

## Introduction

### **What is the Book of Jasher?**

The book of Jasher is one of 13 ancient history books that are recommended reading by the Bible. Out of these 13 only Jasher is still in existence. If we are to believe the text itself, this history book was written over 3,500 years ago. It is approximately the same age as the biblical book of Genesis. It covers about the same time period as Genesis and Exodus but has about twice as much information in it than Genesis. It answers a lot of questions raised in Genesis.

### **How can we be sure this is the *real* Jasher and not a forgery from the Middle Ages?**

There have been at least two forgeries. One is an ethical treatise from the Middle Ages and does not exist in English currently, as far as I know. It is somewhat Gnostic in style beginning with a section on the mystery of creation. A second forgery was published in AD 1829, supposedly translated by Flaccus Albinus Alcuinus. These two are nowhere near the caliber of *this* book of Jasher and both are missing the information that Scripture tells us is in the *real* book of Jasher. This is the only Jasher that corresponds to what Scripture says it contains.

Much of the extra information contained in Jasher can also be found in the Babylonian Talmud, the Mishna, and Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews*. There are numerous quotes showing Rabbi Eliazar used this book of Jasher extensively in the first century AD. The Mishna was completed about AD 200, and the Talmud about AD 800. We can know for a fact that the Mishna and Talmud used *this* book of Jasher as a source document and not the other way around. Also, since the *Ancient Seder Olam* was written in about AD 169 and references Jasher, we know the book of Jasher was used by other historians in the second century AD.

### **What does the Bible say about the Book of Jasher?**

Scripture records the event where God caused the sun to stand still until Joshua and his men finished defeating the Amorites. This was such an incredible event the author of the book of Joshua explains it must be true because it is *also* recorded in the Book of Jasher. This tells us two things. First, the original book of Jasher is older than the book of Joshua; and second, Scripture recommends we read this particular history book.

“Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.” *Joshua 10:12-14*

Jasher's record states this:

“...and Joshua said in the sight of all the people, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon, until the nation shall have revenged itself upon its enemies... And the sun stood still in the midst of the heavens, and it stood still six and thirty moments, and the moon also stood still and hastened not to go down a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of man, for the Lord fought for Israel.” *Jasher 88.63-64*

The reference to Jasher in Second Samuel occurs where David is lamenting over the death of Saul. The Bible says:

“And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)” *2 Samuel 1:17-18*

This passage refers to the time when Jacob lay dying and called his sons together to prophesy over them. This event is recorded in Genesis 49 but this specific command of Jacob to Judah is not recorded in Scripture but in the *Ancient Book of Jasher* as we are told in this passage.

“...only teach thy sons the use of the bow and all weapons of war, in order that they may fight the battles of their brother who will rule over his enemies.” *Jasher 56:9*

Paul names the two magicians who withstood Moses: Jannes and Jambres. This event is recorded in Exodus 7:8-13; but the names of the magicians are never given in the Old Testament. Paul knew their names and other details about them from other Hebrew sources. One of these is the *Ancient Book of Jasher*.

“Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their’s also was.” 2 *Timothy 3:8-9*

“And when they had gone Pharaoh sent for Balaam the magician and to Jannes and Jambres his sons, and to all the magicians and conjurors and counsellors which belonged to the king, and they all came and sat before the king... And Aaron hastened and threw the rod out of his hand before Pharaoh and before his servants, and the rod turned into a serpent.” *Jasher 79:27,36*

The *Ancient Seder Olam* is another Hebrew history book (not mentioned by Scripture) that dates from about AD 169. It records that Rabbi Eliezer was the most accurate when figuring dates and festivals because he used the *Ancient Book of Jasher* as the best source for his history. This tells us *Jasher* was in use and very well known in the first century AD. See chapter 4 of *Ancient Seder Olam* for details.

The original preface added that Josephus wrote that *Jasher* is a very reliable history book. See Appendix C for full details.

“by this book are to be understood certain records kept in some safe place on purpose, giving an account of what happened among the Hebrews from year to year, and called *Jasher* or the upright, on account of the fidelity of the annals.” *Josephus*

### **Why isn’t the Book of Jasher in the Bible?**

The *Book of Jasher* was never considered to be inspired of God. It is simply an accurate history book. Even though it is recommended reading by Scripture, we must never think that it equals Scripture.

### **Who was Jasher?**

The word *Jasher* is not a proper name, but a Hebrew word meaning “upright.” Many through the centuries have referred to this book as the “*Book of the Upright*.”

### **What is the history behind the Book of Jasher?**

According to rabbinic legend, the book of *Jasher* and several other ancient non-biblical Hebrew texts were brought from Jerusalem to Spain after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. One of the officers of Titus, Sidrus by name, was a believer in the God of the Hebrews. He made sure several sacred texts made it out of Jerusalem and into the Spanish city of Sevilla for safe keeping. The Sephardic rabbinate kept the texts safe. In the year AD 1613, the first official printed Hebrew copy of the book of *Jasher* was published in Venice, Italy. The first translation from the Hebrew version of *Jasher* into English was completed in AD 1840.

### **Has the text been corrupted over the centuries?**

The ancient scrolls of this book were in poor condition when the book was printed in Hebrew in 1613.

## Ancient Book of Jasher

This text is not inspired by God, and was simply an extremely accurate history book, highly recommended by Scripture itself. The text *does* show signs of some corruption. There are obvious scribal errors – and more than likely embellishments – added to the original text. We must remember this scroll may be over 3,500 years old.

Examples in the Book of Jasher of people leaping on walls, breaking rocks, shrieking so loud as to cause damage, etc. may be ancient Hebrew idioms long forgotten or simply embellishments to the real text.

Here is a great example of an idiom causing confusion. Jasher mentions “lion faced men” doing battle. Some people have scoffed at this text thinking that Jasher is telling us there were men whose faces really looked like cat’s faces. The Hebrew idiom “lion-faced” means the same thing as the English idiom “lion-hearted.” Anyone who is lion-faced or lion-hearted is fearless in battle.

### **What about Jasher’s connection with Mormonism?**

It is true that the Mormon publishing house, *J. H. Parry and Company*, first published the 1840 English translation of Jasher in 1887. This 1840 version is the same version that modern authors use.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Mormons have, in the past, used extra-biblical texts to try to show a kind of open-mindedness. If they show you a *real* historical account, then you might be more susceptible to their false histories like the Book of Mormon. Mormonism has long been fascinated with the Book of Jasher, but it is not officially recommended because some portions of Jasher contradict Mormon teaching.

### **The Hebrew Calendar**

The Christian calendar dates from the birth of Christ. If the calendar has not been corrupted, the year AD 2008 would mean Jesus Christ was born 2,008 years ago. The Hebrew Calendar dates from the creation of the world. The Christian year of AD 2008 corresponds to 5768 AM on the Jewish calendar. The abbreviation “AM” stands for “Anno Mundi,” which means the “Year of the World;” just as “AD” stands for “Anno Domini,” which means “in the year of our Lord.”

So if the Jewish calendar has not been corrupted, then the spring of AD 2008 was 5,768 years after Creation. Most fundamentalist Christians believe the Jewish calendar is off by at least 168 years. This, however, is outside the scope of this work. All the dates in the book of Jasher date from Creation to the Jewish people entering into the Promised Land. It only covers the first 2,516 years of human history.

For your ease I have placed the AM date in most chapters and the most notable events are given in Appendix A. The 1840 version of Jasher originally had several prefaces attached to the front. In order to clean up the book, I have moved these to the back of the book. If the reader wishes to study them, they can be found in Appendix C.

### **The Layout of this Book**

Following this introduction chapter is the text of the Ancient Book of Jasher. After the text itself, you will find three appendices.

- Appendix A shows a series of timeline tables for your convenience.
- Appendix B gives a detailed analysis of the supposed discrepancies between Jasher and the Bible.
- Appendix C contains the original prefaces to the 1840 version.

Please send all questions and comments to [Biblefacts.org](http://Biblefacts.org). We would love to hear from you.

The *Ancient Book of Jasher* contains 91 chapters.

