

## The Bible's Hidden Glory

Sermon August 21, 2022

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 1:4–10 and Psalm 71:1–6

**Golden Verse:** *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations ... I have put my words in your mouth.”* Jeremiah 1: 5, 9/b

One of the biggest wonders of human history is Christmas.

At Christmas, in Jesus of Nazareth, the living God Himself came to this earth as a human being. He left His divine glory behind and walked on this earth as a casual person. In Christ, we saw God's eternal glory.

Today, God continues to do His work on earth in a very special way by electing casual people, like you and me, who are representing Jesus Himself. Through these people, Jesus Christ continues His work on this earth. All these people are called Jesus' followers and they created the church.

God's words, and God's work through the centuries are presented to us through the Bible. God is revealing Himself, His power, and His will through this book, called the Bible. Those who do not want to accept the Bible as God's word, and stand against the Bible, usually summarize their objection saying that **the Bible was written by humans**.

Yes, that's true. The Bible was written by humans. The Bible is really not a miracle book dropped from the sky. The Bible was written by people who are created by flesh and blood, people who aged, and people from different eras and different cultures. In the Bible, there are stylistic differences and a wide variety of psychological characteristics of those individuals who wrote the Bible. At that time when they wrote their parts, the natural scientific vision of the world was quite different from ours today. The writers of the Bible lived and wrote based on their own old worldview's ideas. If we analyze the words and the parables of our Saviour Jesus Christ, we notice that He is using His examples from His own world. He is using examples based on what people experienced and understood 2,000 years ago.

Some of them cannot be compared to our present worldview. Some would say that those parables or laws are way outdated according to our own world in 2022.

We see that the Bible was written and influenced by humans since in some cases there are contradictions in how some different people commented about the same situation, or about an idea, or about some dates. We can say that the Bible was written by humans, who were not perfect.

But let's go one step further! Now let's try to examine the Bible from the point of view of what spirit works in it, and whose spirit is behind the writers. The Bible was written by real people who in their sentences included their own human spiritual characteristics and their values. But we know that they were tools used by God. They were elected by God and they were constantly in God's hands.

As they wrote **the Bible's verses, they were constantly inspired by God's Holy Spirit, who took the lead above their limited way of thinking.**

Let us see what the apostle Peter, as one of the authors of the biblical texts, says to us answering our question: *"We did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him, I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 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 1:16-21.

Peter is in complete agreement with the other authors of the Bible when he says: we do not speak for ourselves or from ourselves, we do not want to describe what thoughts we have formed in ourselves about God, about the world, about people, about eternal life, but with all that we say and the way we live, we want to bear witness to what God himself showed and told us in some very special moments. We tell and describe everything that the Eternal God Himself has made so powerful and certain; we cannot remain quiet but we are forced to share with others.

The Bible is not an expression of general human religious ideas. Those who wrote the Bible were called by God to this sacred and unique service. It often happened

that they themselves did not even want to be called for this sacred service. They did not want to be instruments and carriers of a divine commission. They were reluctant, they wanted to escape from the assignment. They felt the pressure of their call. God's call burdened their heart and conscience in many ways.

For example, Moses did not want to take on the task of leading his people out of Egypt. He bargained with God until he finally gave up. Jeremiah was horrified by the task God had sent him to do. He feels unfit for it. He begs God, who speaks to him to send someone else, a more suitable person. But he had to go to accept the call, he had to speak in God's name and this cost him his life. God forced Jeremiah to take the prophet's duty and responsibility, although that cost his earthly life. This happened to Paul, Peter, John, and the evangelists as well.

This is the real secret of the Bible and the invincible vitality of the Bible, that it was written by real people and these people bear all the limitations of their age, language, and level of social and cultural progress, but what they say and write is not their own religious fantasy, but a sacred testimony resulting from a divine encounter. This is why they were able to suffer, fight, and even sacrifice their lives with joy for the words they uttered. Their writings are not a result of their own human wisdom, but it is God's words and God's truth. No matter how different the individual writers are in terms of age, level of education, dialect, perception, and spirit, always the same one living God talks through them, the Lord of history, the Eternal God, the creator of mankind. As Peter says, the holy men spoke moved by the Holy Spirit.

One of the deepest mysteries of divine condescension lies in the fact that God puts His holy word on the lips of sinful people, in the mouths of people who **shared the received message**.

It is so nice how Martin Luther, the Reformer, compared the Bible to the Christmas story, when he said: As the divine Child of Bethlehem was covered in poor swaddling clothes, and laid in a miserable stable, in the manger, so there is also the word of divine truth - in very poor clothing, in human speech and writing. The swaddling clothes were poor and cheap but were holding a precious treasure, the body of Christ. And only those who hunger and thirst for life and truth will find the life stream of eternity and the shining glory of God among the torn and often patched words of the Bible.

God reveals Himself in this world in the lowliness of His servants. God prefers to reveal Himself through human beings and through human speech, so that His word may spread among us and into our world.

**The secret of this wonderful book is that the Bible contains God's words translated to us by God's servants, who were guided by the Holy Spirit.** This is why it has remained to this day, for many thousands of years. People, world powers, and cultures changed and disappeared, but the Bible remained, and even today speaks to the people to renew us and to refresh us with impressive power. Even today, though parts of the Bible are more than 3,000 years old, God shares with humanity God's will: how God feels about us, how much love He has towards us, and what huge future plans He has for human history.

In the Bible, we won't find any information on HOW God created heaven and earth, and the cosmos, but we can find out what is in our own hearts, how we can get rid of the burden of our sins, how we can be prepared for a happy and joyful life, what can we expect beyond death and the grave, and how we can we find peace with ourselves.

People who create their opinion about the Bible should check first their attitude as they approach the Bible. Those who are looking for human errors will find human errors in it, but those who want to find God, will find the loving and caring God.

Let's try to read the Psalms or the gospels during difficult spiritual and internal struggles, and we will find that strength, healing and reconciliation will move into our hearts. We will experience that **the life and power of Eternal God will flow into our hearts and our thirsty spirit will be satisfied.**

If we continue to read the Bible, we will recognize in it God's love for us. When we take our Bible in our hands, we should pray for open ears, so that behind the human words, we could understand God's call and God's message. Let us pray for enlightened vision so that we can glimpse the figure of the living Jesus Christ in the clothing of human words, who wants to lead us to all truth with his words.

Let us look for God Himself in the Bible, and then each word of the Bible turn in us into unspeakably great guidance and strength in the midst of our problems and struggles. Then each chapter, each story, and each letter will affect us with such an impressive blessing. And after a while, we will realize, that we can no longer imagine our life without a Bible, but the Bible will be our best friend, from where we can always receive strength, consolation, peace, joy, blessing, and eternal life.

Amen