

Welcome

We're glad you're here!



The Antelope Valley

-Our Mission-

We'd love to hear from you!

Scan the QR codes around the room to submit Questions or Prayer Requests to the team

What We're Passionate About

God – The all-loving, all-just, perfect, almighty creator of the universe

Jesus – God's son who rescued humanity from its sin through his sinless life, death, and resurrection

The Bible – The inspired Word of God

Why..?

Because the problem of sin is real

We see and acknowledge that there is something “wrong” with the world and the human condition

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

Romans 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal

life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

The Bible accurately and authentically describes:

- This condition – sin
- Why it exists – human rebellion against God
- What it leads to – eternal separation from a just God

Gen 2:17, Gen 3.6, Rom 3.9-12, Rom 5:12-15, 1 John 3:4-6, James 1:14-15, Rom 3:23, Gal 5:19-21

Why..?

Because Jesus is real – GOOD NEWS

Despite the problem of sin and its effect on the world, God did not abandon us, but chose to save us through his Son Jesus Christ

“You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.” 1 John 3:5

Jesus was:

“He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.”

1 Peter 2:22

- A real Galilean Jew who walked this earth
- Completely God and completely man
- Lived a perfectly sinless life
- Crucified under Pontius Pilate (30 to 33 A.D.)

Why..?

Because Jesus loves us – GOOD NEWS

Jesus lived a sinless life, loved God perfectly, and willingly substituted himself for each of us (every sinful human that has ever or will ever live and put their faith Him)

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

Jesus, when He was crucified:

- Substituted His sinless life for our sinful life (great exchange)
- Experienced God’s wrath – so we won’t have to
- Fulfilled the requirements of God’s justice

Why..?

Because Jesus lives – GOOD NEWS

The Bible then records that 3 days after His death on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead which vindicated His claims as God and the Messiah

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, [26] and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

John 11:25–26

The resurrection of Jesus:

- Is miraculous – consistent with God’s miraculous nature
- Vindicates Jesus’ claims to be God
- Vindicates Jesus’ authority over death
- Fulfills prophecy, fulfills the Law, establishing Biblical credibility

Why..?

Because God is Good

Despite mankind's rebellion and sin towards an all power and righteous God. God is good and chose to love us and make a way for us to be in his presence through Jesus' sacrifice

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

God's goodness:

- Is evident in a general and specific sense
- Is evident in a believer's changed life
- Powerfully displayed through His Word

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

James 1:17

Why..?

Because God will renew His creation

While we find great comfort and joy in what Jesus has done, God isn't finished yet, He will renew His creation

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Revelation 21:4

“And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Revelation 21:5

Do you see why we are so excited?!

About God, Jesus, and the Bible

This amazing truth causes us to want to love and serve God better, and allow Him to work through us to reach others, obeying the great commandment and the great commission

“And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 22:37–40

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19–20

We want to tell others

And Spread the good news

The Bible instructs us in this way

“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. [6] Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

Colossians 4:5-6

“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,”

1 Peter 3:15

Why Apologetics?

Because we are called to lovingly engage
our culture

The Apostle Paul as an example:

[1] Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. [2] And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days **he reasoned with them from the Scriptures**, [3] explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “**This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.**” [4] **And some of them were persuaded** and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

Acts 17:1-4

Why Apologetics?

Because sometimes those we want to reach have questions

Apologetic (Ancient Greek: ἀπολογία, (apologia) "verbal defense, speech in defense" - formal defense usually in the case of a particular idea or philosophy

Speaking truth with grace

Let's look at some apologetic examples...

Reliability of Scripture

- What is the Bible?
- How is Holy scripture recognized as canon?
- Examining the council of Nicaea
- Comparing ancient sources with modern translations
- Tacitus vs Luke

What is the Bible?

- **Means “Books” (biblia [books])**
- **God’s Holy Word to mankind – written for us to reveal His Glory**
- **Composed of 66 (39 OT, 27 NT) books**
 - **Written over 1600 years, 40 authors, 3 different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, & Koiné Greek)**
- **Written by the Holy Spirit through human authors**
- **2 Timothy 3:16a, ‘all Scripture is God-breathed’ (theo [God] + pneustos [breathed/inspired])**
- **The OT - inscribed by the ‘finger of God’ (Exod 31:18), given by the ‘voice of God’ (Deut 13:18), delivered to Moses ‘face to face’ (Exod 33:11)**

Authority of the Bible

- **Stamped with God’s own authority**
 - **“Word of God” or “Word of the LORD” used over 300 times**
 - **Found throughout the OT and NT**

2 Timothy 3:16–17

Hebrews 4:12

Psalms 119:105

James 1:22

Psalms 119:9

Luke 11:28

Isaiah 40:8

Psalms 18:30

Matthew 7:24

Matthew 24:35

Philippians 2:14–16a

Psalms 119:130

Matthew 4:4

John 1:1

Psalms 33:4

John 7:38

1 Peter 2:2

Psalms 56:4

Proverbs 2:6

John 8:31–32

Psalms 119:114

Isaiah 55:11

James 1:21

John 15:7

Deuteronomy 8:3

John 1:14

Ezekiel 12:28

Matthew 13:22

Proverbs 4:5

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Proverbs 4:10

John 15:3

Matthew 5:18

John 1:3

John 7:16

Ephesians 6:17

Romans 15:4

Proverbs 30:5

Proverbs 4:20–21

Psalms 18:35–36

Hebrews 1:3

Colossians 3:16

2 Samuel 22:31

Psalms 119:11

Romans 10:11

Psalms 119:160

Psalms 130:5

1 Peter 1:23

Psalms 107:20

Psalms 19:7

Job 23:12

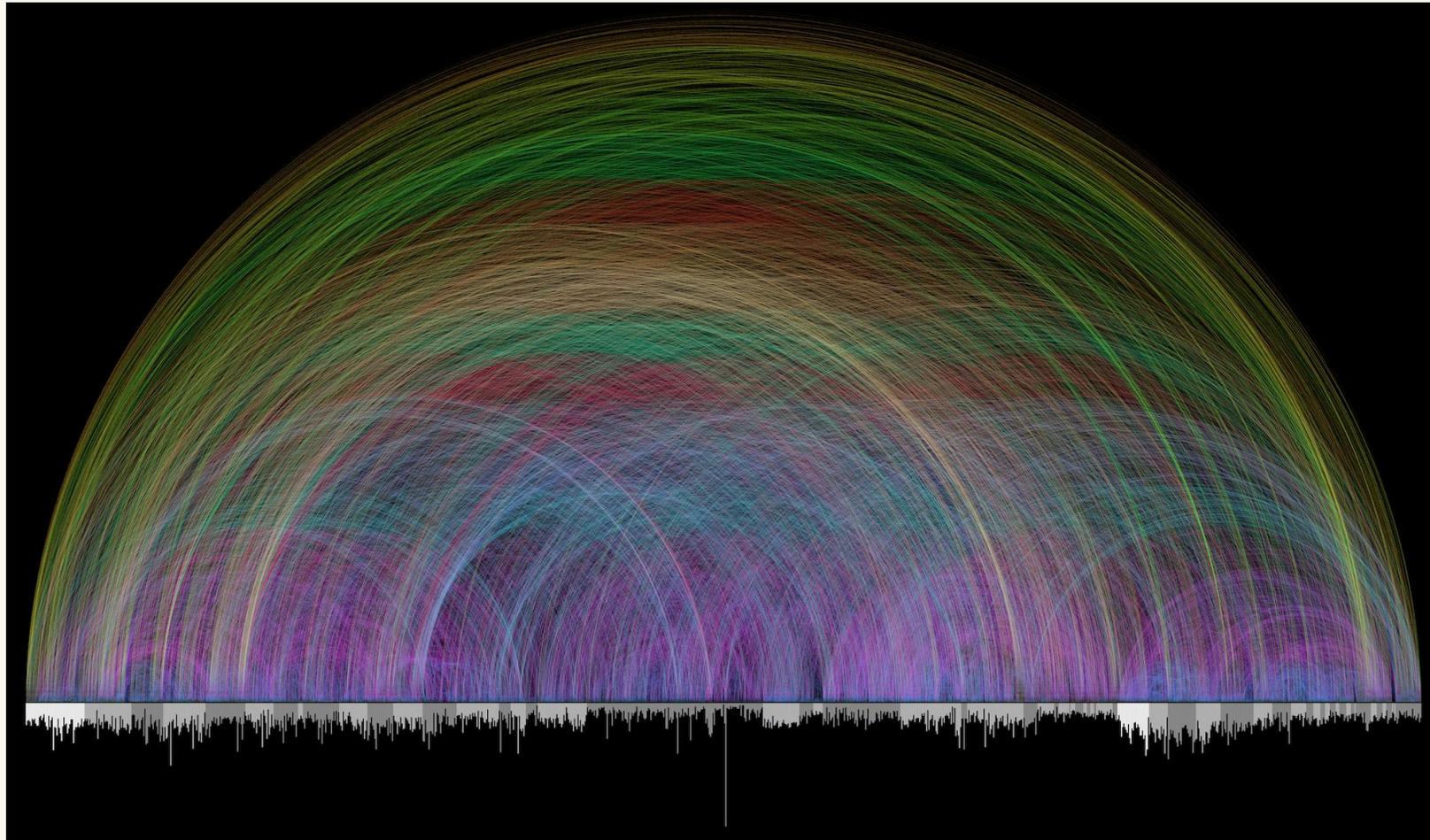
Deuteronomy 32:2

Exodus 34:28

Acts 2:41 ...

Cross References in the Bible

Over 63,000



Organization of the Bible

Old Testament

Pentateuch (Torah), Law, “Law of Moses” (5)

- 1.Genesis
- 2.Exodus
- 3.Leviticus
- 4.Numbers
- 5.Deuteronomy

Historical Books (12)

- 6.Joshua
- 7.Judges
- 8.Ruth
- 9.1 Samuel
- 10.2 Samuel
- 11.1 Kings
- 12.2 Kings
- 13.1 Chronicles
- 14.2 Chronicles
- 15.Ezra
- 16.Nehemiah
- 17.Esther

Wisdom & Poetry (5)

- 18.Job
- 19.Psalms
- 20.Proverbs
- 21.Ecclesiastes
- 22.Song of Solomon

Major Prophets (5)

- 23.Isaiah
- 24.Jeremiah
- 25.Lamentations
- 26.Ezekiel
- 27.Daniel

Minor Prophets (12)

- 28.Hosea
- 29.Joel
- 30.Amos
- 31.Obadiah
- 32.Jonah
- 33.Micah
- 34.Nahum
- 35.Habakkuk
- 36.Zephaniah
- 37.Haggai
- 38.Zechariah
- 39.Malachi

New Testament

Gospels (4)

- 1.Matthew
- 2.Mark
- 3.Luke
- 4.John

History (1)

- 5.Acts

Pauline Epistles (13)

- 6.Romans
- 7.1 Corinthians
- 8.2 Corinthians
- 9.Galatians
- 10.Ephesians
- 11.Philippians
- 12.Colossians
- 13.1 Thessalonians
- 14.2 Thessalonians
- 15.1 Timothy
- 16.2 Timothy
- 17.Titus
- 18.Philemon

General Epistles (8)

- 19.Hebrews* (perhaps Pauline)
- 20.James
- 21.1 Peter
- 22.2 Peter
- 23.1 John
- 24.2 John
- 25.3 John
- 26.Jude

Prophecy (1)

- 27.Revelation

Organization of the Bible (an Apologetic)

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- 3.Leviticus
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- 14.2 Chronicles
- 15.Ezra
- 16.Nehemiah
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- 28.Hosea
- 29.Joel
- 30.Amos
- 31.Obadiah
- 32.Jonah
- 33.Micah
- 34.Nahum
- 35.Habakkuk
- 36.Zephaniah
- 37.Haggai
- 38.Zechariah
- 39.Malachi

“And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments **depend all the Law and the Prophets.**”

Matthew 22:37–40

“And beginning **with Moses and all the Prophets**, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Luke 24:27

“**For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.** [47] But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

John 5:46–47

Gen 3:15, Deut 18:15-18, Exod 12, Gen 22, Num 21:9, Gen 49:10

How is OT Scripture Recognized?

Today the Hebrew Scriptures (OT) are segmented into three categories collectively labeled:

- ‘T’ for ‘Tanak’ (Torah) – Recognized earliest as authoritative (~5th century BC)
- ‘N’ for Nevi’im (Prophets) (Joshua-Kings, Isaiah-Malachi) – Recognized ~200-150 BC
- ‘K’ for Ketuvim (Writings) Job, Psalms, Proverbs – 1st century AD

[44] Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Luke 24:44

“The threefold shape of the Scriptures received as canonical clearly goes back early in Judaism, reaching its formal designation as Torah, Prophets, and Writings in ~150–180 AD (an early tannaitic saying cited in b. Batra 14b)”*

- Bava Batra 14b is a key section of Jewish Oral Law famous for containing rabbinic tradition on the order of the books of the Hebrew Bible

Earliest evidence for Jewish canonical awareness for 3 categories:

- **Biblical:** Zechariah (7:12) (~518 B.C.), Ezekiel (7:26) (~570 B.C.), and Jeremiah (18:18) (~580 B.C.)*
- **Historical (non-Biblical):** the ~180 BC prologue to the Wisdom of Ben Sira (or Sirach)*

How is OT Scripture Recognized?

The Torah was the earliest, uncontested core of Scripture – Recognized Earliest ~5th cen. BC

- Moses is viewed as God’s prophet-lawgiver
- Deuteronomy commands Israel to preserve and obey this written law (Deut 31:24–26)
- Ezra’s reforms (~450 BC) publicly read the Torah as Scripture (Nehemiah 8–9)

Scriptural authority of Prophets & Writings evidenced in both Biblical and non-Biblical historical sources

- (non-Biblical) Ben Sira (Sirach), written around 180 BC, refers to “the Law, the Prophets, and other writings”, showing that “Prophets” was already a known scriptural category
- (Both) The Dead Sea Scrolls (200 BC-70 AD) treat the Prophets as authoritative Scripture, distinguish between Scripture and other sectarian documents
- (non-Biblical) Josephus (~90 AD) indicates the 24 books of Hebrew Bible were recognized Scripture
- Philo of Alexandria (20 BC – 50 AD) Quotes the Law and Prophets as Scripture and treats them as authoritative
- (Biblical) In Acts 2 (30-33 AD) Peter cites both Joel (Joel 2:28-32) and Psalms (Psalm 16:8-11 and Psalm 110:1) when giving his sermon at Pentecost

How is NT Scripture Recognized?

Written directly by an Apostle or traced back and proven reliable

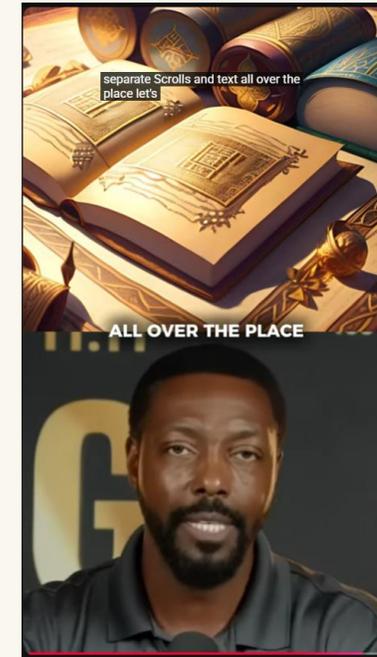
- **Direct connection to Jesus**
- **Evidence they were written by His followers in the first few decades following His death/resurrection – direct Apostolic connection**
- **Clearly recognized, fulfills Messianic OT prophecy - Covenantal (Davidic, Abrahamic)**
- **“While the Biblical New Testament Canon documents all predate the second century in autograph and origin, the apocryphal documents all date from the second century or later.”***
*apocryphal: not inspired scripture
- **Non-Biblical sources indicate** “The majority consensus on the date of canon is the end of the second century as the point when this shift takes place, specifically because of the writings of Irenaeus (130-202 CE)” – also many others...

The council of Nicaea

Many unsupported myths & misconceptions:



“and at this council the many sects of Christianity debated, and **voted on, well.. everything, from the acceptance and rejection of specific Gospels, to ...**”



[The Council of Nicaea #billycarson](#)
[#forbiddenknowledge #constantine #catholic #religion](#)

The council of Nicaea

What it was:

- **Convocation of Bishops at Nicaea, summoned by Constantine – 325 AD (late Spring / early Summer)**
- **Main topic was the debate about Arius's teachings concerning Jesus's relationship to the Father – to which the council issued 20 disciplinary canons**
 - **"canon" (from Greek *kanon*, meaning "rule" or "measuring rod")**
- **Nothing to do with “Selecting Biblical Canon” – Biblical Canon was already well established at that time** (sources: Eusebius eyewitness account, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret)
- **We can clearly see this in the Synodal Letter of Nicaea (325 AD) — the council's own letter summarizing decisions**

Historical Sources of Scripture

Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) – Qumran & other Judaean Desert sites

- 3rd century BC to 1st century AD
- Fragments of every book of the Hebrew (OT) Bible
- 1000 years older than medieval Masoretic copies
- Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts



Caves of Qumran



Nash Papyrus

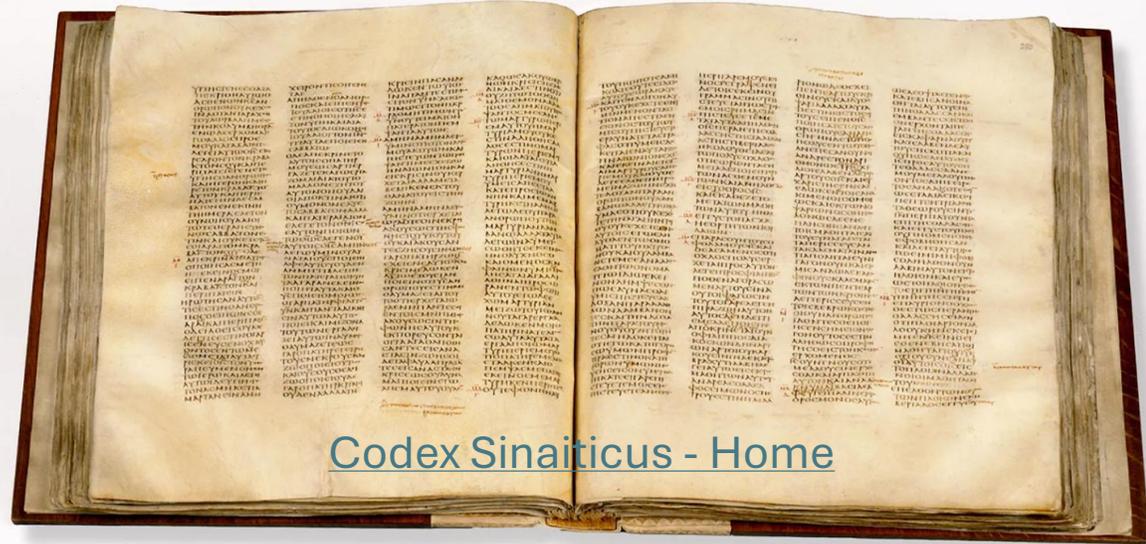
- 2nd–1st century BC
- 4 fragments
- contains portions of the Ten Commandments, Deut 6
- Hebrew text

Historical Sources of Scripture

Major Septuagint and NT – Greek Old Testament

- Mid 4th to 5th century AD
 - pre-Masoretic Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible (LXX)
 - One of the two earliest, best witnesses to both the Septuagint OT and the NT
 - Key for Septuagint and NT textual criticism:
1. Codex Vaticanus (B) – Nearly complete OT + most of NT
 2. Codex Sinaiticus (א) – portion of OT + entire NT + early Christian work
 3. Codex Alexandrinus (A)

Every major line of evidence — canonical lists, patristic testimony, codex structure, scribal correction behavior, and explicit scholarly statements (Metzger, Aland, Skeat, Birdsall, Parker) — agrees that the compilers of Codex Sinaiticus did *not* consider Barnabas or the Shepherd of Hermas to be inspired Scripture, but rather valuable ecclesiastical texts appended after the New Testament.



[Codex Sinaiticus - Home](#)

Tacitus vs Luke

Luke declares Pontius Pilate to be the governor (*prefect*) of Judea in Luke 3:1 (earlier than 2nd cen. AD)

Tacitus claims in Annals, Book 15, Ch. 44 (AD 116), that “Christus (Jesus) was executed by Pontius Pilate, the *procurator* of Judeah”

There was an important distinction between a Roman Procurator and a Prefect at the time (26 – 36 AD)

Until 1961 (Caesarea Maritima, Isreal) until the finding of the “Pontius Pilate Stone” everyone thought Luke got it wrong.. **BUT HE DIDN'T**



"To the Divine Augusti [this] Tiberieum... Pontius Pilate...
prefect of Judea... has dedicated [this]"

Q & A

Analytical Defense of the Resurrection

- **Richard Swinburne, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate* (Oxford University Press, 2003).**
- Uses Bayes' theorem and background arguments for God's existence to evaluate the evidence for Jesus' life, death, empty tomb, and post-mortem appearances.
- Swinburne concludes that, on his numbers, the probability that Jesus was God incarnate who rose from the dead is about **0.97**. [Internet Archive+3Real Seeker Ministries+3Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews+3](#)

Defense of the Resurrection

- Gary R. Habermas, “Resurrection Research from 1975 to the Present” (2005).**

Habermas surveyed over **1,400 scholarly publications** on Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (German, French, English). garyhabermas.com+1

- Gary R. Habermas, large ongoing project *On the Resurrection* (B&H Academic, 2021–).**

Volume 1 (*Evidences*) and Volume 2 (*Refutations*) synthesize and defend the historical case for the resurrection and interact with alternative theories. [Amazon](#)+1

- M. J. Alter, “Dataset Analysis of English Texts Written on the Topic of Jesus’ Resurrection: A Statistical Critique of Minimal Facts Apologetics” (ResearchGate preprint).**

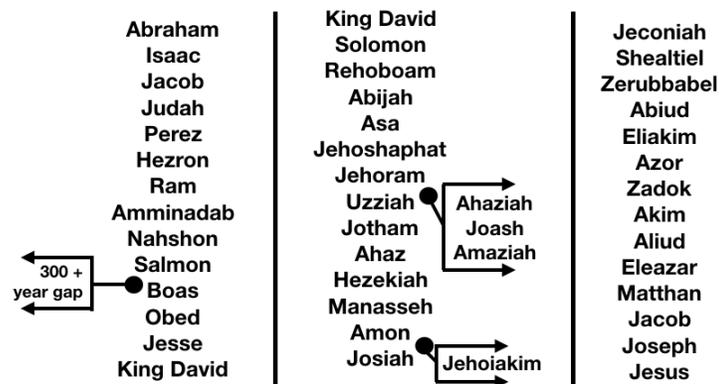
Even as a *critique* of Habermas’s method, Alter’s dataset shows **680 pro-resurrection books by 601 authors** in English alone. [ResearchGate](#)

- Habermas’s own estimate of scholarly trends.**

Based on thousands of sources, he reports that roughly a **3:1 ratio of scholars** in his dataset accept the empty tomb and that many accept other “minimal facts” underpinning a resurrection conclusion. [Southern Equip](#)+1

Genealogies of Matthew & Luke

Why are the genealogies in Matthew and Luke different? — Wesley Huff



The answer to this puzzling choice lies in the fact that if we count the names we get three perfect sets of fourteen, totaling forty-two generations from Abraham to Jesus. This is not an act of mistake or purposeful misleading, but rather an attempt to use numbers to present a symbolic message to the reader that Jesus is in fact the Messiah. How? Well in ancient Judaism there was a concept called Gematria, where letters held numerical value, and this was used to present certain ideas or concepts. David's name in Hebrew, for example looked like this:

$$\daleth (D) + \vphantom{\daleth} (V) + \daleth (D) = 4 + 6 + 4 = 14$$

2 Samuel 7:12-16

Isaiah 9:6-7

Isaiah 11:1 (Jesse, is David's father)

Jeremiah 23:5

On telescoping

•Comparative ANE and biblical studies (Wilson, Kitchen, Ray, Hess) demonstrate that **selective, schematic genealogies with missing generations (“telescoping”)** are a normal feature of such literature, often limited to conventional depths (10–14 generations) and shaped for theological or social aims. [JSTOR+4Google Books+4jewishstudies.rutgers.edu+4](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3750000)

On gematria

•Reference works on **gematria** show that assigning numerical values to letters and using them in scriptural interpretation is a **known Jewish practice from the Second Temple / early rabbinic period**, not a later medieval novelty. [Wikipedia+2Jewish Encyclopedia+2](https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1077-gematria)

•Major Matthew commentators (Davies & Allison, France), as well as more recent studies (Carlson; McIntyre), see Matthew's three groups of fourteen as very plausibly built on **David's name = 14**, a conscious use of gematria to stamp “DAVID” all over the genealogy. [The Bart Ehrman Blog+5JSTOR+5Scholars Crossing+5](https://www.bartehрман.com/2015/05/05/jstors-scholars-crossing/)