

The Bible, Human or Divine?

3 reasons we know God really is the author of the Bible

There are two ways to view the Bible

- #1 That the Bible, though it might contain useful and inspiring content, is primarily the work of human authors.
- #2 That the Bible is the Word of God, said well in this summary:
- *"We believe **the Bible is** (not merely contains) **the unique and authoritative Word of God**, which teaches all that is necessary for faith and life. The prominence of God's Word over our lives shapes our priorities, and the unrivaled authority of the Bible directs our actions to be in concert with Christ's very best for our lives."* (from <https://eco-pres.org/>)
- This statement presupposes that God is the ultimate author of the Bible—that He spoke through human authors and though they each expressed it in their own way, the content is ultimately God's.
- That's the presupposition from which I do all my teaching and from which I suggest applications.
- But, just because I believe that, why should you believe it?
- That's what I want to share with you today.

We will look at 3 areas

- First, we'll establish that the Bible's content is anchored in true history.
- Second, with true history as our foundation, we will then look at how only an entity outside of the human timeline could be the author of the Bible.
- This reality of God outside the human timeline is illustrated in what we call Prophecy, which isn't simply about end-times scary stuff.
- Prophecy is simply "a prediction about something that is to come" and we'll examine what makes Biblical prophecy unique, what "predictive prophecy" is all about and if our lives are pre-determined or not.
- Third and finally, we'll talk about the one voice we hear throughout the Bible, admittedly a much more subjective topic, but one very meaningful to me and I trust it will be to you also.

The Bible and true history

- The Bible is unique among the religious writings of the world in that it was written from the earliest days of human writing (approx. 2000 BC) down to the era of the Roman world in approximately 70 AD.
- There are SIX identifiable periods of time during this span, the following slide illustrates them, and a copy is in the notes for this lesson.
- During each era of time there are clearly identified, human authors, who tie what they wrote about their current situation with verifiable people and events also taking place at that time.
- This dating of events and the people who wrote during this time is confirmed by Christian, Jewish, and secular history. There may be minor dating controversies, but the overall times and events are clear.
- You do not have to believe in any divine authorship or intervention to accept this history.

Here is where it gets interesting

- If there is a passage in the Bible that predicts a specific event and then later that event takes place in verifiable history, that provides evidence to me

that the Bible is the Word of God.

- This isn't a minor feature of the Bible, but a major thread throughout it.
- There are (depending on direct and indirect ones) up to 300 prophecies about Jesus alone. <https://www.aboutbibleprophecy.com/301-prophecies-fulfilled-by-jesus.htm>

But not about Jesus alone, here are some additional ones, from one prophetic website—

Non-Messianic national prophecies (about 20–25)

- Israel's exile to Babylon (Isaiah, Jeremiah)
- Babylon's fall (Isaiah 13–14)
- Cyrus named 150 years before birth (Isaiah 44–45)
- The fall of Tyre (Ezekiel 26)
- The return from exile (Jeremiah 29–31)
- These are **specific events** predicted and fulfilled in history.

Specific prophecies about individuals (about 10–15)

- Josiah named 300 years before birth (1 Kings 13:2)
- Hezekiah's healing and sign (Isaiah 38)
- Nebuchadnezzar's rise (Jeremiah 25)
- Zedekiah's fate (Jeremiah 34; Ezekiel 12)
- These are **named individuals** with **specific outcomes**.
- From www.aboutbibleprophecy.com though similar lists can be found in many sources as again, the content is simply based on what was said at a certain time and then what happened at a later time exactly as it was foretold.

How could did this happen?

- One way would be to show that the author of these prophecies exists outside of time and communicated to us what would happen in the future.
- We look at it as "prophecy" but for the one communicating to us outside of time, it isn't extraordinary as all, but simply communication from their viewpoint.
- Here is an analogy that might help.

Imagine a parade

- You are watching it with a friend, but then your friend leaves you and a few minutes later you get a text where your friend announces that she was able to get into the announcer's booth, above the crowd because she has a friend there.
- You don't believe your friend and you respond: "Prove it."
- Because your friend can see what is coming in the parade and you can't, she tells you what will happen in the future of the parade—a huge float with Star Trek characters will come by and since nothing like this has been in the parade so far, you respond "I'll believe it when I see it."
- In a few minutes, the float with Star Trek characters comes by and you realize your friend really is up in the announcer's booth.

A view from above the level of the parade allowed your friend to make a "prophecy" about what would happen

- Imagine now that the parade is the total history of our universe and humanity.
- And instead of an announcer's booth, God is outside of time, seeing, knowing the beginning from the end. And He wants us to believe that.
- We have a right to expect proof of that just as we would from our friend at the parade.

- That's why He gives us prophecy to clearly tell us what is going to happen.
- Following is an infographic that illustrates it (and will be in your notes).

God is outside time

- Instead of the announcer's booth, (this infographic is available with the lesson notes at www.Bible805.com).
- Let me describe it to you--

How does this work in the Bible?

- In the Bible God tells us what is coming hundreds, if not thousands of years before events they happen. These events are written down ahead of time by his prophets and the Biblical writers (which again, is why it is important to date when the Biblical documents are written.)
- When events later happen exactly as predicted, we should recognize that the God outside of time knew what would happen and had a hand in bringing it about.
- For example, the most numerous predictions in the Bible are the many prophecies about Jesus. We may not know exactly when certain things were written but we certainly know that the Old Testament was written long before Jesus lived.
- From his family lineage, to the place of his birth, his life work, and the details of his death and resurrection, it was all written about, prophesied from literally the beginning of humanity.

In addition, the prophecies about Jesus

- Are about much more than the details of where he would be born, etc.
- He is considered by most everyone as a good man, an inspiring preacher, who unfortunately, by chance, lived when Rome was in charge of his world.
- In that world Jesus had no idea how radical his teachings were or that he was going to be crucified by the Romans.
- His death is seen by many as tragic and one that took him by surprise as much as it did his followers.
- Understanding the prophecies about Jesus and that the God who gave them we believe...
- His death was not an accident, but an event foretold from the earliest days of human life and throughout the Old Testament and we see this, not only because of the fulfillment of basic prophecies about his life but because of what is known as

Progressive Revelation

- In addition to specific events, God shares with us the planning, directing, revealing of the whole story of the redemption of the world in the Bible.
- He does this from the start of the Bible by giving us \, the seeds of all the key doctrines of the Bible—sin, redemption, grace—they are all introduced in Genesis and Job—and then carried through the writings of the different authors in the Bible for over 1500 years while the entire Bible was written.
- One example: early in Genesis when Adam and Eve sinned, God covered them with animal skins, when Able made his offering pleasing to God, it was an animal sacrifice; Job offered animal sacrifices, so did Abraham, all prior to Levitical laws; sacrifices were clarified after the Exodus, and ultimately with Jesus, when John saw him and said, "behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the World"—all the previous teaching about sacrifices were fulfilled were fulfilled with Jesus's death on the cross.

- The later books of the Bible expand and clarify—but never change the teaching of a needed sacrifice for sin and it progresses until we read about....

Jesus as the final sacrifice

- This plot line moved along through the Old Testament and that is why it was extraordinarily meaningful to an audience steeped in the Old Testament when John the Baptist saw Jesus and announced, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the World.”
- His audience knew all John was referring to.
- Finally, all the previous teaching about sacrifices were fulfilled with Jesus’ death on the cross.
- The later New Testament writers expand on and clarify the meaning of His death until in the final book of Revelation John has a vision of Jesus as both Lion and Lamb.
- The plot line of a needed sacrifice for sin of an innocent winds through the entire Bible, through the centuries and the voices of many, but its truth progressively revealed by the one Author—God—behind it all.

Jesus’ view of the fulfillment of prophecy and progressive revelation

- Jesus constantly affirmed this belief in the reliability of Old Testament scriptures and the progressive revelation of God when he answered critics and where, He said, *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”* John 5:39
- *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.* Luke 24:27
- Not only Jesus, but other New Testament authors refer to and confirm progressive revelation as the OT is quoted over 200 times in NT, always as a further revelation, not a contradiction or declaration that previous teachings were wrong or false.
- Paul does this extensively; also, in Hebrews (author not certain) we see a clear explanation of what was first taught in the Old Testament now made real in the life of Jesus.

Conclusion about Progressive Revelation

- From it, one can conclude that our Bible has ONE author, God, who worked through human authors, but it was God who kept in mind the whole plot of the salvation story –because He wrote it.
- Outside of time God carefully planned and though it took many centuries to tell it all, the basic plot lines, the key themes do not change, but expand and are fulfilled.
- ***This consistency of Progressive Revelation is a unique Characteristic of the Bible.***
- Other religions totally change doctrines, ignore blatant contradictions, define “progressive revelation” as the option to change their mind about important topics or upfront admit that they change it however and whenever they want—see teaching about other religions on Bible805.com.
- ***But this brings up a troubling personal question:***

Does Progressive Revelation mean everything we do is fatalistically determined?

- We can’t help but ask the question: what about Me?
- Is my future out of my control?

- Do my decisions mean nothing?
- And if they don't, why bother with anything?
- God's sovereign will over time and history vs human choice is the core question here.

An illustration that helped me understand it

- Human history (the big picture) is like an ocean liner—the direction is certain; the route is set.
- The Captain is in charge.
- It's his ship, HIS word is law. And the passengers have a copy of his law, his guidelines, his manual (the Bible obviously) for them to get the most out of the journey.
- ***But within the ship the passengers given quite a bit of freedom.***
- Individual actions do not affect the final destination—that is determined by the captain—however.....

Individual decisions greatly affect the traveler's time on the ship

- There is a crew with assigned tasks and if they don't do them, things don't go well.
- Also, each passenger responsible for his or her actions, his or her attitude and based on them, and what they get or don't get out of the trip.
- There is individual freedom whether they are a helpful passenger on the journey, or a peace-maker and joy-producer, or a dead weight, a bore, a constantly complainer, or someone thrown in the brig.
- They can't change the destination of the ship, but their actions greatly affect their experience of the journey.
- Remember for our analogy, all passengers have access to a copy of the instruction manual for how to live the best way possible to get along with others, for their joy and peace on the journey. No one forces them to read it—but they are responsible if they don't.
- The passengers do well to keep in mind that this is not a meandering pleasure cruise that never ends, but one with a definite destination and harbor that will be reached because of a.....

Linear view of time and history

- Many religions believe in a cyclical view of time—Eastern religions, reincarnation, going round and round “samsara-- the indefinitely repeated cycles of birth, misery, and death caused by karma.”
- Christianity quite different.
- It teaches a personal Creator started it all, not eternal impersonal matter, not karma.
- Genesis teaches creation “ex nihilo” (out of nothing) and with that our universe began.
- *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”* Rev. 1:8
- In addition to a clear beginning, Revelation 21 (and many other places) teaches us that a time will come when there will be an end to our present universe and New Heaven and a New Earth.
- Remember the earlier illustration. God created time, rules over all that happens in it and will bring it to an end when He sees fit.

Important conclusions because the Christian faith presents time as linear

- There is no reincarnation, no “do overs.”
- Though God is clearly in control of the ship of human history, and He wrote

the guidebook (our Bible) for how to live it best as He has shown us through:

- Prophecy, History, Progressive Revelation—He won't force us to read it, but we do well to remember that—
- At the end of the journey each passenger will need to give an account to the Captain, first of all over which ultimate destination each has chosen—of darkness or light.
- And for those who have chosen to trust the Captain on their journey for their time on the ship and how they used the resources they were given no matter where we found ourselves, in First Class or working in the galley.
- I have come to think of this life as our first assignment for the Captain. We are all assigned a place, a work to do and Scripture is very clear what we do in this life matters for what assignments we will be given in the ages to come.

C.S. Lewis puts the reality of our meeting with the Captain much better—switching to the metaphor of a play, but it is the same idea

Precisely because we cannot predict the moment, we must be ready at all moments. . . the curtain may be rung down at any moment. . . We do not know the play. . . the Author knows [and]. . . We are led to expect the Author will have something to say to each of us on the part that each of us has played. The playing it well is what matters infinitely.

C.S. Lewis, *the World's Last Night*

Bible 805 is committed to helping you play your part, infinitely well

- I hope that from this lesson you have been convinced that God, not humans is the author of the Bible and that the Bible is truly a book “*which teaches all that is necessary for faith and life,*”
- For living and dying and serving God forever.
- And that it should be an essential priority in your life to know it well and to live obediently.
- All the resources of Bible805.com are available freely to help you do that.
- AND all the resources of the Bible805Academy.com are available for your to freely download, modify, use without attribution to teach the lessons.

One more thing...the voice of the One Author in the entire book

- This final point is subjective, but important.
- ***Jesus said his sheep recognize his voice.***
- When we read the canonical books of the Bible, we hear one voice.
- We see this most clearly in contrast if we read books of the Apocrypha or of the Gnostic gospels; there is obviously a different voice in them.
- Looking at one example, the Gnostic ***Gospel of Thomas*** is very different than the 4 gospels in our Bibles, though some contemporary media wants you to believe it is the same.
- I think you'll hear the different voice behind even this short example from the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Thomas.
- The setting of both books is the Last Supper Jesus has with His disciples.

Gospel of John, from the Christian Bible

Gospel of John, New Testament, chapter 14

1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God[a]; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4

You know the way to the place where I am going.

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

..... 23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. 25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The Gnostic Gospel of Thomas

These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas recorded.

1. And he said, "Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death."

2. Jesus said, "Those who seek should not stop seeking until they find. When they find, they will be disturbed.

When they are disturbed, they will marvel, and will reign over all. [And after they have reigned they will rest.]"

3. Jesus said, "If your leaders say to you, 'Look, the (Father's) kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the (Father's) kingdom is within you and it is outside you.

When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living

Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you live in poverty, and you are the poverty."

7. Jesus said, "Lucky is the lion that the human will eat, so that the lion becomes human. And foul is the human that the lion will eat, and the lion still will become human."

Obviously TWO very different voices

- Not only different, but one (the Gospel of John) is clear, the other (the Gospel of Thomas) is confusing.
- Satan's communication is often like that—it stirs us up, it is upsetting, it is confusing.
- When you know the Bible well, if someone says, "the Bible teaches this or that," even though you may not be able to immediately recall a chapter and verse, you know that is not from your Lord.

Finally, the answer to the question.....

- Is the Bible "human or divine?" in who wrote it, is a question each person must answer.
- I trust the evidences of a God outside of time, predictive prophecy, and the one voice of the Bible have helped you see that the Bible is divine in its origin.
- But more than that, I encourage you to read the Bible (Bible805 has resources for beginning in the New Testament and reading through the

entire Bible chronologically) and more than any argument or lesson, allow the God of the Bible to speak to your heart and life.

- Introduce yourself to your God, the one voice of the Bible and ask Him to make Himself known to you through His Word—and He will.

Two Resources to help you get into the Bible

both available on www.amazon.com

- For beginners
- The book, ***Start Here, a plan for curious people to begin reading the Bible***
- To read the entire Bible,
- The book, ***Not Safe, but Good, Why it is important to read your Bible in chronological order and how to do it***

DISCUSSION GUIDE for The Bible, Human or Divine?

Brief Lesson Summary

This lesson asks whether the Bible is primarily a human book or truly the Word of God. It presents three reasons for believing God is the ultimate Author of the Bible: its content is anchored in true history; predictive prophecy and progressive revelation point to an Author outside the human timeline; and one consistent voice is heard throughout the Bible. The lesson also considers God's sovereign direction of history alongside meaningful human choices, the Bible's linear view of time, and the importance of knowing the Bible well enough to recognize and obey the voice of its Author.

Ice-breaker Question

When you first began reading or hearing the Bible, what most influenced the way you viewed it—as a human religious book, as God's Word, or somewhere in between?

Discussion Questions for a Group; Journal Questions for Individual Study

1. The lesson begins with two ways to view the Bible: primarily as the work of human authors, or as the authoritative Word of God spoken through human authors. What difference does our starting view of the Bible make in how we read it and respond to it?
 2. Why is the Bible's connection to identifiable people, places, historical periods, and events important when considering its claim to divine authorship? How does fulfilled predictive prophecy add to that evidence?
 3. The lesson uses the picture of someone viewing a parade from above to explain how God can know and reveal what is coming. How does the idea that God exists outside of time help you understand Biblical prophecy?
 4. What is progressive revelation? Using the lesson's example of sacrifice—from Genesis and Job, through the Old Testament sacrificial system, to Jesus as the Lamb of God—how does this theme support the idea of one Author behind the Bible?
 5. The ocean-liner illustration presents God as directing the destination of human history while passengers still make meaningful choices during the journey. How does this illustration help you think about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
 6. The lesson contrasts the clear, consistent voice of the canonical Bible with the very different voice of the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas. Why is knowing the Bible well so important for recognizing teaching that does not agree with it?
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Life Application Suggestions, consider and respond

1. Examine your own view of the Bible. Write a sentence describing what you believe about its authorship and authority, and consider how consistently your daily choices reflect that belief.
2. Choose one example of predictive prophecy mentioned in the lesson and read both the prediction and the later Biblical or historical fulfillment. Consider what this teaches you about God's relationship to time and history.
3. Trace one theme of progressive revelation through the Bible—such as sacrifice, sin, redemption, grace, or the promised Messiah—and note how later passages expand and clarify what was introduced earlier.
4. Make regular Bible reading a priority, not simply to gain information, but to know God's voice and to live obediently. Ask God to make Himself known to you through His Word.

Prayer Focus

Ask God to deepen your confidence that the Bible is His Word and to help you understand it accurately. Pray for discernment to recognize His voice, humility to obey what He teaches, and faithfulness to use the life and opportunities He has given you well.

THE BIBLE IN WORLD HISTORY

Biblical events • writers & prophets • major events happening in the wider world

ERA	BIBLICAL EVENTS	WRITERS & PROPHETS	WORLD HISTORY
~2000- 1500 BC	PATRIARCHS Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & Joseph Joseph goes to Egypt	Job - placed in this era	Egyptian Middle Kingdom Code of Hammurabi in Babylon
~1500- 1000 BC	EXODUS & JUDGES Moses leads the Exodus Israel settles in Canaan	Moses • Joshua • Samuel Traditional associations include Judges & Ruth	New Kingdom Egypt Trojan War Bronze Age Collapse
~1000- 586 BC	KINGS & KINGDOM Saul • David • Solomon Temple built • Kingdom divides	David • Solomon Jonah • Amos • Hosea • Isaiah • Micah Nahum • Zephaniah • Habakkuk • Jeremiah	Neo-Assyrian Empire rises First Olympics (776 BC) Rome founded (753 BC)
~586- 330 BC	EXILE & RETURN Jerusalem falls to Babylon Return under Cyrus • Temple rebuilt	Jeremiah • Ezekiel • Daniel Haggai • Zechariah • Malachi Ezra • Nehemiah	Babylonian then Persian dominance Cyrus the Great • Classical Greece Confucius & Buddha
~330- 1 BC	INTERTESTAMENTAL ERA Maccabean Revolt Period between the Testaments	No biblical books traditionally dated to this period in the Protestant canon	Alexander the Great Hellenistic kingdoms Rise of Roman Republic
~1- 100 AD	NEW TESTAMENT ERA Life of Jesus • Early Church Paul's missionary journeys	Matthew • Mark • Luke • John Paul • James • Peter • Jude Hebrews - author uncertain	Roman Empire Augustus & Tiberius Jerusalem destroyed (AD 70)

Illustration of God's View of Time

This illustration shows how God is simultaneously aware of and knows all of time, past, present, and future and in contrast how we humans only experience one particular point of time.

This illustrates also how God can tell us in the Bible what will happen because He knows all of it in advance of us encountering it on our timeline.

Prophecy is not some mysterious thing, but simply how a caring God communicates what His people need to know.

Links to a podcast and video on this topic are also on www.Bible805.com

