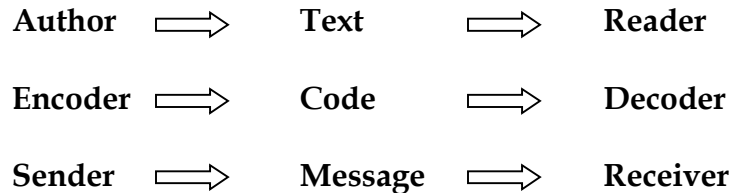


**I. Introduction: Who Makes the Rules?**

Roy Zuck: “Communication, whether spoken or written, always involves three elements: (a) the speaker or writer (b) the message, given in intelligible audible sounds or intelligible written symbols we call words, and (c) the hearers or readers. The purpose of the speaker or writer is to convey to the hearers or readers an idea he has in mind. He does this by means of linguistic symbols common to both the communicator and the ones receiving the communication. The desired result is that the hearers or readers will understand in their minds the ideas conveyed from the minds of a speaker or writer. A person can know the mind of a speaker or author only by what he says or writes.”

**THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS:**



**KEY QUESTION:** Where do we get the hermeneutical principles which guide the process of actually interpreting Scripture?

**II. The Biblical Foundation of Dual Authorship**

Waymeyer: “Although God does not specifically tell us in His Word *how* to interpret Scripture, the approach we take to studying the Bible flows out of the nature of Scripture itself. More specifically, it flows out of what is commonly known as the *dual authorship* of Scripture.”

**A. The Definition of Dual Authorship**

**TWO AUTHORS:**

- **Immediate Author:** the human writer
- **Ultimate Author:** God

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<sup>1</sup> Notes compiled from The Master’s Seminary and the Expositor’s Seminary and Matt Waymeyer Hermeneutics course, *Grasping God’s Word* (Duvall and Hays), and *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Roy Zuck).

Wayne Grudem: “In cases where the ordinary human personality and writing style of the author were prominently involved, as seems the case with the major part of Scripture, all that we are able to say is that God’s providential oversight and direction of the life of each author was such that their personalities, their backgrounds and training, their abilities to evaluate events in the world around them, their access to historical data, their judgment with regard to the accuracy of information, and their individual circumstances when they wrote, were all exactly what God wanted them to be, so that when they actually came to the point of putting pen to paper, the words were fully their own words but also fully the words that God wanted them to write, words that God would also claim as his own.”

Norman Geisler: “Judging by the various vocabulary, grammar, styles, figures of speech, and human interests of the various authors, God did not disregard the personality and culture of the biblical writers when He providentially guided them to be the vehicles through which He revealed His written Word to humankind. On the contrary, the Bible is a thoroughly human book in every respect, except that it is without error.”

“Regardless of the mystery surrounding how God was able to make His word certain without destroying the freedom and personality of the authors, several things are clear. The human authors of Scripture were not mere secretaries taking dictation; their freedom was not suspended or negated, and they were not automatons. What they wrote is what they desired to write in the style that they were accustomed to using. God in His providence engaged in a divine concurrence between their words and His so that what they said, He said.”

John MacArthur: “God formed the personality of the writer. God made [him] into the man He wanted him to be. God controlled his heredity and his environment. When the writer reached the point that God intended, God directed and controlled the free choice of the man so that he wrote down the very words of God. God literally selected the words of each author’s own life, out of his personality, his vocabulary, and his emotions. The words were man’s words, but that man’s life had been so framed by God that they were God’s words as well.”

## **B. The Basis of Dual Authorship**

Throughout the Bible, the words of Scripture are consistently presented as both the words of God and the words of man (2 Sam 23:2; 1 Kings 14:18; 16:12; 16:34; 2 Kings 9:36; 14:25; 1 Chron 17:3; Jeremiah 1:9; 37:2; Zech 7:7; 7:12; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 2:16-17; 3:18; 3:21; 4:25; 28:25; Rom 1:1-2; 1 Cor 9:8-10; 14:37; Gal 1:11-12; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:8; 4:15; Heb 1:1; 1 Pet 1:10-12; 2 Pet 3:2; Rev 1:1-3).

- Dual Authorship Described in 2 Peter 1:21:

“No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

- **Human Authorship:** “men...spoke”
- **Divine Authorship:** not “by an act of human will”  
“moved by the Holy Spirit”

The Greek word (φέρω) translated “moved”:

- Acts 27:15, 17: “driven along” (wind drives along sailboat)
- BDAG: “to cause to follow a certain course in direction or conduct”  
“**from God**” (source)

- **Dual Authorship Illustrated in Matthew 1:22 and 2:15:**

“Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet” (Matt. 1:22).

“He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON’” (Matt. 2:15).

OT Scripture = “what was spoken *by* the Lord *through* the prophet”

- **Human Authorship:** “through [*dia*] the prophet”
- **Divine Authorship:** “by [*hupo*] the Lord”

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PREPOSITIONS:

- ***Hupo* introduces:** The Ultimate Agent

*The person who is ultimately responsible  
for the action of the verb*

- *Dia* introduces: The Intermediate Agent

*The person who is used by the ultimate agent to carry out that action*

**THEREFORE:** If:     A = the ultimate agent  
                               B = the intermediate agent  
                               C = the action of the verb

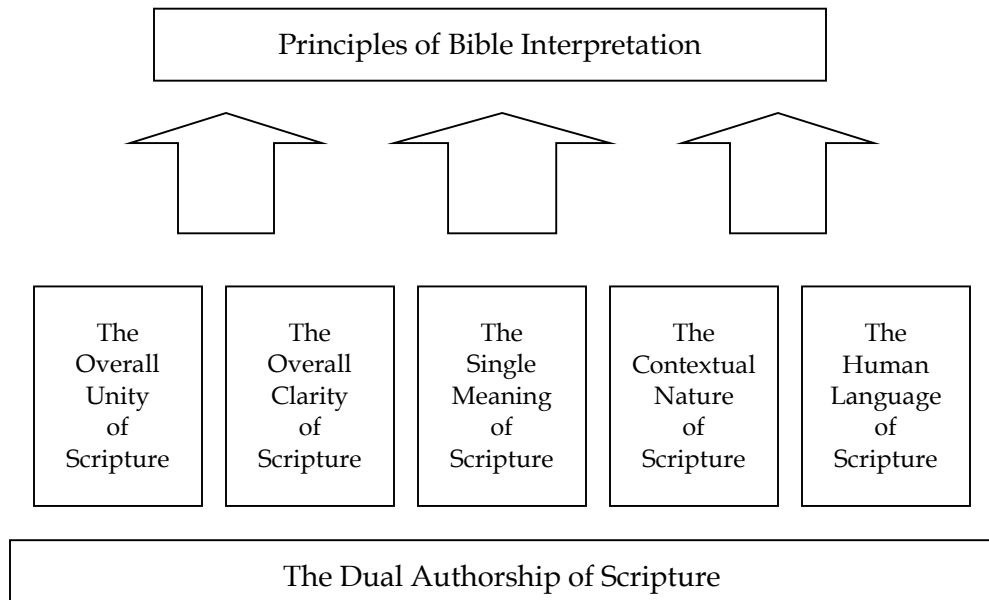
Then:             A used B to perform C.

**CONCLUSION:**

- A (God) used B (the prophets) to perform C (write Scripture).
  
- God is the Ultimate Author of Scripture and the prophets were His spokesmen.

**III. The Hermeneutical Implications of Dual Authorship**

Waymeyer: “The dual authorship of Scripture ultimately forms the foundation of Bible interpretation, for upon it rest five aspects of Scripture, which, in turn, lead to specific principles for interpreting God’s Word. These five aspects are the overall unity of Scripture, the overall clarity of Scripture, the single meaning of Scripture, the contextual nature of Scripture, and the human language of Scripture:



Roy Zuck: “Seeing that the Bible is a book that is both human and divine, we seek to interpret it as we would any other book while at the same time affirming its uniqueness as a book of divine truth from the hand of God.”

“Man, as a communicator, has always sought to address other human beings in ways that would enable them to comprehend what the speaker was saying. When a person is addressed, he is automatically engaged in interpretation when he seeks to comprehend what is being communicated to him. This is part of man’s nature.... In other words the principles for interpreting the Bible are simply descriptions of the way people think and read when they seek to understand the meaning of any writing. **They are not inventions, they are discovered.** Rather than being created, they are observed. If they were arbitrarily devised by man, then each person could make up his own rules. But since these principles are part of the way man normally communicates, they are to be considered universal. They are not special rules applicable only to Bible study.”

### A. The Overall Unity of Scripture

1. Even though Scripture was written by at least 40 different men over a period of 1500 years, the one true God is the Ultimate Author of the entire Bible. For this reason, a fundamental unity must exist among the 66 books of Scripture.
2. The Bible, in other words, contains a single, unified, consistent, harmonious message from God in which no one part of Scripture is contradictory to another. At the same time, this does not mean that no discontinuity exists throughout the progress of revelation, but rather that any discontinuity which exists does not actually contradict anything else in Scripture.

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** Come to a given passage of Scripture with the understanding that it is part of a larger unified whole, and that it should not be interpreted in contradiction to any other passage.

[For a discussion of the use and abuse of this principle, see “The Analogy of the Faith” and “Continuity vs. Discontinuity” in the syllabus below.]

### B. The Overall Clarity of Scripture

1. The Bible consists of what God was pleased to reveal or make known to His people through the human writers. In a word, the Bible is *revelation*.

2. Because the Bible was given to reveal truth and not to obscure it, God's intention must be that His Word be understandable.

"The basic presupposition of interpretation is that God is a God of sense, not of nonsense. By this, I mean that whatever God reveals through His ancient spokesman must have made sense both to them and to their hearers.... The very fact that we have a Bible at all, from the human standpoint, is an indication that it made real sense to the people. It spoke to them where they were" (Robert Cate).

Jeff Epperly: "If God writes a book for His people to be read and understood then that book by definition must be and will be understandable."

3. This means that the divine intention of Scripture was/is basically clear and comprehensible:
  - To its original writers
  - To its original audience
  - To its contemporary readers
4. R.C. Sproul: "This is not to say that all parts of the Bible are equally clear or that there are no difficult passages or sections to be found in it."

Waymeyer: "In fact, as Peter writes, some things in Scripture are 'hard to understand' (2 Pet. 3:16). At the same time, however, the Bible as a whole possesses an overall clarity that reflects God's desire that His people understand the truths contained in it. It may take diligence and hard work to interpret Scripture accurately (2 Tim 2:15), but the Bible *can* be understood."

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *Come to a given passage of Scripture with (a) the presupposition that it was understandable to its original audience and (b) the expectation that you can understand its true meaning as well.*

**C. The Single Meaning of Scripture**

1. Waymeyer: “Because God intends that we understand the Bible, a given passage of Scripture – like any other piece of literature – must contain only one meaning.”
  - 2 Timothy 2:15 and 2 Peter 3:16 indicate that there is an accurate way – and an inaccurate way – to interpret Scripture, which implies a singleness of meaning.
  - Disclaimer: At the same time it should be recognized that an author will sometimes employ *double entendre*, a rhetorical device in which two meanings of a word operate simultaneously.

**THE INTERPRETER’S MANTRA:**

- One True Interpretation
- Many Possible Applications

<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Application</b>
Meaning	Significance
Ancient	Contemporary
Fixed	Dynamic
Single	Plural

2. Walt Kaiser: “The best argument for a single-meaning hermeneutic is to be found in observing what happens when it is removed from current conversation or writing. Communication itself is severely handicapped if not made impossible,” for it results in the difficult situation of “everyone communicating, but no one in particular ever receiving (or knowing if he has adequately received) the message.”

Walt Kaiser: “It never ceases to amaze me how those interpreters who wish to fight the theory that meaning is single-fold and always a return to the author’s own meaning demand that all who read their own papers and books do so with the understanding that their meaning is singlefold and must be understood literally.... Any successful exegete must face the question of intentionality. We are most confident that the

meaning of any given word (and therefore its text and context) will be discreetly contained in a single intention of the author.”

3. William Ames: If one *denies* singleness of meaning, “the meaning of Scripture would not only be unclear and uncertain, but there would be no meaning at all – for anything which does not mean one thing surely means nothing.”

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *Come to a given passage of Scripture with the assumption that it contains but one true meaning, the meaning that the original author intended to communicate to the original audience.*

## D. The Contextual Nature of Scripture

Waymeyer: “The contextual nature of Scripture refers to the fact that the Bible is not an independent and free-floating list of detached truths that dropped out of heaven one day. Instead, every verse of Scripture is connected to the historical, cultural, and literary context in which it was originally written.”

### 1. The Historical Context

Because each book of the Bible was written to specific readers in a specific historical situation, we must understand every passage of Scripture in the context of its historical background. This involves understanding the original circumstances that led to the writing of the book of the Bible in which the passage occurs.

### 2. The Cultural Context

Because each book of the Bible was written by and to people who lived in a particular culture, the writing itself reflects the culture of its day. And because that culture is different from our own, we need to become familiar with it in order to discover the intended meaning of Scripture.

### 3. The Literary Context

Because each passage of Scripture was written as a part of a larger literary unit, it must be interpreted in the light of its literary context. In addition, because Scripture contains various literary genres – for example, narrative, poetry, prophecy, proverbs,



epistles, parables, etc. – the interpreter must be aware of these and how they impact the interpretation of a given passage.

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *The first step in Bible interpretation is to examine the historical, cultural, and literary contexts of the passage under consideration.*

Roy Zuck: “Each biblical writing was written by someone to specific hearers or readers in a specific historical, geographical situation for a specific purpose. This corollary suggests that each portion of the Bible was originally written to address a certain reader or readers who were living in certain locations and times, and that that writing had a given purpose. This relates again to the point that exegesis is to discover the original meaning of the text. In other words what were the words conveying to their initial readers?”

Before we can determine their significance or relevance to us today, people who are not the original readers, we must first seek to determine what the words meant to those who originally read them.”

## **E. The Human Language of Scripture**

1. In setting forth the special revelation His Word, God chose to reveal truth through existing human languages.

Roy Zuck: “Each biblical writing – that is, each word, sentence, and book – was recorded in a written language and followed normal, grammatical meanings, including figurative language.”

Ramesh P. Richard: “The Bible is to be approached hermeneutically in a manner methodologically similar to any other piece of literature, since God adapted Himself to human language and to a human use of human language.”

2. In order to determine the divinely intended meaning of the Bible, then, the interpreter must be careful to analyze the grammar and determine the meaning of words according to their normal grammatical and lexical uses at the time that the passage was written. Put simply, this consists of:
  - **Syntactical Analysis:** Determine the significance of the grammar

- **Lexical Analysis:** Determine the meaning of key words

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *Analyze the grammar and determine the meaning of words according to their normal grammatical and lexical uses at the time that the passage was written.*

#### **IV. Summary of the Grammatical-Historical Method**

Waymeyer: "The foundation of the dual authorship of Scripture, then, ultimately leads to the following approach to studying the Bible, an approach commonly known as the Grammatical-Historical Method of interpretation."

- **Examining the *Context* of the Passage**
  - The Historical Context
  - The Cultural Context
  - The Literary Context
- **Interpreting the *Content* of the Passage**
  - Syntactical Analysis
  - Lexical Analysis

Grammatical-historical hermeneutic exercise: 1 Corinthians 13:1 "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or clanging cymbal."

Notes: