Romans 15:4 *"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope." (NIV)*

5. PROPHETIC Evidence: The Bible is prophetically accurate.

2 Samuel 23:2 *"The Spirit of the Lord spoke **through** me; His word was on my tongue." (NIV)*

2 Peter 1:21 *"20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, **spoke from God** as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (NIV)*

Deuteronomy 18:18-22 *"18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. 19 I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. 20 But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death. 21 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?" 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed." (NIV)*

Examples of Fulfilled Prophecies

A. Prophecies about TYRE (in modern Lebanon)

Ezekiel made a startling prediction about the city state of Tyre:

- Many nations would come against Tyre (Eze 26:2)
- Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the city (Ez 26:4)
- The city would be scraped bare (Ez 26:4)
- Fishing nets would be spread over the site (Ez 26:12)

- The stones of the city would be thrown into the sea (Ez 26:12)

- The city would never be rebuilt (Ez 26:14)

Fulfilment:

- King Nebuchadnezzar II -585-573
- Then Ruled by Persian Kings
- Alexander the Great – seven-month siege in 332.
- He completely destroyed the mainland portion of the town and used its rubble to build an immense causeway (some 2,600 feet) long and 600-900 feet wide to gain access to the island section.
- After the town's capture, 10,000 inhabitants were put to death and 30,000 were sold into slavery.
- Alexander's causeway, which was never removed, converted the island into a peninsula.

B. Prophecies about the JEWISH People

Daniel's (around 530 BC) accurately predicts:

- Over 600 years of world history
- The rise to power of the Medes and the Persians, Greece and Rome (Dan 7 & 8)
- The division of Greece into four kingdoms that occurred in 323 B.C. (Dan 8:21-22)
- A detailed history of the political intrigues, wars and treaties occurring between 530 and 160 B.C.
- The time in which Jesus would live (Dan 9:25)
- Jesus' death (Dan 9:26)
- The destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in A.D. 70 (Dan 9:26)
- The desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes that occurred in 168 B.C. (Dan 11:31).

C. Prophecies about JESUS.

- Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4-7)

- Sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 26:15)
- Silver used to buy a potter's field (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:6)
- Silent when accused (Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12-14)
- Condemned with criminals (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:32-33)
- Raging thirst when dying (Psalm 22:15; John 19:28)
- Crucified (Psalm 22:16; John 19:18)
- Pierced after death (Isaiah 53:5; Luke 23:46)
- Buried by a rich man (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60)
- Suffering not the end (Isaiah 53:11; Luke 24:1-8)

Luke 24:25-27 *"25 [Jesus] said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe* ***all that the prophets have spoken****! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was in all the Scriptures concerning Himself." (NIV)*

6. SECULAR Evidence: Historians of antiquity mention Jesus and the controversy surrounding His life and death.

A. TACITUS – Roman historian (AD 56-120)

"Therefore, to squelch the rumor, Nero created scapegoats and subjected to the most refined tortures those whom the common people called "Christians," hated for their abominable crimes. Their name comes from Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Suppressed for the moment, the deadly superstition broke out again, not only in Judea, the land which originated this evil, but also in the city of Rome, where all sorts of horrendous and shameful practices from every part of the world converge and are fervently cultivated."

B. JOSEPHUS – Jewish Historian (AD 37-100)

"… a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to

exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, an brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose names was James, and some others … he delivered them to be stoned." (Josephus, Antiquities 20:200t)

"At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one should call him a man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of the people who receive the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. He was the Messiah. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. For he appeared to them on the third day, living again, just as the divine prophets had spoken of these and countless other wondrous things about him. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out." (Josephus—Antiquities 18:63)

Accepted Text: "At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who receive the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians (named after him) has not died out."

C. Others: Suetonius; Pliny the Younger; Lucian of Samosata; Thallus; Celsus; Mara bar Serapion.

Reference: ***Evidence that Demands a Verdict (updated)***, Josh & Sean McDowell, pp.144-158)

COMMUNION: The Prophecy of God's Suffering Servant

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (NLT)

52:13 See, my servant will prosper;
He will be highly exalted.

14 But many were amazed when they saw Him.
His face was so disfigured He seemed hardly human,
and from His appearance, one would scarcely know He was a man.

15 And He will startle many nations.
Kings will stand speechless in his presence.

For they will see what they had not been told;
they will understand what they had not heard about.

53:1 Who has believed our message?
To whom has the LORD revealed His powerful arm?

2 My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot,
like a root in dry ground.

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about His appearance,
nothing to attract us to Him.

3 He was despised and rejected—
a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way.
He was despised, and we did not care.

4 Yet it was our weaknesses He carried;
it was our sorrows that weighed Him down.

And we thought His troubles were a punishment from God,
a punishment for His own sins!

5 But He was pierced for our rebellion,
crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole.
He was whipped so we could be healed.

6 All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
We have left God's paths to follow our own.

Yet the LORD laid on him
the sins of us all.

7 He was oppressed and treated harshly,
yet He never said a word.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,
He did not open his mouth.

8 Unjustly condemned,
He was led away.

No one cared that He died without descendants,
that His life was cut short in midstream.

But He was struck down
for the rebellion of my people.

9 He had done no wrong
and had never deceived anyone.

But He was buried like a criminal;
He was put in a rich man's grave.

10 But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him
and cause him grief.

Yet when His life is made an offering for sin,
He will have many descendants.

He will enjoy a long life,
and the LORD's good plan will prosper in His hands.

11 When He sees all that is accomplished by His anguish,
He will be satisfied.

And because of His experience,
my righteous servant will make it possible

for many to be counted righteous,
for He will bear all their sins.

12 I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier,
because He exposed himself to death.

He was counted among the rebels.
He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

Acts 10:43 *"He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in Him will have their sins forgiven through His name." (NLT)*

BOTTOM LINE

2 Peter 1:19 *"We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." (NIV)*