

Is the Bible a Reliable Pathway to God?

Article 2 of 8 – The Bible’s Self-Claims

By Robert A. Mimiaga

Back in 1958 a toymaker, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, patented a stud-and-tube coupling principle that the creator claimed was a “System of Play” that would nurture imagination, logical thinking, and problem-solving skills in children’s playtime. Many leaders in the toy industry rejected the idea at first, but Christiansen forged ahead with his plan to create what is now known as The Lego Group.¹ The Lego Group’s self-claims about their toy’s ability to introduce creativity and logical thinking into children’s playtime not only proved true but also highly profitable!

In this second article, we are going to investigate the Bible’s self-claims, that is, how the Bible describes and identifies itself, and its claims to be spiritually profitable. Obviously, to accomplish this, we must examine passages in Scripture to determine what it asserts about itself. Keep in mind that on their own merit, these self-claims do not demonstrate the reliability of the Bible in providing a pathway to God. But this information will help us better understand the Bible’s claims about itself, so that as we examine the evidence from future articles, we will be well positioned to assess its overall reliability.


What does the Bible say about its own intention and usefulness to its readers?

The Bible’s Origin and Purpose

Let’s start with the writings of the apostle Paul, who claims that “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In this passage, Paul is direct in claiming the origin of the text originated with God as he proclaims that “**All Scripture is God-breathed.**” “God-breathed” comes from the Greek term *theopneustos*, meaning “inspired by God,” and was intended to convey the idea that God guided the authors to write the collection of books contained in the Bible. Paul believed that God’s fingerprint of purpose and intent can be found in every word of scripture from the first book of Genesis to the last book of Revelation.²

The apostle Paul continues his passage by stating the purpose of the Bible’s content is “for *teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness...*,” emphasizing what he believed to be the transformative worth of the Scriptures. Paul sees the merit of the Bible as providing more than bedtime stories, old adages, or suggestions for pleasant living.

Paul claimed these words were the revelation of our Heavenly Father, to communicate divine wisdom, instruction, and hope to those who read it with an open heart and serious intent.



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Another self-claim from the Bible comes from the apostle Peter, who wrote a letter about the prophecies from the Old Testament. *“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. 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.”* (2 Peter 1:20-21)

In this passage, the apostle Peter affirmed that the source of the Old Testament prophecies didn’t originate in the minds of the prophets or authors, but instead, they were inspired by God himself and stirred into the minds and hearts of their authors by the Holy Spirit. This is arguably a profound and reflective passage that, if true, demands our urgent attention. Another similar passage is found in 1 Corinthians 2:13, affirming the words of the Bible originated from the Holy Spirit of God.

Donald Arthur Carson, a Distinguished Emeritus Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, explains the source of the words of Scripture this way: “When Christians speak of the authority of Scripture, ... because Christians believe that this word, even though it’s mediated through many different

human authors, nevertheless, is God-breathed and is revealed by God and is utterly reliable and all that it says ... it is trustworthy and therefore, because it is from God it has God’s authority.”³

What about the claim that the Bible has the power to affect change in a person’s life?

Impact of the Bible

Another biblical self-claim is about the transformative powers of the Bible. In the book of Hebrews the author writes, *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”* (Hebrews 4:12) In this passage the author testifies that God’s Word in the Bible is much more than just frivolous text on the pages of a book. The author of Hebrews states God’s Word is *alive* and *active*. That’s a pretty remarkable statement. The Greek term for “alive” is *energes*, from which we get our word “energy.” Consequently, the author believes that God’s word causes action and transformation in the minds and souls of its readers by revealing and judging their thoughts and feelings for the purpose of causing a godly change in their lives.

This metaphor description represents the idea that *God’s Word* is suited to detect hypocrisy and to lay open the true nature of the feelings of the soul so that there can be no escape for the guilty. God’s “truth” is self-powered to bring out man’s real feelings and to show him exactly what he is.⁴

What about some of the other self-claims of the Bible, where God’s personal statements can be found throughout the Old and New Testaments of the Bible? What do they imply?

God's Personal Statements

Many of these statements that appear to be directly from God begin with *"The Lord says..."*, *"The Lord spoke..."*, or other instances of pronouncements from God. Here are two examples:

"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" (Genesis 2:16-17)"

"And God spoke all these words: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.'" (Exodus 20:1-3)

Dr. Wayne Grudem, a university professor and theologian, in his book *Systematic Theology*, made the following comment about the personal addresses of God in the Bible. "In these and several other instances where God spoke words of personal address to individual people, it was clear to the hearers that these were the actual words of God: they were hearing God's very voice, and they were therefore hearing words that had absolute divine authority and that were absolutely trustworthy."⁵

Dr. Grudem claims that God himself spoke the words of personal address, which adds importance and authority to these promises, warnings, and commands. In the Bible, there are roughly 400 to 500 widely accepted direct quotations from God, appearing in forms such as direct speech, narrative descriptions, and prophetic revelations.

Dr. Grudem believes the Bible is a collection of God's revelations, proclamations, and commands, which are spoken to humanity to encourage, admonish, warn, and shape us into the image of Christ.

But what about the claims recorded in the Bible of those people who supposedly experienced a genuine and unmistakable transformation in their own lives through the Bible's messages?

Claims people made in the Bible

There are numerous accounts of people recorded in the Bible who heard teachings from Scripture and were profoundly changed by its words and promises. Here are several examples.

"Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.'" For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 9:8-10) In this passage, it was noted that when the Law was read aloud, the people wept, repented, and then rejoiced—resulting in clear emotional and spiritual transformation through hearing the Scriptures.



On another occasion in the Book of Acts, there is an account of the apostle Peter speaking to the crowds in Jerusalem soon after Jesus' crucifixion and testifying through the Old Testament Scriptures why it had occurred. This passage continues with an explanation of the crowd's response.

“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do? ... “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” (Acts 2:36-41)

We can find other examples in the Bible of people claiming to have been powerfully impacted by hearing the words of scripture. All of us have read fiction and nonfiction literature from time to time that has stirred our emotions, stretched our imagination, and expanded our understanding about ourselves, our world, and the people around us. But how do we reconcile the claim that, according to the biblical record, thousands of people have experienced profound spiritual transformation and entered into a loving relationship with God through hearing and embracing the words of Scripture?

Once again, I’d like to conclude by stating that these self-claims in themselves do not prove that the Bible is a reliable pathway to God. But our takeaway from this article provides us with a clear picture of what the Bible claims itself to be.

We are now in a better position to examine the other perspectives of the Bible in light of these self-claims. In the next article, we will explore the textual preservation of the Old Testament books and learn about the modern methods used to evaluate the textual accuracy of both biblical and secular ancient manuscripts.

For the complete set of ***Is the Bible a Reliable Pathway to God?*** articles, visit my Facebook Page Library:

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¹ The Lego Group, “The LEGO System in Play,” corporate history materials and archival timeline, LEGO.com.

² Portions of this section are adapted from my previously published small group series by Robert A. Mimiaga and Lew Davies, “Can You Really Trust the Bible?” (New Hope Church, Bend, OR, 2011)

³ Carson, Don A. Quoted in “Interview with D. A. Carson, editor of *The Enduring Authority of*

the Christian Scriptures,” Books At a Glance, accessed January 3, 2026

⁴ BibleHub, *Commentary on Hebrews 4:12*, accessed January 3, 2026, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/hebrews/4-12.htm>

⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 48.