

# **Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics**

**A Workbook  
for Serious Investigators**

by A. Bernhardt



Also by the author:

*Seeing Jesus*

A Disciple's Perspective

*How To Gain Victory Over Sin*

Knowing the Sanctification of the Holy Spirit

Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics—A Workbook for Serious Investigators

© 2018 Andrew Bernhardt

[dtjsoft.com/55questions.pdf](http://dtjsoft.com/55questions.pdf)

You may make any number of copies of this document in unmodified form for non-profit use without my permission. All other rights are reserved.



## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

### ***Introduction***

Hypothetical question: The Aztec empire flourished in the area of central Mexico until the Spanish conquistadors arrived in 1521. Today there are descendants of those same Aztecs living in Mexico. How likely do you think it would be for them to come together after 500 years to rebuild the Aztec empire? What about the Phoenicians? Do you think it possible for them to form a revived Phoenician nation after 2300 years? More importantly, how would you determine the probability of such an event happening? Of course, the chances are extremely low, but *how low*?

Let's make it even more absurd. Supposing such an event did occur, what would be the chances that someone, hundreds of years earlier, had somehow accurately and plainly predicted it would happen. What would be the probability then? How would you estimate or determine the combined probability of the event and the successful prediction?

If these sound like silly questions to you, they're not, for such an event has happened in recent history. In 1948, after over 2500 years of captivity and dispersion around the world, the Jews of the ancient nation of Israel returned to their old homeland to become a modern state<sup>1</sup>. Like it or not, the independent state of Israel exists today, and is a central figure in the conflicts of the Middle East. That such an event happened is unprecedented, yet what is more amazing is that there are multiple direct predictions of this happening written thousands of years earlier, and those predictions accurately reflect the current conditions in Israel today.

By this point, you probably think I'm just another religious nut job, along the lines of snake-handlers and faith-healers. Whatever predictions there are, you're sure they're written so vaguely, they can be interpreted to mean anything—hence they mean nothing. But the predictions I'm talking about are unambiguous, obvious to anyone who will read them. They are specific in their details. Some even explain their own meanings in plain language.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia defines a nation as “a stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, ethnicity or psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” . A state is defined as “an organized community living under a single political structure and government, sovereign or constituent.”

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

Being somewhat of a skeptic myself, I know I cannot convince you of this. But I think if you're willing to read the prophecies for yourself, discover the meanings on your own, and do your own research, I won't have to. *You will convince yourself.*

This is a workbook to test the claims of the Bible using only personal investigation, logic, and a little mathematics. It consists of fifty-five straight-forward, impartial questions. Some are very simple, but others will require time and effort to research and answer. All of the questions are necessary, however, to determine the probabilities of the predicted events and test their claimed fulfillments. Since you will be comparing biblical prophecies with reality, some questions will require you to first read those prophecies. I have included references to them so you can read them in any Old Testament of your choosing.

If you accept the challenge, you may use whatever sources you want to do your research: books, magazines, news articles, internet, encyclopedias, subject-matter experts, first-hand experience, and so on. You can do this study on your own or with others. The important thing is that, whether you earnestly want to know the truth, or you intentionally try to prove me wrong, you do your own work, *sticking only with the facts*. I will not provide answers for you. You will do so yourself, and when you're finished, you will come up with your own conclusions based solely on the facts you find.

What's the purpose of this challenge? To show, through your own research, the evidence that points to the existence of the God of the Bible, that the Bible is God's word, and what it has to say is of life-and-death importance for you. Right now you probably have the opposite belief. You've been told the Bible is full of fables, lies, and inaccuracies. You may even be able to list off what you think are some contradictions. Whatever you believe, you can only know the truth by doing your own investigation into the claims of the Bible, paying close attention to the meanings of words, and the various contexts (i.e. literary, social, historical, covenantal, etc.).

The Bible not only contains many different prophecies, it records some of their eyewitness fulfillments. But those eyewitnesses are long dead, so skeptics have come up with a list of standard excuses to avoid having to believe. You may have heard of some or all of these:

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

1. "The prophecies were written after the events happened."
2. "The prophecies were written vaguely, making the fulfillments open to interpretation."
3. "The fulfillments were coincidental, the result of random chance."
4. "The prophecies were purposely fulfilled to make the Bible seem true."
5. "The Bible writers lied about the fulfillments."

These seem like good points, but I have *never* seen them backed up with hard facts. They really only serve as an excuse to avoid the effort of looking at the evidence. It doesn't matter, though, for all of these objections fall flat when it comes to the predictions of the restoration of the nation of Israel:

1. It is plainly evident that the prophecies were written before Israel became a state in 1948. There are still a large number of Bibles significantly older than modern Israel, and they all contain the prophecies. If you have access to one, you're welcome to use it. The older, the better.
2. By reading the Bible passages for yourself, you will discover that the restoration of Israel was directly predicted in multiple places. Far from being a vague interpretation, it is the most obvious interpretation.
3. The likelihood that all the prophecies were fulfilled by random chance is so small, it's more likely you'll win the lottery tomorrow. All of the questions in this booklet are worded to get you to think seriously about the probability of each aspect of each fulfillment, and then to think about their combined probability.
4. When you study history, especially of the period leading up to 1948, you will find Israel was not restored just to make the prophecies seem true. Nations don't return after hundreds or thousands of years just because they want to, otherwise we would see many ancient displaced peoples regain their homeland to form revived states. If you do your research, you will also see that the fulfillment happened as a result of non-Jewish causes.
5. Obviously, the Bible writers could not have lied about the fulfillment, because they didn't witness it—we did.

Your study will confirm that these excuses don't apply.

## **Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics**

This is a quest for hard truth. Due to the effort involved or the fear of upsetting one's personal world-view, I don't expect many will take this challenge... but I hope you will. Investigate this in minute detail. Look for evidence both for and against. Try to set aside your biases as much as possible. You're welcome to come up with a theory to explain all this in a naturalistic manner, but make sure your theory also has supporting evidence.

As you seriously study this topic, I hope you will connect the facts and come to my conclusion, however uncomfortable it may be to you:

### **Fact 1:**

It is extremely unlikely for an ancient nation to be restored in modern times.

### **Fact 2:**

The ancient nation of Israel was restored to their homeland in 1948.

### **Fact 3:**

The Bible predicted God would restore Israel to their homeland.

### **Conclusion:**

God fulfilled his promises as he said. Therefore, he exists, and the Bible is true.



## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

### *The Questions*

This first set of questions is to help establish a baseline for calculating the probabilities for Fact 1. You will be determining if the modern-day restoration of Israel is a result of natural causes or supernatural intervention, so you need some global statistics to compare those events to. It may be difficult or impossible to find precise answers or numbers for some of these questions, but at least do the research to come up with a realistic estimate.

1. How many nations exist on earth today?
2. How many nations have existed in recorded history?
3. Besides Israel, how many groups of people have lost their independent state status, and then regained it after at least 10 years? after 100 years? after 1000 years?
4. What happens to the likelihood of a nation regaining statehood over each of these time periods?
5. Other than Israel, how many scattered people groups have retained their national identity for at least 10 years? for at least 100 years? for at least 1000 years?

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

6. Besides Israel, how many nations were removed from their homeland and scattered among many other nations before regaining their statehood?

The next two questions are optional, since we're focusing on Israel's return, not their dispersion.

7. (optional) Besides Israel, how many nations have had the loss of their statehood predicted at least 100 years in advance?
8. (optional) How many of these other nations have had the manner of that loss (i.e. how it would occur) predicted at least 100 years in advance?
9. How many of these nations, before they lost their statehood, were told beforehand they would be scattered around the world, yet would never lose their identity?
10. Besides Israel, how many nations have had the restoration of their statehood predicted at least 100 years in advance?
11. How many of these nations have had the future conditions within their restored nation predicted in detail?

---

NOTES



## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

16. According to Jeremiah 31:35–36, under what conditions will Israel cease to ever be a nation?

(See Genesis 1:14–15 for the ‘ordinances’ (purpose) of the sun, moon and stars.)

17. According to these passages, why would Israel be scattered among the nations?

Now we come to questions that deal with the biblical prophecies of Israel’s restoration (Fact 3). This first group of questions deal with the claims that Israel’s return was foretold before it happened. In these passages, note that Jacob is the original name of Israel (Genesis 32:28), and Ephraim represents Israel because he received the birthright (preeminent position) from Jacob (Genesis 48:13–19, 1 Chronicles 5:1, Jeremiah 31:9).

Read Isaiah 11:11–12, Jeremiah 3:18, Jeremiah 16:14–15, Jeremiah 23:7–8, Ezekiel 20:33–44, Ezekiel 36:1–12, Ezekiel 36:22–24, and Zechariah 10:6–8.

18. What is the common event that is going to happen in all of these passages?

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

19. Is there a more obvious explanation of these passages that doesn't require Israel to be returned to their homeland?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
20. According to these passages, how certain is this event going to happen, and why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
21. Where are the people of Israel returning from? Is this a return of Jews moving from one region to their homeland, or something larger?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
22. What does "they shall be as though I had not cast them off" (Zechariah 10:6) say about what you read earlier in Hosea 9:17?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
23. According to Ezekiel 36:12, once Israel returns to their land, will they ever be removed again? (see also Jeremiah 24:6, Amos 9:15.)

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

Read Deuteronomy 30:1–5. (If you have time, read chapters 28 through 30 for the full context, including the “blessing and the curse” of verse 1, and do the optional questions.)

24. Who is this passage written to?

25. Where will they be in chapter 30, verse 1?

26. (optional) According to chapter 28, why will they be there?

27. What is going to happen to them?

28. According to verse 1, at what point in their history is this supposed to happen?

29. What will cause this to happen? What is the “driving force” to ensure that it happens?

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

30. (optional) How does Deuteronomy 28:15–68 compare to the history of ancient Israel?

31. (optional) How does Deuteronomy 28 to 30 fit in with Amos 9:7–10, Ezekiel 5:13, Hosea 9:17, Jeremiah 31:35–36, and Jeremiah 46:28 that you read earlier?

32. (optional) How old are the oldest known copies of Deuteronomy that we have today?

33. (optional) When was Deuteronomy 28:68 fulfilled? Was it before or after the prophecy was written?

Read Ezekiel 37. This is a prophetic vision with symbolic imagery, followed by the interpretation of the vision.

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

34. According to verse 11, what are the “bones” mentioned in this passage?
35. According to verses 12 and 21, what are the “graves” mentioned in this passage?
36. What is this prophecy about?
37. According to these passages, what is the primary cause for this event happening?
38. What do you think is the significance of the bones being “very dry” in verse 2?  
(What can you deduce about a dry bone when you see it?)
39. The progress of moving from dry bones to a living army takes multiple stages. Do these stages imply anything about how the fulfillment will happen?

---

NOTES



## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

40. Is there some other explanation for this passage that makes it irrelevant in regards to the modern day restoration of Israel? If so, what factual evidence do you have for the explanation?

These next questions are about what the Bible says the conditions will be like in the restored nation of Israel.

Read Joel 3:1–2, Joel 3:17–21, Joel 2:23–26, and Amos 9:13–15.

41. What do these passages say the conditions will be like in the future land of Israel?

42. How do the conditions in the land of Israel today compare with the land of Palestine before Israel returned in 1948? (Research old photographs and eyewitness evidence.)

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

Read Isaiah 49:19–21 and Zechariah 10:9–10.

43. What do these passages say about the population density of Israel after it returns?

44. How much area does the state of Israel cover today, and what is its population?  
What is the average population density?

45. How does the population density compare to Japan?

46. How much of the land of Israel is inhabitable, and what does this say about the population density in the inhabitable parts?

Read Zechariah 2:1–13.

47. According to verse 4, what will be the future condition of Jerusalem?

48. Does this reflect the condition of Jerusalem today?

49. When this prophecy was written, was it considered a good thing not to have a wall around Jerusalem? If not, why would this prophecy say it would be so?

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

There are many more fulfilled prophecies relating to the restoration of Israel, but these should be sufficient for you to draw some kind of conclusion. These last set of questions address that conclusion, whatever it may be.

50. Do the claims given in the introduction (i.e. the third paragraph) accurately reflect what the Bible says? Why or why not?

51. Some of the prophecies you've read state God would be the one to bring Israel back to their homeland. Did Israel become a state solely as a result of its own effort?

52. How do you calculate the combined probability of multiple events? (For example, if you know the chances that a tossed coin will land 'heads' is 50%, how do you calculate the odds that the next ten tosses will all result in 'heads?')

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

53. Calculate the combined probability that all of the prophecies you've looked at were fulfilled by random chance. Enter 0.0 to 1.0 for 0% to 100%:

\_\_\_\_\_ : the likelihood that an ancient people would retain their ethnic identity after 2300 years of captivity and dispersion around the world.

× \_\_\_\_\_ : that afterward, these people would regain their land and become a nation again,

× \_\_\_\_\_ : that these people would return to their original homeland from all over the world,

× \_\_\_\_\_ : that the conditions in their land would be accurately predicted,

× \_\_\_\_\_ : that their capital city would be inhabited without walls,

× \_\_\_\_\_ : that, of all the ancient nations that could have returned, it happened to the one prophesied to do so.

= \_\_\_\_\_ : Multiply all of the above to get the combined probability.

This answer only takes into account some of the fulfilled prophecies. There are many others I haven't included. You can investigate them for yourself and include them in your calculations if you desire. (Another factor you can include is that the Jews suffered many attempts over the centuries to annihilate them—in my opinion to prevent the prophecies from being fulfilled, yet they survived. This is implied in passages such as Deuteronomy 28:63–67 and Amos 9.)

54. Now compare the combined probability of these prophecies being fulfilled by chance with the many statements in the Bible that say God would surely cause these prophecies to be fulfilled. What does this say about the likelihood that God exists and the Bible is reliable?

---

NOTES

## Fifty-Five Questions for Skeptics

55. What significance does this have for you?

---

NOTES

## Postscript

There are more fulfilled prophecies relating to Israel's return, but I don't want to tire you out looking up Bible passages and doing research. I hope by this point you've come to the same conclusion I have. If you still need to see more fulfilled prophecies, I recommend the book *"The Hand of God: Ancient Prophecies—Modern Miracles of Israel"*, by Bill Heinrich (<https://www.scribd.com/document/183070987>). In it the author presents the details of many prophecies that were partially or completely fulfilled by the time of publishing, a few of which are:

- the eastern gate of Jerusalem being shut (happened in 1514 A.D. by the Muslims.)
- the Hebrew language restored to everyday usage,
- the monetary unit of the restored nation being the shekel,
- the Gentiles helping to bring the Jews to their restored homeland,
- Jews being airlifted into the country,
- and the desert lands being inhabited.



When you factor in these other prophecy fulfillments, the likelihood for a chance fulfillment shrinks even more rapidly. It's also fascinating to see these things happen practically before everyone's eyes!

I hope this booklet has given you a hunger to study the Bible for yourself. Claims that the Bible is unreliable are themselves unreliable. You can only know this by investigating for yourself.

Most importantly, I hope your study of the Bible will lead you to seek to know Jesus Christ. The modern-day fulfillments relating to Israel are just a few of the indicators that we are living in the "last days," right before Jesus returns to earth to judge the world. You need to be ready for his return!