

# The Blessed Hope!

**“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” –(Titus 2:13)**

*Diamond & Nugget #23*

## **Mathematical Probabilities of Fulfilled Prophecies**

Some of the most common questions that come from those seeking answers are ones that each of us have asked in years past. Seeking truth and answers to eternal questions is one of the paths taken by many to come to saving faith. Here are just a few you should be able to defend your reason for belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Is the Christian faith built upon good solid evidence?
- Can the Bible withstand the onslaught of the most scholarly skeptics?
- Is the Bible a reliable historical record?
- Was the resurrection a hoax or one of the greatest historical events?
- Were the events surrounding the life of Jesus Christ accurately foretold centuries before his birth?
- Why was Jesus Christ profoundly different from any other man who ever lived?

There are answers — scholarly, intelligent, well-grounded answers. Answers backed by solid evidence. Answers that span over six thousand years of history. Answers which will satisfy anyone who is willing to honestly weigh the evidence.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15 sets a special responsibility on believers of being able to answer the question: ***“But in your hearts revere Christ as LORD. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”***

Math for me in high school was my least favorable subject. Because of both my work and education I subsequently acquired a great love for math. I was what they called a late “bloomer” in high school back in the day. I had four years of drafting/mechanical drawing in high school, my favorite class, and so it became a necessity in civil engineering, the original career I had pursued in after my four years in the U.S. Army. That interest in mathematics became one of my greatest interests as a relatively young pastor. One of my favorite books has always been Josh McDowell’s 1986 *‘Evidence That Demands a Verdict’* and its sequel *‘More Evidence That Demands a Verdict’* published in 1999. When I was a pastor in Kentucky, most Methodist churches had Sunday night services and so I often drew upon the works of Josh McDowell for my

teaching. I came to a point where I earned an M.A. in Apologetics. The subject of Apologetics is the formal term we would answer to the Apostle Peter's question. One of my professor's was the late Ravi Zacharias, who recently went on to glory from a rare form of lower back cancer.

Josh McDowell provides a pastor a wealth of information on Christian Apologetics and one of the greatest mathematical proofs of Jesus Christ and the Word of God as truth. Every believer can benefit from the topic and if you take serious Peter, you will learn the value and importance. I'm sharing here an example from Josh McDowell's books, the concept of compound probability.

### Compound Probability

Number of details in a prophecy	Chance of fulfillment
1 detail = 1 chance in.....	2
2 details = 1 chance in.....	4
3 details = 1 chance in.....	8
4 details = 1 chance in.....	16
5 details = 1 chance in.....	32
6 details = 1 chance in.....	64
7 details = 1 chance in.....	128
8 details = 1 chance in.....	256
9 details = 1 chance in.....	512
10 details = 1 chance in.....	1,024
11 details = 1 chance in.....	2,048
12 details = 1 chance in.....	4,096
13 details = 1 chance in.....	8,192
14 details = 1 chance in.....	16,348
15 details = 1 chance in.....	32,768
16 details = 1 chance in.....	65,536
17 details = 1 chance in.....	131,072
18 details = 1 chance in.....	262,144
19 details = 1 chance in.....	524,288
20 details = 1 chance in.....	1,048,576
21 details = 1 chance in.....	2,097,152
22 details = 1 chance in.....	4,194,304
23 details = 1 chance in.....	8,388,608
24 details = 1 chance in.....	16,777,216
25 details = 1 chance in.....	33,544,432
26 details = 1 chance in.....	67,108,864
27 details = 1 chance in.....	134,217,728
28 details = 1 chance in.....	268,435,456
29 details = 1 chance in.....	536,870,912
30 details = 1 chance in.....	1,013,741,824

31 details = 1 chance in.....	2,147,483,648
32 details = 1 chance in.....	4,294,967,296
33 details = 1 chance in.....	8,589,934,592
34 details = 1 chance in.....	17,179,869,184
35 details = 1 chance in.....	34,359,738,368
36 details = 1 chance in.....	68,719,476,736
37 details = 1 chance in.....	137,438,953,472
38 details = 1 chance in.....	274,877,906,944
39 details = 1 chance in.....	549,755,813,888
40 details = 1 chance in.....	1,099,511,627,776
41 details = 1 chance in.....	2,199,023,255,552
42 details = 1 chance in.....	4,398,046,511,104
43 details = 1 chance in.....	8,796,093,022,208
44 details = 1 chance in...	17,592,186,044,416
45 details = 1 chance in...	35,184,372,088,832
46 details = 1 chance in...	70,368,744,177,664
47 details = 1 chance in..	140,737,488,355,328
48 details = 1 chance in..	281,474,976,710,656
49 details = 1 chance in..	562,949,953,421,312
50 details = 1 chance in	1,125,899,906,842,624
51 details = 1 chance in	2,251,799,813,685,248
52 details = 1 chance in	4,503,599,627,370,496
53 details = 1 chance in	9,007,199,254,740,992
54 details = 1 chance in	18,014,398,509,481,984
55 details = 1 chance in	36,028,797,018,963,968

In this diamond & nugget we will demonstrate the mathematical probability that Jesus' fulfillment of just these 48 prophecies proves with absolute certainty that Yeshua, and only Jesus Christ, is the Messiah of Israel.

A common objection to using fulfilled prophecy to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah is that "you could find at least some of these prophecies fulfilled in Kennedy, King, Hitler, etc."

While it may be true that you could find one or two prophecies fulfilled in other men, you most certainly could not find more than a very few. In this article we will conclusively demonstrate that you absolutely, positively will not find any man except the Lord Jesus Christ who has fulfilled all these 48 major prophecies. (We won't bother to extrapolate the mathematical probability of any one man fulfilling all 324 prophecies; the number is beyond the capacity of the human mind to comprehend.) In fact, if you can find someone other than Jesus of Nazareth, either living or dead, who can fulfill only half of the predictions concerning Messiah that are given in *'Messiah in Both Testaments'* by Fred John Meldau, the Christian Victory Publishing Company of Denver is ready to give

you a \$1,000 reward. There are a lot of men in the universities who could use some extra cash, but the offer has been standing for nearly 40 years without a single taker!

H. Harold Hartzler, of the American Scientific Affiliation, Goshen College, in the foreword of Peter Stoner's book, *'Science Speaks'*, writes: *"The manuscript for Science Speaks has been carefully reviewed by a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation members and by the Executive Council of the same group and has been found, in general, to be dependable and accurate in regard to the scientific material presented. The mathematical analysis included is based upon principles of probability which are thoroughly sound and Professor Stoner has applied these principles in a proper and convincing way."*

The following probabilities are taken from Peter Stoner's work in *'Science Speaks'* to show that coincidence is ruled out by the science of probability. The analysis is concerned with the following eight prophecies:

1. Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; fulfilled in Matthew 2:1-7; John 7:42; Luke 2:47).
2. Messiah is to be preceded by a Messenger (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1; fulfilled in Matthew 3:1-3; 11:10; John 1:23; Luke 1:17).
3. Messiah is to enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9; fulfilled in Luke 35- 37; Matthew 21:6-11).
4. Messiah is to be betrayed by a friend (Psalms 41:9; 55:12-14; fulfilled in Matthew 10:4; 26:49-50; John 13:21).
5. Messiah is to be sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; fulfilled in Matthew 26:15; 27:3).
6. The money for which Messiah is sold is to be thrown "to the potter" in God's house (Zechariah 11:13; fulfilled in Matthew 27:5-7).
7. Messiah is to be silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7; fulfilled in Matthew 27:12).
8. Messiah is to be executed by crucifixion as a thief (Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10; Isaiah 53:5,12; fulfilled in Luke 23:33; John 20:25; Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27,28).

Stoner says that by applying the modern science of probability to just these eight prophecies, "... We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in  $10^{17}$ ." That would be one in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order for us to be able to comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing that:

*"... we take  $10^{17}$  silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets*



**This is approximately the total number of electrons in all the mass of the known universe.**

### Principles of Probability

The mathematics field of probability has its own rules, definitions, and laws, which you can use to find the probability of outcomes, events, or combinations of outcomes and events. To determine probability, you need to add or subtract, multiply or divide the probabilities of the original outcomes and events. You use some combinations so often that they have their own rules and formulas. The better you understand the ideas behind the formulas, the more likely it is that you'll remember them and be able to use them successfully.

One of the **greatest proofs of the Bible's authenticity** is the study of statistics regarding the "laws of common probability." We use term "compound probability". Today, mathematical probability is used by insurance companies, as well as by other businesses, to make important decisions. Banks use it in calculating interest on loans. Another way to explain this concept would be, The U.S. National Debt is calculated upon it. **By 2025, U.S. Interest Payments on the National Debt Will Pass the Defense Budget.** Another way to explain this concept would be, "What are the odds that something could happen?"

Blaise Pascal, (1623-1662), a French philosopher and mathematician, developed the modern theory of probability. You might have heard the statement "Pascal's wager." Pascal's wager is an argument in philosophy presented by the seventeenth-century French philosopher, theologian, mathematician and physicist, Blaise Pascal. It posits that humans bet with their lives that God either exists or does not.

It presents a powerful premise to the reader that "Pascal's Wager" is the greatest challenge to human thinking in a modern-day world rife with skepticism among generations X, Y, and the Millennials. Most of those younger than 30 do not give much thought to death in the western world. It is a consequence of affluence and our world of freedom, a lack of appreciation of what God has permitted in our world. This is obvious

What you do with your life: What you find upon dying:	Wager on: God Exists	Wager on: no God
God Exists	Infinite Reward <small>epic win</small>	Infinite Loss <small>epic fail</small>
There is no God	No Loss <small>fail</small>	No Reward <small>meaningless win</small>

by the world-wide drive to bring the Marxist/socialist brand of nihilism, whether it be the communist form of Marxist/socialism or the Vatican form of Marxist/socialism, and believe me there is a difference. The revolutionaries are composed of ideological anarchists as well as nihilistic version. However, their mentors are Satanic Zionists pulling the strings of revolution. But I digress.

In essence, Pascal's Wager is saying, you would have to be a fool to bet against God Exists.

Let's look at an example of statistical probability. Take a single event that would be predicted about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Say the laws of probability revealed that the chance of this single event occurring randomly was one in five. If another event in the Old Testament about Jesus Christ had the probability of one in ten, the chance of these both occurring together in sequence are five multiplied by ten. So the combined chance of both of these events or prophecies occurring in order is one in 50. If anyone could honestly look at the 300-plus prophecies given about the coming of Christ in the Old Testament (centuries before the actual birth of Christ), they would soon have to acknowledge that the Bible is the Word of God.

J. Barton Payne has found as many as 574 verses in the Old Testament that somehow point to or describe or reference the coming Messiah. Alfred Edersheim found 456 Old Testament verses referring to the Messiah or His times. Conservatively, Jesus fulfilled at least 300 prophecies, closer to 356 in His earthly ministry. The reason for the variation by different scholars is related to how they categorized the many prophecies of Jesus Christ. J. Barton Payne's work *'Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy'* is the most comprehensive work, as exemplified by the fact he categorized 8,362 predictive prophecies in the Bible, on 1,817 predictions covering 737 separate matters.

There is an excellent go to link on the Internet, "356 Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ" <https://accordingtothescriptures.org/prophecy/353prophecies.html>

The critics and scoffers are easily disarmed when you can show how Probability becomes mathematical proof of our faith. You may not know this but Mathematics is known as the only Pure Science, which simply means its results are fully replicable and 100% perfect and accurate. As a previous Diamond & Nugget has shown, I am fascinated by the Mathematical properties of *Pi*, *Phi*, and *Euler*. God is a Mathematician in so many ways that boggle our minds.

### **17 Prophecies of the Messiah's First-Coming**

The Messiah is the central figure in the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi. Prophecies about Him deal with every facet of his life — His birth, His ministry on earth, His death, and His ultimate victory. The late Grant Jeffrey, a Bible scholar and author, has estimated the probability of anyone fulfilling just 17 prophecies about the Messiah's first-coming, and his results are astonishing. Jeffrey's probability estimates are presented below, and they are extremely conservative:

**480,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000**, or **one chance in 480 billion x 1 billion x 1 trillion**. Remember, **there are over 300 fulfilled prophecies** regarding the life of Jesus Christ.

1. He will be born in Bethlehem and descended from Judah—Micah 5: 2 and Genesis 49: 10—Probability: **1 in 2,400**.
2. A messenger will precede the Messiah—Isaiah 40: 3 and Malachi 3: 1—Probability: **1 in 20**.
3. He will enter Jerusalem on a colt—Zechariah 9: 9—Probability: **1 in 50**.
4. He will be betrayed by a friend—Psalm 41: 9—Probability: **1 in 10**.
5. His hands and feet will be pierced—Psalm 22: 16—Probability: **1 in 100**.
6. His enemies will wound Him—Isaiah: 54: 5—Probability: **1 in 10**.
7. His betrayer will receive 30 pieces of silver for betraying Him—Zechariah 11: 12—Probability: **1 in 50**.
8. He will be spit upon and beaten—Isaiah 50: 6—Probability: **1 in 10**.
9. The money for His betrayal will be thrown into the Temple and used to buy a potter's field—Zechariah 11: 13—Probability: **1 in 200**.
10. He will be silent before His accusers—Isaiah 53: 7—Probability: **1 in 100**.
11. He will die with thieves—Isaiah 53: 9—Probability: **1 in 100**.
12. People will gamble for His garments—Psalm 22: 18—Probability: **1 in 100**.
13. His side will be pierced—Zechariah 12: 10—Probability: **1 in 100**.
14. None of His bones will be broken—Psalm 34: 20—Probability: **1 in 20**.
15. His body will not decay—Psalm 16: 10—Probability: **1 in 10,000**.
16. He will be buried in a rich man's tomb—Isaiah 53: 9—Probability: **1 in 100**.
17. Darkness will cover the earth at His death—Amos 8: 9—Probability: **1 in 1000**.

Using Grant Jeffrey's estimates, the odds of anyone in earth's history fulfilling these 17 prophecies is **1 in 480,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000**. We can state this number another way: 1 in 5 trillion multiplied by 96 trillion. The denominator in this fraction is so large that it boggles the mind.

Here is another way to think about these odds. In 2001, The United States' national debt was about 5 trillion dollars. Candidly, I never thought that I would look back on the free-spending days of 2001 as the good old days, but that's another story. That said imagine you have in front of you 5 trillion times 96 trillion \$1 bills. It would take an area the size of Texas to pile them up. We mark one of the \$1 bills, hide it somewhere in the pile, blindfold you, and tell you to pick the marked bill out of the pile in one try.

The probability of you picking the correct \$1 bill in this example is the same as the likelihood of anyone fulfilling these 17 prophecies about the Messiah by chance, but there are hundreds of Messianic prophecies in the Bible — not 17. Thus, logic and probability indicate that anyone who fulfills these prophecies must be the Messiah.

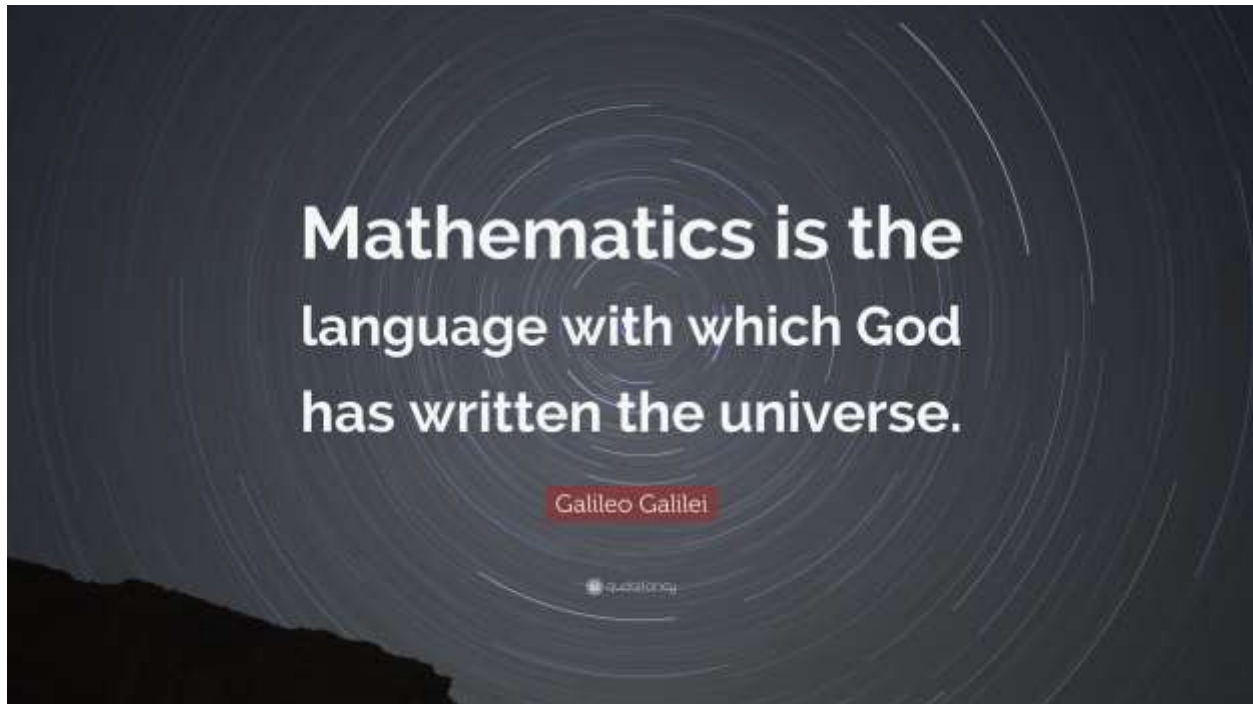
I find great comfort and encouragement in mathematics of the Bible and a useful tool of apologetics to be able to answer the Apostle Peter's challenge. We are in the days of



sorrow and chaos abounds in all direction. God provides us substance for our faith unseen to encourage us in our Christian walk. The substance is in the fact that one Person fulfilled those 17 prophecies and should encourage you and strengthen you in those days which do not go the way you hoped for. We are close to hearing the sound of the great trumpet, and His words!

**480,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000**, or **one chance in 480 billion x 1 billion x 1 trillion**. Remember, **there are over 300 fulfilled prophecies** regarding the life of Jesus Christ.

If we were to take 48 of the major predictions regarding the promised Messiah, the number would be so large our minds could not comprehend it. The conservative odds are  $10 \times 157$  (one followed by 157 zeros).



So why do so many people still question the validity of the Bible? **The fact of the matter is that people are willingly ignorant and fail to consider even the most obvious proofs.** Recognizing that the Word of God is true puts man into a position of accountability and dependence. This requires change and a transformation of how one is presently living. They choose to ignore or reject the proof of God. They commit the Unpardonable Sin of Mark 3:28-29. The Unpardonable Sin is to reject God's offer of salvation in full awareness of the evidence of the choices. As Blaise Pascal expressed it, one would be stupid to walk away from the Free Gift of Salvation offered through Jesus Christ's Atonement for sin. That is blasphemy! It is to finally reject the Holy Spirit's testimony to Jesus' identity and mission. It is to deny that Jesus is who the Holy Spirit has revealed Him to be. It is to behold the person and work of Christ as

empowered by the Holy Spirit and reject it outright! It is to revile God himself! To reject the Holy Spirit's testimony of Christ is to reject Christ and thus reject all that He is and all that He has done, which includes, offering a pardon for sin for all who would repent and believe in His gospel. Blasphemy, therefore, is deadly because it ultimately leads to separation from the Only Person who can save sinners from their sins.

**REMEMBER: These 17 predictions give us a combined probability of one chance in 480,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or one chance in 480 billion x 1 billion x 1 trillion. And there are over 300 prophecies!**

Every Christian's faith should be built up after the realization that God has set in His Word the exact plan and coming of the Messiah, several thousand years before He actually came to earth. Every nonbeliever must take notice as the kingdom of God was brought to mankind. **These predictions were fulfilled by a divine plan and not by chance! He has a plan for your life also.**

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Blessings in our Lord's Name, Jesus Christ,

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