

THE BIBLE: ONE STORY, ONE AUTHOR

BIG IDEA: The Bible is one unified story, written through many human authors, with God as its ultimate Author—and Jesus Christ at the center of the story.

KEY TRUTH: When we understand the Bible as one story written by one ultimate Author, we begin to see how every part of Scripture points us toward God's plan of redemption fulfilled in Jesus.

1. THE BIBLE IS ONE STORY

The Bible contains:

- **66 books**
- Approximately **40 human authors**
- Written over approximately **1,500 years**
- Written in different places and circumstances
- Yet it tells one overarching story.

The Big Story

Part of the Story	What Happens
CREATION	God creates the world and humanity
FALL	Sin enters God's creation
PROMISE	God promises a Redeemer
PREPARATION	God works through Israel and prepares for the Messiah
REDEMPTION	Jesus comes, dies, and rises again
PROCLAMATION	The gospel goes to the nations
RESTORATION	God makes all things new

In one sentence: God created us → sin separated us → God promised a Redeemer → Jesus came to redeem us → the gospel goes to the nations → Jesus will restore all things.

2. JESUS SAID THE SCRIPTURES ARE ABOUT HIM

Read Luke 24:25–27; Jesus meets two disciples after His resurrection.

What does Jesus explain to them?

Luke 24:27 says Jesus explained: “in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Read John 5:39–40; Jesus says: “The Scriptures ... bear witness about me.”

The religious leaders knew the Scriptures, but they failed to recognize the One to whom the Scriptures pointed.

Can someone know the Bible without truly knowing God? Why?

KEY PRINCIPLE: The goal of Bible study isn't merely to know more about the Bible. It is to know God and the truth He has revealed—including His Son, Jesus Christ.

3. JESUS CONFIRMED THE WHOLE STORY

Read Luke 24:44–49

Jesus specifically refers to:

1. The _____
2. The _____
3. The _____

Jesus tells His disciples that everything written about Him had to be _____.

Why is it important that Jesus connected His life, death, and resurrection with the Old Testament Scriptures?

4. THE STORY OF JESUS RUNS THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament progressively builds the story of God's plan of redemption.

GENESIS 3:15 — THE PROMISE: God promises that the offspring of the woman will ultimately crush the serpent.

What problem introduced in Genesis 3 does the rest of Scripture address?

GENESIS 12:1–3 — THE BLESSING: God tells Abraham: “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Compare **Galatians 3:8, 16**.

How does God's promise to Abraham connect to Jesus?

2 SAMUEL 7:12–16 — THE KING: God promises David an everlasting kingdom.

Compare:

- Matthew 1:1
- Luke 1:32–33
- Acts 2:29–36

Who is the ultimate King in David's line?

ISAIAH 53 — THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Read Isaiah 53:4–6.

The servant would:

- ☐ Be rejected
- ☐ Suffer
- ☐ Bear our sins
- ☐ Be wounded/pierced
- ☐ Bring healing

Compare **1 Peter 2:24**.

MICAH 5:2 — THE BIRTHPLACE

Micah identifies _____ as the birthplace of the coming ruler.

Compare **Matthew 2:1–6**.

PSALM 22 — THE SUFFERING MESSIAH

Compare:

Psalms 22 New Testament

Psalms 22:1 Matthew 27:46

Psalms 22:7–8 Matthew 27:39–43

Psalms 22:16 John 19:23–24

Psalms 22:18 John 19:23–24

Psalm 22 New Testament

BIG PICTURE: The point isn't simply to find isolated predictions. **The Old Testament progressively reveals God's plan of redemption that is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.**

5. HOW MANY PROPHECIES ARE IN THE BIBLE?

There is **no universally agreed number** because scholars differ on how prophecy should be defined and counted.

One major scholarly catalog identifies approximately: **1,817 predictive prophecies** throughout Scripture.

Christian scholars commonly identify **300+ Old Testament passages or prophetic features** that find fulfillment in Jesus, although the exact number depends on how prophecy is counted.

IMPORTANT: We don't need to depend on an exact number to make the case. The stronger approach is to examine **specific examples** and see how the biblical story develops.

Examples:

- **Messiah from Abraham** — Genesis 12:3
- **Messiah from David** — 2 Samuel 7:12–16
- **Born in Bethlehem** — Micah 5:2
- **Suffering Servant** — Isaiah 53
- **Betrayed** — Psalm 41:9
- **Suffering and crucifixion** — Psalm 22
- **Pierced** — Zechariah 12:10
- **Resurrection** — Psalm 16:10

6. ONE AUTHOR — MANY HUMAN WRITERS

The Bible has many human authors.

- Moses.
- David.
- Isaiah.
- Jeremiah.
- Luke.
- Matthew.
- John.
- Paul.

- Peter.
- And many others.

Yet Scripture teaches that God was working through them. **Read 2 Peter 1:20–21**

Complete the thought: “Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the _____.”

Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17, “All Scripture is _____ out by God.”

Scripture is useful for:

- ☐ Teaching
- ☐ Reproof
- ☐ Correction
- ☐ Training in righteousness

The result: “that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every _____.”

KEY TRUTH: God is the ultimate Author of Scripture, working through human authors by the Holy Spirit.

7. CAN WE TRUST THE TEXT?

One reason the Bible can be examined historically is that we possess a remarkably large manuscript tradition.

NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

There are **5,000+ Greek New Testament manuscripts**, plus thousands of additional manuscripts in other ancient languages. These range from tiny fragments to nearly complete New Testaments.

Why does this matter? The manuscripts give scholars a large body of evidence for comparing different copies and determining the earliest attainable wording of the New Testament.

Important distinction: Thousands of manuscripts does NOT mean thousands of complete Bibles. It means thousands of surviving witnesses to portions or all of the New Testament.

8. HOW OLD ARE THE MANUSCRIPTS?

OLDEST KNOWN BIBLICAL TEXT

- **Ketef Hinnom Silver Scrolls**
- Approximately **7th–6th century BC**
- They contain wording corresponding to: **Numbers 6:24–26**
- This gives us biblical text preserved approximately **2,500–2,700 years ago**.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

- Approximately **3rd century BC–1st century AD**
- They contain portions of almost every Old Testament book.

GREAT ISAIAH SCROLL

- Approximately **125 BC**
- Contains essentially the entire book of Isaiah.
- This is particularly significant because Isaiah contains major passages concerning the coming Messiah, including Isaiah 52–53.

9. THE NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

P52 — JOHN 18

Generally dated to approximately **AD 100–150**, although the exact date is debated.

It contains a small portion of John's Gospel.

Other important early manuscripts include:

- **P46** — substantial portions of Paul's letters
- **P66** — substantial John
- **P75** — large portions of Luke and John
- **Codex Vaticanus** — 4th century
- **Codex Sinaiticus** — 4th century

WHY THIS MATTERS

The Bible has an unusually large and geographically diverse manuscript tradition for an ancient work.

This doesn't by itself prove divine inspiration.

But it gives us substantial evidence for determining **what the biblical authors wrote**.

10. WHAT ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGY?

Archaeology cannot prove every theological claim of the Bible. But archaeology has repeatedly confirmed that the Bible accurately reflects ancient:

- People
- Places

- Kings
- Governments
- Cities
- Customs
- Political events
- Historical settings

Some examples:

THE HOUSE OF DAVID

- Tel Dan Stele
- Approximately 9th century BC
- Contains the expression: "House of David"
- This provides important extra-biblical evidence for the Davidic dynasty.
- Compare: 2 Samuel 7:12–16

HEZEKIAH AND SENNACHERIB

The Bible records the Assyrian invasion of Judah during Hezekiah's reign.

Read:

- 2 Kings 18–19
- Isaiah 36–37
- 2 Chronicles 32

The **Sennacherib Prism** records Sennacherib's campaign and identifies **Hezekiah** and Jerusalem.

Think about it: The Bible's account isn't occurring in a mythical, disconnected world. It is describing people and events that existed within the wider historical world of the ancient Near East.

PONTIUS PILATE

- The New Testament identifies **Pontius Pilate** as the Roman official involved in Jesus' trial.
- Archaeologists discovered the: **Pilate Stone** at Caesarea. It identifies Pontius Pilate and confirms his position as a Roman official in Judea.

THE POOL OF SILOAM

- **Read John 9:1–11**
- Jesus tells the blind man to wash in the: **Pool of** _____.
- Archaeological excavation identified the ancient Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA

- **Read John 5:1–9**
- John describes the Pool of Bethesda and its unusual architectural features.

- Archaeological excavations uncovered a pool complex consistent with John's description.

WHY THIS MATTERS Archaeology doesn't prove that Jesus performed the miracle. But it demonstrates that John's Gospel is grounded in a real historical and geographical setting.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS — A POWERFUL TEST

- Before the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the oldest substantial Hebrew manuscripts of much of the Old Testament were approximately **1,000 years later** than the original composition of many books. Then manuscripts from before the time of Jesus were discovered.
- **What would you expect if the Old Testament had been radically changed during those centuries?**
- Instead, comparison with the later Masoretic tradition showed remarkable textual continuity, while also revealing the normal kinds of scribal variations found in manuscript transmission.

KEY THOUGHT: The Dead Sea Scrolls give us ancient witnesses with which to compare the later Hebrew biblical tradition.

11. THREE DANGERS IN BIBLE STUDY

1. MAKING THE BIBLE PRIMARILY ABOUT ME

- Example: "David killed Goliath, therefore I need to kill my Goliaths."
- There may be an application there. But David and Goliath isn't primarily about **me defeating my problems**. It belongs within the larger story of God's covenant, His people, His promises, and His purposes.

2. KNOWING FACTS WITHOUT KNOWING GOD

- The Pharisees knew Scripture. But Jesus said they failed to come to Him. **John 5:39–40**
- **Bible knowledge without relationship with God can miss the very Person Scripture reveals.**

3. READING ISOLATED VERSES

Remember:

- **A verse is part of a paragraph.**
- **A paragraph is part of a book.**
- **A book is part of the Bible.**
- **The Bible tells one story.**

12. HOW SHOULD I READ THE BIBLE?

When you open God's Word, ask:

1. **WHAT DOES IT SAY?** What does the actual text say?
2. **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** What did it mean in its original context?
3. **WHAT DOES IT REVEAL ABOUT GOD?** What does this teach me about God's character and purposes?
4. **WHERE DOES IT FIT IN THE STORY?** How does this passage fit into the larger biblical story?
5. **HOW DOES IT POINT ME TO CHRIST?** What does this reveal about God's plan of redemption?
6. **HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?** What should I believe, change, do, or trust?

13. SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- The Bible is God's Word, 2 Timothy 3:16–17
- Scripture is inspired by God, 2 Peter 1:20–21
- Scripture points to Jesus, John 5:39–40
- Jesus explained the Old Testament, Luke 24:25–27
- Jesus said the Scriptures would be fulfilled, Luke 24:44–49
- God's Word is living and active, Hebrews 4:12
- God's Word gives direction, Psalm 119:105
- God's Word guards us from sin, Psalm 119:11
- We must do—not merely hear—the Word, James 1:22–25
- Scripture gives encouragement and hope, Romans 15:4
- The Holy Spirit helps us understand, 1 Corinthians 2:12–14

14. QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. What stood out to you most from today's study?

2. Why is it important to see the Bible as one unified story?

3. What difference does it make that God is the ultimate Author of Scripture?

4. Which archaeological or manuscript evidence was most interesting to you?

5. Why is it important to distinguish between **evidence that supports the historical reliability of Scripture** and **evidence that proves theological claims**?

6. What are some ways we can accidentally make the Bible primarily about ourselves?

7. How does seeing Jesus throughout Scripture change the way you read the Old Testament?

8. What is one change you need to make in the way you study God's Word?

15. MY PERSONAL RESPONSE

Something I learned:

Something that challenged me:

Something I need to change:

Something I want to study further:

TAKE-HOME CHALLENGE

- The next time you read a passage of Scripture, don't ask only: **"What does this verse mean to me?"** Ask:
 1. What does this reveal about God?
 2. Where does this fit in the story of Scripture?
 3. How does this point me toward Jesus?
 4. How should I respond?