



Introduction to Bible Prophecy: Justifying the Assumptions

Note: Scripture used in this Bible Study is from the New King James Version.

In order to better appreciate this introduction to Bible prophecy, there are four assumptions that need to be accepted at least for the purpose of this class...

1. God is
2. God is Almighty
3. God created us for a purpose
4. God's Word is true

Let's spend a little time on these assumptions to make sure everyone understands what we're talking about here...

1. God is... If there wasn't a Bible or teachers addressing spiritual matters, how could a person know that God exists?

The evidence of God's work is in His creation. If you were walking along a beach and found a watch, would you think that the watch washed up on the beach after being formed by wave action from the minerals in the sea? NO! If there is a watch, there had to be a watch-maker. Likewise, if there is a creation, there had to be a Creator.

How does the creation prove that people are a product of intelligent design and not evolution?

If people came into being by a truly random process, we have a lot of parts that serve no useful functions. But in reality what we see is irreducible complexity. Consider the eye for example. The eye is a complex organ yet if you take away any one part of it, the cornea, the iris, the symbiotic fluid, the retina, the optic nerve, it will not function.

Evolution is one of the delusions of the age in which we live. The Bible explains why this deception came about...

Romans 1:18-21 - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and

Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

This passage makes it clear that God's existence should be obvious to all because of the creation and those who reject this concept do so because they have chosen to reject the truth.

Why do people reject the truth about God?

Because accepting the truth about God comes with a responsibility to yield yourself to Him and people have a propensity to avoid responsibility. People naturally like being their own authority, they don't like having someone over them telling them what to do.

What is the danger in rejecting the truth about God?

There are consequences for rejecting the truth and not fulfilling the reason we were created. All people are either under God's grace or under His wrath, and the choice as to which of these we are under is our own.

2. God is almighty... this is the most important attribute of God. What does it mean that God is Almighty?

God is sovereign and there is nothing that He can not do except to act contrary to His own nature. The Bible does not present God as having set everything in motion at the creation then sat back to watch history unfold. God is in control and is actively involved in His creation.

How does accepting God's Almighty nature help us to see that his prophecies about what will happen in the future is 100% accurate?

God is outside the confines of time. Time is just one more dimension that He created to give us a context for our lives. Time is one of the ways we relate to the universe. God created the universe but He Himself is not constrained by His own creation. So it follows that whatever God says will happen, will happen...

Isaiah 46:9-10 - Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'

3. God created us for a purpose... Is there something special about people in God's creation? If so, what is it?

The creation of men and women is special... we are different from the rest of creation in that we are made in the image of God...

Genesis 1:27 - So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

What does it mean that we are in the image of God?

I believe that there are three key aspects to being in the image of God...

(1) As God has a triune nature, three persons in one Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we too are a trinity: soul, body, and spirit. The Bible describes God as being one yet three distinct persons who make up the Godhead, for example:

Matthew 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Likewise, the Bible represents people as being comprised of three aspects, the body is that part of us which relates to the world, the soul is our inner personality, the seat of our emotions and thoughts, the spirit is that part of us which has the ability to commune with God and includes our conscience...

1Thessalonians 5:23 - Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) The most relevant aspect of being made in the image of God for the purpose of our discussion is that people have a free will. Like God, all people have a will whereby we can alter the course of our lives by the choices we make.

(3) The third aspect of being made in the image of God is that people will live into eternity future as God will. The difference is that people had a beginning but God had no beginning, he always was having been around from eternity past.

- Now not all people will spend eternity with God... this life is a test to see who will accept God and His Way for eternal life and who will reject Him. Those who reject God in this life will receive the eternity they voted for by being separated from their Creator for all eternity.

Now someone may be entertaining the thought that you've done just fine being separated from God in this life so spending eternity without God shouldn't be so bad. What is the flaw in this line of reasoning?

It is based on a deception that you are getting by on your own without God's help. But in fact the reason you are doing as well as you are is out of God's grace giving you an

opportunity to respond to Him. While God is longsuffering, there will come a time when He will give up on you and let your will to be separate from Him stand...

Proverbs 29:1 - He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Separation from God is described in the Bible as hell, a terrible place of torment, that you do not want to go...

Mark 9:43-44 - If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- where 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'

Why do you think God gave people a free will to make their own choices?

There is an important reason why God gave us a free will, so that we may freely chose out of our own volition to enter into a relationship with Him.

What kind of a relationship can you have with a robot that is programmed to do what you tell it to?

It would be a pretty superficial relationship, not very satisfying and probably downright boring. God wants to have a deep relationship with His creation and this is only possible if we were created free to accept or reject Him.

The most profound discovery a person can make is to learn the basic reason why God brought them into the world. Why did God create people?

God created us so that we may have a relationship with Him. To know God is to love Him and glorify Him for who He is...

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

What does the term "only begotten Son" mean?

The term only begotten Son addresses the uniqueness of Jesus and is a reference to His deity. From John 10 we learn that people during the time of Jesus understood the term "Son of God" to mean the same as God. The world thinks that Jesus Christ was simply a man. Contrary to this, the Bible presents Him as both man and God Himself.

Why do we need God to save us?

Because of our condition, we can not save ourselves. The problem is that people are born separated from God because our human nature is to think and act selfishly which the Bible characterizes as sin...

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

The Bible also tells us that if we spend our lives being comfortable in our sinful condition separated from God that this has eternal consequences...

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death

What was the provision that God made for us to have an eternal relationship with Him?

God Himself came in the form of one of His creations to pay the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross for those who would let Him into their lives...

Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God has made it possible for people to have a relationship with Him in the death of Jesus Christ. The ball is now in our court to respond. For a relationship to happen, there must be cooperation between both parties. God has already done His part in the mission of His only Son, Jesus Christ.

How do we respond to God so that we may have eternal life?

All we need to do is respond to Him by believing this...

Romans 10:9 - if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

This is a promise that you can apply to your life right now. Right where you're sitting you can exercise your free will to enter into an eternal relationship with God...

- Just speak to God in your thoughts telling Him that you agree with Him that you are a sinner and need His forgiveness... Tell Him that you believe that Jesus paid the penalty for your sin and rose from the dead... and ask Him to save you from the consequences of your sin...
- If you are sincere in that prayer, God will save you from your sin...
Acts 16:31 - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved

All right, we have one more assumption...

4. God's Word is true... If God wants a personal relationship with us, how does He speak to us?

God speaks to us in a variety of ways, in circumstances that are beyond coincidence, in our spirits, through other people, and through the Bible.

Of all the ways God speaks to us, why is the Bible the most important?

The Bible is the resource God has given us to know Him. This means we can use the Bible to authenticate all the other ways God speaks to us to determine if what we think is from God is truly from Him. Without something outside ourselves like the Bible, we do not have a way to tell if our thoughts are from God or only our own. God can not contradict Himself and if He is telling us something in our thoughts,

these thoughts must be consistent with what He tells us in His Word, the Bible.

What is the Bible?

The Bible is a collection of writings which record what God has told us through His spokesmen the prophets, the greatest of which is Jesus Christ Himself who is much more than just a prophet since He is God manifest in the flesh...

Hebrews 1:1-2 - God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds

It is interesting to note that the prophets who wrote the Scripture which comprise the Bible have all been Hebrew, why is that?

Because God chose the Hebrew people through whom to bless the world...

Genesis 12:2-3 - I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

The nation of Israel has already been a blessing to the spiritually discerning because all the writers in the Bible were Jewish and the Messiah Himself was Jewish. The Lord chose Israel for this role not because they did any great feat to earn God's favor but because God wanted to use them as an example for us to know about His grace to those who have a relationship with Him.

Deuteronomy 7:7 - The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples

How can we know that the Bible is truly God's Word, that we should trust it to accurately present the truth? After all, there are many translations, how can we know which one is correct?

- There are many translations of the Bible but they all say the same thing in different ways.
- About a third of the Bible is prophecy. Old Testament prophets generally authenticated that they spoke for God in that their near-term prophecies were fulfilled and thus you can trust their long-term prophecies to be from God as well. Some of the Old Testament writers had miracles associated with them which authenticated they were truly speaking for God. And this is how the early church knew who God was speaking through when the New Testament was written as well.
- Another reason that we can trust the Bible as being from God is the purpose behind the creation. God created us for a purpose, so that we may know Him. It follows

then that God would make a way for us to know Him and the Bible plays a key role in that.

- But for me, the main reason I know that I can trust the Bible as being true is based on the character of God Himself. If God is truly Almighty as He would need to be to create the universe, He is Almighty enough to accurately bring us His Word and preserve it through time even using His error-prone creation...

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

Do Christians have to accept the Bible as being true on blind-faith?

No, God gives believers the proof they need to show them that the Bible is true. In my own case, a struggle I had when I was a new Christian was the Genesis account of the creation. The Bible said that God accomplished the creation in 6 days. As an engineer who had studied science all my life, I just assumed that evolution had to be true and so I rationalized that God used an evolutionary process to bring about the creation. This meant that the six days of creation had to be six eons of time. The problem I had with this is that if I started having the understand the Bible by applying some meaning to it other than what it clearly says, were does this stop? If everything in the Bible needs to be interpreted to mean something other than what it says, how can I believe anything the Bible says? As I was struggling with this, the Lord led me to learn about creation science, there really is proof of the Genesis account of creation. For example, the very fact that there are fossils all over the world is proof of a world-wide flood. It takes a large-scale traumatic event like the flood to create fossils because silt has to rapidly be washed over the organisms. Without such and event things just rot away without forming fossils.

It was so exciting to me to come to the understanding that I could trust the Bible as being true without having someone interpret it for me.

- Now there is symbolism in the Bible that does need to be interpreted but this is the same as in any literature, the symbolism is obvious. If the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense or you'll end up with non-sense.

On the other hand people who believe that matter is eternal and that people came into being as a result of blind, random processes over eons of time are indeed having to do this on blind-faith since there is no proof of it. The big bang and evolution are only controversial theories that are not supported by the evidence. The big bang theorists can not explain why the galaxies are actually accelerating apart and evolutionists have to make excuses for the second law of thermodynamics.

For further detail on these topics see my weekly studies for 2/24/02, 3/3/02, and 7/29/02.