

# Evidence for the Bible—Part 1

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The Bible claims to be and proves to be the Word of God. It was written by prophets of God, under the inspiration of God.

## Written by Prophets of God

The biblical authors were prophets and apostles of God. There are many designations for a prophet, and these are informative about their role in producing Scripture. They are called:

1. A *man of God* (1 Kings 12:22), meaning chosenness.
2. A *servant of the Lord* (1 Kings 14:18), indicating faithfulness.
3. A *messenger of the Lord* (Isa. 42:19), showing mission.
4. A *seer* (*ro'eh*), or *beholder* (*hozeh*) (Isa. 30:9-10), revealing insight from God.
5. A *man of the Spirit* (Hosea 9:7 KJV; cf. Micah 3:8), noting spiritual indwelling.
6. A *watchman* (Ezek. 3:17), relating alertness for God.
7. A *prophet* (most frequently), marking a spokesman for God.

The work of a biblical prophet is described in vivid terms: “The Lord has spoken; who can but prophesy” (Amos 3:8). He is the one who speaks “all the words which the Lord has spoken” (Exod. 4:30). God said to Moses of a prophet, “I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (Deut. 18:18). He added, “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take away from it” (Deut. 4:2). Jeremiah was commanded: “This is what the Lord says: Stand in the courtyard of the Lord’s house and speak to all the people.... Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word” (Jer. 26:2).

A prophet was someone who said what God told him to say, no more and no less.

## Moved by the Spirit of God

Throughout Scripture, the authors claimed to be under the direction of the Holy Spirit. David said, “The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2). Peter, speaking of the whole Old Testament, added, “Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

Not all prophets were known by that term. David and Solomon were kings. But they were mouthpieces of God, and David is called a “prophet” in Acts 2:29-39. Moses was a law-giver. He too was a prophet or spokesman for God (Deut. 18:18). Amos disclaimed the term “prophet,” in that he was not a professional prophet, like Samuel and his “school of the prophets” (1 Sam. 19:20). Even if Amos was not a prophet by office, he was one by gift (cf. Amos 7:14). God used him to speak. Nor did all prophets speak in an explicit “Thus says the Lord” first-person style. Those who wrote historical narrative spoke in an implied “Thus *did* the Lord” approach. Their message was about the acts of God in relation to the people and their sins. In each case God made the prophet a channel through which to convey his message to us.

## Breathed Out by God

Writing about the entire Old Testament canon, the apostle Paul declared: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Jesus described the Scriptures as the very “word that comes out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). They were written *by men who spoke from God*. Paul said his writings were “words... which the Holy Spirit teaches” (1 Cor. 2:13). As Jesus said to the Pharisees, “How is it then that David, *speaking by the Spirit*, calls him ‘Lord’?” (Matt. 22:43, emphasis added).

## What the Bible Says

The basic logic of the inerrancy of Scripture is offered in the articles *Alleged Errors in the Bible* (*ATRI Journal*, September, October 2000, Theological Dictionary). That the Bible is God’s inerrant Word is expressed in several ways in Scripture. One is the formula, “What the Bible says, God says.” An Old Testament passage claims God said something, yet when this text is cited in the New Testament, the text tells us that the Scriptures said it. Sometimes the reverse is true. In the Old Testament it is said that the Bible records something. The New Testament declares that God said it. Consider this comparison:

### What God Says... The Bible Says

Genesis 12:3... Galatians 3:8  
Exodus 9:16... Romans 9:17

### What the Bible Says... God Says

Genesis 2:24... Matthew 19:4, 5  
Psalm 2:1... Acts 4:24, 25  
Psalm 2:7... Hebrews 3:7  
Psalm 16:10... Acts 13:35  
Psalm 95:7... Hebrews 3:7  
Psalm 97:7... Hebrews 3:7  
Psalm 104:4... Hebrews 3:7  
Isaiah 55:3... Acts 13:34

## Scripture’s Claims

### “Thus Says the Lord.”

Phrases such as “thus says the Lord” (for example, Isa. 1:11, 18; Jer. 2:3, 5), “God said” (Gen. 1:3), and “the Word of the Lord came” (Jer. 34:1; Ezek. 30:1) are used hundreds of times in Scripture to stress God’s direct, verbal inspiration of what was written.

### “The Word of God.”

At some points the Bible claims, forthrightly and unequivocally, to be “the Word of God.” Referring to Old Testament commands, Jesus told the Jews of his day, “Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition” (Matt. 15:6). Paul speaks of the Scriptures as “the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:2). Peter declares, “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23). The writer of Hebrews affirms, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12).

### ***The Claim of Divine Authority.***

Other words or phrases used in Scripture entail the claim of God's authority. Jesus said the Bible will never pass away and is sufficient for faith and life (Luke 16:31; cf. 2 Tim, 3:16-17). He proclaimed that the Bible possesses divine inspiration (Matt. 22:43) and authority (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). It has unity (Luke 24:27; John 5:39) and spiritual clarity (Luke 24:25).

### **The Extent of Its Biblical Authority**

The extent of divine authority in Scripture includes:

1. all that is written—2 Timothy 3:16;
2. even the very words—Matthew 22:43; 1 Corinthians 2:13;
3. and tenses of verbs—Matthew 22:32; Galatians 3:16;
4. including even the smallest parts of words—Matthew 5:17, 18.

Even though the Bible was not verbally dictated by God, the result is as perfectly God's thoughts as if it had been. The Bible's authors claimed that God is the source of the very words, since he supernaturally superintended the process by which each human wrote, using their vocabulary and style to record his message (2 Peter 1:20-21).

### ***Presented in Human Terms***

Although the Bible claims to be the Word of God, it is also the words of human beings. It claims to be God's communication to people, in their own language and expressions.

First, every book in the Bible was the composition of *human writers*.

Second, the Bible manifests different *human literary styles*, from the mournful meter of lamentations to the exalted poetry of Isaiah, from the simple grammar of John to the complex Greek of Hebrews. Their choices of metaphors show that different writers used their own background and interests. James is interested in nature. Jesus uses urban metaphors, and Hosea those of rural life.

Third, the Bible manifests *human perspectives and emotions*; David spoke in Psalm 23 from a shepherd's perspective; Kings is written from a prophetic vantage point, and Chronicles from a priestly point of view; Acts manifests a historical interest and 2 Timothy a pastor's heart. Paul expressed grief over the Israelites who had rejected God (Rom. 9:2).

Fourth, the Bible reveals *human thought patterns and processes*, including reasoning (Romans) and memory (1 Cor. 1:14-16).

Fifth, writers of the Bible used *human sources for information*, including historical research (Luke 1:1-4) and noncanonical writings (Josh. 10:13; Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12; Jude 9, 14).

(To be continued)

