

The Authority of Scripture

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Happy New Year, everyone! We're after the Christmas season, that time of year when people get back to normal after irregular schedules, celebrations, and indulging in rich foods. In January of each year, people tend to start new things such as gym memberships and Bible reading plans! I'm not much into gym memberships and I don't have a specific Bible reading plan to recommend, but there are many good plans out there.

At the beginning of this new year, it's a good time to focus on the essentials, so I hope to do just that today. The title of today's sermon is The Authority of Scripture and if you've been attending Sunday School here at Trinity, we're several months into a study of Systematic Theology. Several of the men here have taught and there have been some fascinating subjects covered so far.

I know, the words systematic theology and fascinating may not seem to go together but a deep dive into theology is really a study of God himself, and what could be more fascinating than to study the God who created everything from nothing by merely uttering words and who created every living thing.

Just the fact that you can ponder anything about God is proof of his amazing nature. He's given you a mind capable of discovering who he is.

God has revealed himself in his word, the bible. So, as children of God, we should pay close attention to what God has written in His Word by the hands of his prophets and apostles. Unbelievers doubt and reject the Bible and its authority. But where does that authority come from? Keep that question in mind as we continue.

There are widespread doubts about the Bible. Listen as I read some statements that I found doing a Google Search on this phrase: Is the Bible true?

Is the Bible true? Answer #1:

No, it is not. It is a rehash of older myths from around the world. The Bible is not the 'word of God,' but borrowed from pagan sources."

Is the Bible True? Answer #2:

"Somebody ought to tell the truth about the Bible. The preachers dare not, because they would be driven from their pulpits. Politicians dare not. They would be defeated. Editors dare not. They would lose subscribers. Professors in colleges dare not, because they would lose their salaries."

Is the Bible True? Answer #3:

"The dubious nature of biblical "history" and "science" and the multiple discrepancies among the four evangelists led to a great schism in Christianity, each side assuming that truth is equated unequivocally with facts."

Is the Bible True? Answer #4:

"The Bible is much quoted, but little understood or believed. Can the Bible withstand scrutiny of its apparent contradictions? Should you believe it?"

It's pretty obvious from a simple Google search that the world around us is confused about the Bible. Some think that there is a conspiracy among the status quo to hold on to power by hiding the truth about the Bible. Some have more questions than answers about the Bible. Still, others think that the Bible is a bunch of myths and made-up stories.

For example, some of you may be familiar with Jordan Peterson. He's a Canadian clinical psychologist and author who's become famous over the last several years because of his conservative views and his YouTube videos and conferences. Peterson encourages men to rise to higher ideals to improve their lives and, in turn, improve society.

His latest book, *We Who Wrestle with God*, explores Christianity and the positive effects of Christian moral behavior on society in general, and people in particular.

But Peterson's views of God are less than Biblical. Instead of concluding that God is real, Jordan Peterson concludes that, in the words of one reviewer,

"God is real as an inspiring myth—humanity's highest ideal."

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/we-wrestle-god-review/>

But is belief in God just good for people? Even if God isn't real, could this "belief" be good if it serves to be a benefit for society? Or, as Colin put it during last week's sermon, is following Jesus advantageous if it's a net positive, like getting your fill of something? Or another way to ask the question is this: *does it matter if God is real, as long as that belief in God makes you behave better and makes society more peaceful?*

A family member heard a believer say that the Bible has been interpreted so many different ways, that we can't be sure of what it says. So, I have a couple of questions for you, and you don't need to answer out loud: do you think the Bible is true? Do you believe in the authority of the Bible?

You may wonder, Kraig, why are you preaching on a theological subject? Shouldn't you take a section of scripture and expound on that? My goal is that this message is going to be a booster shot for you, to help with your confidence in the Bible. Now, this isn't going to be like some more recent, ineffective booster shots. This Bible booster shot will help protect you from error and heresy and will increase your confidence in God and what the scriptures contain.

Now, we won't use any actual needles, and this booster shot may not hurt. I say may not, because the Word of God sometimes pierces, according to Hebrews 4:12. But, if there is pain, my prayer is that it won't be long lasting. What do I pray is long lasting, is the effect that examining the Bible will have on you. We need confidence in the people, events, and the teachings of the Bible, in order that we live lives that are holy, fruitful, and God-glorifying.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we need to have faith in what the Bible says is true and it's worth basing your life on. But, how can you know what the Bible says is true? Is there some authority, some person that we can look to as a gauge to measure the validity of the Bible?

So, to cut to the chase, I'm saying that Jesus is God. No big surprise there. Jesus does share all of the same attributes with God the Father, because he is God the Son. The facts that Jesus lived, died on a Roman cross, was buried in a guarded tomb, and that the tomb was empty three days later, and that Jesus appeared to many people after his death, these facts are not, as John Piper put it, generally up for grabs. In fact, the historical facts about Jesus are accepted by even the most liberal scholars.

However, the facts about Jesus and the resurrection have always been denied by some. This denial of the facts began to pick up speed in the second half of the twentieth century. The church in America and in the West began to doubt everything. This doubt gave way to a "do what you want to do, believe what you want to believe, everyone has their own truth" mentality. But the facts about Jesus and His Resurrection still remain, even though many reject these facts.

We shouldn't be surprised by denials of facts. The Jewish Holocaust in Europe during World War 2 is still being denied by many all over the world, even though there are survivors and allied liberators still alive, and much of the concentration camps and the activity in them was documented with photographs and in books. There's a word used to describe this kind of denial of established fact. Dictionary.com defines the word "delusion" as a belief that though false, has been surrendered to, and accepted by the whole mind as a truth."

If Jesus is who he says that he is, He is God. Then, what Jesus says about the Bible has a weight that we have to sit up and take notice of. To quote theologian Derek Thomas,

"The doctrine of Scripture's absolute authority is, in the end, a *Christological issue*. The question we have to ask ourselves is this: are we willing to hold to a different view of scripture than the one that Jesus held to?"

Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible, pg 66-67, Derek W.H. Thomas, 2009

Jesus said to his disciples, after his resurrection in Matthew 28:18 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." That's a bold statement, a bold claim of "All Authority.". Since Jesus is God, and he has all authority here on earth, let's roll up our sleeves and take a shot (pun intended) at looking at what Jesus says about the Bible.

The historical Jesus referenced scripture many times. What he says about scripture can make valid what many skeptics consider to be myth.

Let's examine some sections of scripture to get Jesus' take on scripture. And, as we do this, we are going to be 'page turners.' We're going to start in Matthew, examine some references to Deuteronomy, then onto Genesis, Jonah, and the Psalms, just to name a few. So, I assume that as we go along, I'll hear the sweet sound of bible pages turning, for those of you that still use paper bibles.

1. Jesus believed in a written and authoritative word that comes directly from God.
Matthew 4:1-11

Let's look at our first example of Jesus' use of scripture as authoritative. Turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 4. Here in chapter 4, this is the account of the Temptation of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness,

before he began his public ministry. Satan is trying to tempt Jesus into sin. If Jesus sins, he will not be the sinless sacrifice, the spotless lamb that is required of the savior of mankind. Jesus is fully man AND fully God. I'll read through Matthew chapter 4, starting at verse 1:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."
4 But he answered, "It is written "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

There are two important points to note. First, is the use of the verse "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'" is a direct reference to Deuteronomy 8:3. Jesus validates this verse with the phrase "It is written" and also displays His confidence in the scriptures and His obedience to God.

Reading further in Matthew chapter 4, we see another scriptural reference by Jesus. Verse 5 "Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,""He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."

A couple of things to note: Satan references scripture and omits an important part of Psalm 91 verses 11-12. Jesus again uses scripture, from Deuteronomy 6:16, when he said, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" and he again uses the phrase "It is written."

The third temptation of Jesus, is in Matthew chapter 4, verse 8:

"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,""You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him."

We see again Jesus' reference of Deuteronomy chapter 6, this time in verse 13 when he said "It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve." Jesus references scripture, validating it as the Son of God. He gives us confidence in what was written, and how it can be applied to defeat sin. Jesus used scripture to deny sin any foothold in his life.

This lesson by Jesus, can have a direct application on all of our lives. In 1st Corinthians 10:13, Paul wrote something that can be instructive for all of us:

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

As in Jesus' example with Satan, Jesus relied on God, his Father, and the written word as a way of escaping the temptation to sin and displaying his confidence in God and His word. So, to restate Point number 1: Jesus believed in a written and authoritative word that comes directly from God. He didn't display any doubt. He abided by the written, authoritative word his entire, human life.

2. Jesus affirms a supernatural, worldwide flood that was recorded in the Old Testament.

Matthew 24:36-39

Many people stumble over the supernatural events in the Bible. We live in a very precise, rational age where it is thought that science can explain everything. Supernatural events are considered to be just myth because we can't explain, scientifically, how something happened. But what did Jesus say about Noah and the flood? Let's look at another reference to the Old Testament by Jesus. This time we'll turn to Matthew chapter 24. This section in Matthew's Gospel, is often referred to as the Olivet Discourse, because it took place on the Mount of Olives. Here, Jesus is telling his disciples about the coming end of the age.

Being fully God, Jesus can speak with authority about the future, as well as past people and events. Matthew, chapter 24, verse 36:

"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

We see in these verses that Jesus references the account of Noah and the Flood that starts in Genesis chapter 6. Jesus once again shows his knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures. He also lends credence to the Ark and the Flood. This part of scripture is denied by many, because of the seemingly unnatural events of Noah building an ark and a flood that was universal in its scope of destruction (and, quite possibly, its universal, worldwide scope). Skeptics could say that Jesus didn't mean that Noah was a literal person. But it would seem that if these events were simply myth, Jesus would have made a reference to the fact, and that he wouldn't have used the phrase "so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

It doesn't seem in the character of Jesus, that he would use a fictitious event in the past to compare a future event. Remember, Jesus is no mere man. He IS the future event that is coming.

To restate Point number 2: Jesus affirms a supernatural, worldwide flood that was recorded in the Old Testament.

He believed in the reality of Noah, his Ark, and God's judgment for sin in a flood.

3. Jesus dispels the myth of Jonah and the great fish. He affirms the historicity of this supernatural event and compares it to his events to come: his death, burial, and supernatural resurrection from the dead.

Matthew 12:39-41

Here, We'll now look at another "unnatural" section of the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus referenced more than once during His time on earth. I say unnatural, because the account of Jonah is something that many have a hard time accepting. If you're not familiar with the Book of Jonah, here's part of it, in a nutshell: God calls Jonah to go to the great city of Nineveh, to preach a message of repentance to the Ninevites. Jonah disobeys God, and heads in the opposite direction on a ship going to Tarshish.

During his time on board ship, Jonah is thrown overboard and is swallowed by a huge fish. Three days later, the fish vomits the still-alive Jonah up on to dry land. That's pretty incredible. There's more to the story, but let's look at what Jesus said about Jonah and the fish. Look with me at Matthew chapter 12 verse 39. Jesus is asked by some of the Scribes and Pharisees for a sign, possibly a miracle that they could use against him. Look at verse 39:

"But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Here we see Jesus comparing past events recorded in scripture, with a future event involving him, his burial in a tomb. But unlike the last example we looked at, we have seen the "future" story of his burial, because it is recorded as well. At no time does Jesus "let on" that the story of Jonah was not true. Does it really make sense that Jesus would use a fictitious past event to compare to a true event that will happen to him in his very near future? It's plausible, but highly unlikely.

We'll continue to look at Jonah here in Matthew chapter 12, because Jesus references more of the book. I'll explain the events of the book further: Jonah finally goes to Nineveh, preaches God's message of repentance, and the Ninevites accept it! Praise God and his mercy that 120,000 people turned from their sins and God relented of the destruction that he communicated through Jonah.

Jesus references this section as well. Still in Matthew chapter 12, follow along with me, starting at verse 41:

"The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

Jesus further validates the existence of Jonah and the historical account of the repentance that the Ninevites expressed because of Jonah's preaching. Is it logical to think that Jesus was referring to fictitious events to make his point? Listen to what one author said about this particular reference made by Jesus:

"And yet, we are to suppose him [Jesus] to say that imaginary persons who at the imaginary preaching of an imaginary prophet repented in imagination, shall rise up in that day and condemn the actual impitence of those his actual hearers?"

T.T. Perowne, Obadiah and Jonah, pg. 51.

Dictionary.com has a word for the type of thinking that Jesus would use imaginary people to perform a real task, but I don't think I need to give you the definition of the word, nonsense.

To restate Point 3: Jesus dispels the myth of Jonah and the great fish. He affirms the historicity of this supernatural event and compares it to his events to come: his death, burial, and supernatural resurrection from the dead. As Christians, we believe in a God who is superior to nature because he created everything from nothing and who upholds the entire universe together.

4. Jesus affirms the divine authorship of a Psalm, a literal King David, and the coming Lord (himself) that will be greater than David.

Matthew 22:41-46

Here's another reference that Jesus made about the Old Testament that carries a larger meaning for the authority of the Bible. Jesus is addressing the Pharisees, and He gives the reason for the divine authorship of a Psalm and the reason that David writes scripture with authority. Matthew chapter 22, starting at verse 41:

"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." 43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 44 "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"'? 45 If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" 46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions."

Notice the phrase "In the Spirit" from verse 43. Jesus is confirming the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit on David's life. This confirmation of the Holy Spirit in David's life gives the Psalm that it references, Psalm 110, authority. Jesus' reference of David being "In the Spirit" also gives scripture that David wrote authority, because the source of his writing was from the Holy Spirit.

Coincidentally, David knew of the Spirit's presence in his life, and he expressed the value of it in Psalm 51:11. He wrote: "Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me."

As we saw in the previous example, David, one of the writers of the Old Testament, was "In the Holy Spirit." All of the other writers of all of the books of the Bible are considered to be "inspired." The Inspiration of Scripture is a theological subject that we don't have time to discuss more fully today. But I will say that if the writers of the books of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit (and most scholars think that they were), then their writings take on an added weight. As we know about the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is as much an equal member of the Godhead, as is God the Father and God the Son. Inspiration matters greatly, when we are examining the authority of scripture.

To restate point number 4: Jesus affirms the divine authorship of a Psalm, a literal King David, and the coming Lord (himself) that will be greater than David.

5. Jesus affirms the entirety of the Old Testament which includes the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 5:17-18, 22:37-40

Luke 11:49-51,

Matthew 23:1-3

Let's look at Matthew chapter 5.

Jesus confirms the authority of Scripture in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus is giving what is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. Look at verse 17:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

If you are not familiar with the phrase, "The Law and the Prophets," what Jesus is referring to here is the entire Old Testament. "The Law" is the first 5 books of our Bible, and "The Prophets" refers to the rest of the Old Testament books. Here, Jesus is confirming the existence of an authoritative and complete set of books. To add a greater sense of completeness to the Old Testament and the importance of the details of the law, Jesus says, "not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Let me explain those terms:

An "iota" is the smallest Greek letter, and a "dot" is the smallest part of a Greek letter. What Jesus is saying here is that right down to the smallest strokes of the pen, not only the smallest letter, but the smallest piece of a letter, the entire law would be fulfilled in him. As one commentary put it:

"Jesus said He would fulfill the Law by obeying it perfectly and would fulfill the prophets' predictions of the messiah and His kingdom."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, (Dallas Theological Seminary), vol. 2. pg 30.

Question: If what the Old Testament writers wrote could not be understood or trusted, why then did our Lord emphasize that even the most minute part of the Old Testament had meaning and accuracy?

Continuing on the subject of the Law and The Prophets, let's look at Matthew chapter 22 verse 37. Jesus again affirms the existence and the importance to his followers of these authoritative books in the Bible. Here in Matthew chapter 22, Jesus is asked the question, "What is the greatest commandment?" Although, the questioner was trying to test Jesus, here is His response: in Matthew 22, verse 37

"And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Once again Jesus affirms the Law and the Prophets. This time, he stresses the importance of the Old Testament, and what it stands for: love of God and love of other people. So, how are we doing? Are you turning pages? Let's keep going.

Another section where Jesus affirms the Old Testament is Luke chapter 11 verses 49-51, Jesus affirms the entirety of the Prophets of the Old Testament, similarly as we just looked at how he confirmed the entirety of the Old Testament Law, from beginning to end. However, this reference takes a little bit of digging. Luke chapter 11 verse 49:

“Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.”

Jesus is referring to 2 innocent men that served God. The first innocent victim is Abel, from the book of Genesis, and the last is Zechariah the priest, from 2nd Chronicles. If you know the order of the books in the Bible, you may think, isn't Malachi the last book of the Old Testament? Jesus is referring to the last book of the Hebrew Bible, the book of Chronicles. The point that Jesus is making is that from the beginning to the end of the Hebrew Bible, kind of from A to Z, all of the Prophets are included and, more importantly, that the entire Old Testament is real and has authority.

We will take one last look at what Jesus said about the Old Testament. Look at Matthew chapter 23, verses 1-3. Jesus is teaching the multitudes, warning them to be aware of religious hypocrisy. Matthew chapter 23, Verse 1:

“Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, 3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.”

At first glance, you may ask, where does Jesus reference the Old Testament? Look at verse one. Jesus makes a reference to the Scribes and Pharisees sitting on Moses' seat. This term is referring to the Scribes and Pharisees, when they accurately taught the Law (of Moses), that they were in the seat of Moses; This meant that they had authority, because the Law had authority. Now, you may be wondering: Was this seat literal or figurative? According to the ESV Study Bible:

“Recent archaeological evidence has revealed a literal chair found in early synagogues. Whether literal or figurative, it refers to a place from which experts on the law taught.”

(ESV Study Bible, pg. 1870).

Jesus is commanding people to follow the Law that was being taught. His message was, basically this: follow the teachers of the law, just don't follow the teacher's actions when they are outside the Law. This is another implication that the written Old Testament, was real, was true, and was to be followed.

Here's a rhetorical question: Would Jesus command people to follow an imaginary set of laws that couldn't be understood? If the answer is yes, then Dictionary.com has a word for this line of thinking.

To restate Point 5: Jesus affirms the entirety of the Old Testament, the Old Testament Law, and the OT prophets. He validated it as the Son of God and expected that the Jews believed it and followed it.

I've given you several examples of what Jesus said about the Old Testament. But what did Jesus say about the New Testament? That brings us to

6. Jesus' words in the New Testament as recorded by his Apostles show the eternity of his words, the power to save people, and power to sanctify believers as they live obedient lives in a fallen world. Matthew 24:35

John 5:24
John 17:17-19

Does Jesus affirm the books of the New Testament, the way that He did the Old? The answer is, of course, no, because scripture was still being lived and was not yet written during His time on earth. We do have Jesus' words about His present time, and the future. Since He is fully man and fully God, I'll remind you again that His words carry enormous weight.

Can we trust what the NT writers wrote? Jesus knew that His disciples would record what He said and what He did. He even provided a way for them to remember everything that he taught them over the three years they were with him. In John chapter 14, starting at verse 25. Jesus makes a promise to the disciples: verse 25

"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit gives us confidence in what we read in our Bible. We don't have to doubt the accuracy and truthfulness of the Apostles' writings. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach the disciples all things and bring to their remembrance all that He said to them.

Question: Will Jesus' words endure? He thought so. Look with me at Matthew chapter 24 verse 35.

Here Jesus is teaching His disciples about the coming "End of the Age." Matthew chapter 24 Verse 35:
"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

Jesus attributes permanent status and divine authority to his teaching. It is greater even than heaven and earth, and will last forever.

Question: Do Jesus' words have the power to save people from their sins and give them eternal life?

Jesus also makes a promise to people concerning His words. Look with me at John chapter 5, verse 24. Jesus said:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."

It's obvious, from this passage, that hearing Jesus' word is extremely important. Listening and believing Jesus' words has eternal consequences.

This verse also echoes some Old Testament verses from the Book of Isaiah. In chapter 55 verse 3, Isaiah wrote this:

"Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant."

I know we were talking about what Jesus said in the New Testament, but I bring these verses up in Isaiah to illustrate that Isaiah was speaking for God, and here, Jesus Matthew 24 speaks a nearly identical message as God. Remember, Jesus is no mere human. He is God. Isaiah was the messenger, Jesus is the deliverer. When Jesus makes a promise, you can take it to the bank! So, we can see that Jesus' word is of the utmost importance.

Question: Do Jesus' words have the power to sanctify? Let's look at John 17:17-19. This section is referred to as the High priestly prayer. Jesus in his role as priest is praying to the Father for his disciples to be sanctified:

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Jesus is praying for his followers to be sanctified or set apart from sin by the power of the truth of God's word. Jesus expects his followers to read his words and follow his commandments. They are indwelt by the Holy Spirit in order to put sin to death by the word of God.

Application:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you**. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

So, what is our blueprint as we study the authority of scripture? We'll look at one last section of scripture in Matthew chapter 28, starting at verse 18. You may know this as "the Great Commission." You may be familiar with the words of Jesus here. They come after His resurrection to disciples. Verse 18:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Jesus' command to his disciples is to teach everything that he commanded them. But how are we, His disciples, in this part of the age that is still going on, supposed to teach others? The Bible is our blueprint. The inspired Word of God is our only way to truly know what Jesus said. This book is our guide as we fulfill our part of the Great Commission. We as husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, neighbors and coworkers, we all have a role to fill as a disciple of Jesus Christ. In our sphere of influence, we are to know The Word of God, apply it to our lives, and teach it to others at whatever degree of skill God has given us. This can be a focus as we move through this New Year.

One of the blessings of preparing and studying is to see how much Jesus said. What I've presented today, is just a fraction of what Jesus said about the Bible.

I do realize, though, for any non-believers within an earshot of this message, this may not be the conclusive evidence that you need to accept the claims of the Bible. You may be thinking: isn't the

Bible just a book, written by mere men, who came to the table with biases, opinions, and agendas? I pray that what you've heard here has changed that thinking.

If you doubt the accuracy, validity, and the authority of the Bible, I ask you this: what are you basing your rejection on? Is it the scientific teachings of the atheistic world or a secular school? Or is your rejection of the Bible based on what the secular world portrays on TV and the Internet, or what other people say about the Bible and Christianity?

Or is your rejection of the truth of the Bible based on a thorough examination of the evidence? Have you read the Bible, cover to cover? Have you examined commentaries? If not, I invite you to read the Bible carefully before rejecting it. Let the facts lead you to faith in Jesus.

We as Bible believing Christians don't worship the Bible, we worship the God of the Bible. Jesus died for the sins of all people that will believe in him. He offers forgiveness of your sins and eternal life in a new earth free from sin and suffering. He died to take the punishment that your sins and my sins deserve. He takes your punishment, and you receive his perfect record, guilt-free. Freedom from your guilt and favor with God.

Well, that's my Bible booster shot for today. I hope there wasn't much pain. We turned a lot of pages and looked at many different scriptures to get just a glimpse of Jesus' high view of the Bible. And as believers in Jesus Christ, we should not have a lesser view of the Bible than our Lord.