern Iraq).
- Clay cylinder inscribed in Akkadian, recording Cyrus’s decree allowing conquered peoples to return to their homelands and rebuild temples.
- Ezra 1:1–4; 2 Chronicles 36:22–23.
- Located in The British Museum, London.
- Confirms the historical policy of Cyrus described in Scripture, showing that the Bible’s account matches Persian royal records.

“The Cyrus Cylinder corroborates the biblical account almost word for word.” – British Museum.

Sennacherib’s Prism (Taylor Prism)

- Discovered in 1830 by Colonel Robert Taylor in Nineveh (modern Mosul, Iraq).
- Hexagonal clay prism describing Assyrian King Sennacherib’s 701 BC campaign against Judah. It matches the biblical account in 2 Kings 18–19—except Sennacherib conspicuously

omits claiming he captured Jerusalem, exactly as the Bible says.

- 2 Kings 18–19; Isaiah 36–37.
- Located at The British Museum in London.
- Confirms a major biblical event and even supports the miracle implied—Jerusalem’s deliverance.

“Sennacherib’s own record agrees with the Bible’s account of his failed siege of Jerusalem.” – Dr. Edwin Yamauchi.

Erastus Inscription

- Discovered in 1929 in Corinth, Greece.
- Pavement inscription reading, “Erastus, in return for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense.”
- Romans 16:23 – Paul greets “Erastus, the city’s director of public works.”
- Located in the Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth.
- Provides physical confirmation of a specific named associate of Paul in the exact city and civic role mentioned.

“A direct link between Paul’s letter and archaeological evidence.” – Dr. Ben Witherington III.

Lachish Letters

- Discovered in 1935–1938 by J.L. Starkey at Tell ed-Duweir, Israel.

- Ostraca (pottery fragments with writing) from around 586 BC, containing correspondence between military officers as Babylon advanced on Judah.
- Jeremiah 34:7.
- Located at The Israel Museum.
- They are first-hand eyewitness documents that confirm the tense political and military climate Jeremiah describes.

“They read like dispatches from the last days of Judah.” – Kathleen Kenyon.

Pilate Ring

- Excavated in 1969 at Herodium, analyzed and identified in 2018.
- Bronze ring inscribed with “Pilatus,” confirming the governorship of Pontius Pilate.
- Luke 3:1 and Matthew 27:2
- Located in the Israel Antiquities Authority collection.
- Adds to the multiple lines of archaeological confirmation for Pilate’s existence and role.

“Another piece of tangible evidence for the man who condemned Jesus.” – Haaretz newspaper.

Shishak’s Karnak Relief

- Located in the Temple of Amun, Karnak, Egypt and is still viewable there.

- Large wall relief depicting Pharaoh Shishak's campaign against Judah around 925 BC, listing conquered towns.
- 1 Kings 14:25–26; 2 Chronicles 12:1–12.
- Confirms an Egyptian military campaign into Israel exactly as recorded in Scripture.

“The Karnak relief is a valuable synchronism between Egyptian and biblical history.” – Dr. Kenneth Kitchen.

Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III

- Discovered in 1846 by Austen Henry Layard at Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), Iraq.
- Depicts King Jehu of Israel bowing before the Assyrian king—inscribed with Jehu's name.
- 2 Kings 9–10.
- Located at The British Museum in London.
- Provides direct visual evidence of a biblical king, verifying his existence and political relationship with Assyria.

“The only known depiction of an Israelite king from antiquity.” – British Museum.

The Bible as a Guide to Archeological Discovery

- Nelson Glueck, one of the greatest biblical archaeologists, located hundreds of sites in the Middle East by using the Bible as his map.

- Archaeology doesn't just confirm the Bible—it often depends on it for accuracy.

"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference." – Nelson Glueck.

***There are over 25,000 documented archaeological discoveries that confirm scripture. This level of historical grounding is unmatched by any other religious text.**

5. Trust the Transformational Power

Historically Anchored – Over 100 names, dates, and places verified outside the Bible.

Textually Preserved – 25,000+ manuscripts and early quotations confirm stability.

Prophetically Proven – Centuries-old predictions fulfilled in detail.

Archaeologically Confirmed – 25,000+ discoveries matching Scripture.

Personally Transformative – Millions of changed lives across time and culture.

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“The Bible is supported by an overwhelming amount of historical and archaeological evidence.” – Nelson Glueck

GROUPS QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you most in this week’s message, and why?
2. When you hear someone say, “The Bible is outdated” or “You can’t really trust it,” how do you typically respond? How do you wish you could respond?
3. Read Isaiah 40:8 and Matthew 24:35. What do these verses say about the endurance of God’s Word. Why do you think Jesus compared His words to things that “will never pass away”?
4. Historical evidence shows the Bible has far more ancient manuscripts than any other work from its time. How does knowing this affect your confidence in Scripture?
5. Read Luke 1:1–4 and 2 Peter 1:16. What do these passages reveal about how the writers approached telling the story of Jesus? Why might “eyewitness accounts” matter so much?

6. Read Isaiah 46:9–10. Why is fulfilled prophecy such a compelling reason to trust the Bible? Can you think of a prophecy that strengthens your own faith?
7. The sermon ended with the story of the Pitcairn Island transformation through God’s Word. What does this tell us about the Bible’s power to change people and communities—even when all other systems have failed?
8. Hebrews 4:12 describes the Bible as “alive and active.” In your own life, how have you experienced God’s Word not just as information, but as something that has transformed your heart and/or actions?