

## The Authority of Scripture

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### Introduction

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?

### Google Search for the question: 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.”
- **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.”
- **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.”
- **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?”

### Jesus has all authority:

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?

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 generally up for grabs. In fact, the historical facts about Jesus are accepted by even the most liberal scholars. 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

## Sermon Points:

1. Jesus believed in a written and authoritative word that comes directly from God. – Matthew 4:1-11
2. Jesus affirms a supernatural, worldwide flood that was recorded in the Old Testament. – Matthew 24:36-39
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
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
5. Jesus affirms the entirety of the Old Testament: the Old Testament Law and the Old Testament Prophets. – Matthew 5:17-18, 22:37-40, Luke 11:49-51, Matthew 23:1-3
6. Jesus' words in the New Testament as recorded by his Apostles show the eternality of his words, the power to save people, and power to sanctify believers as they live obedient lives in a fallen world.
  - a. Jesus' words will endure:
    - i. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Matthew 24:35 ESV
  - b. Jesus' words have the power to save people from their sins and give them eternal life:
    - i. "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." John 5:24 ESV
  - c. Jesus' words have the power to sanctify:
    - i. "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" John 17:17-19 ESV

Application: Matthew 28:18-20

"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.”

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### **Other Notes:**

“The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

Grudem, Wayne . Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine . Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

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“Christians who have been unsure about the status of the Bible have been caught in a vicious circle: any satisfactory doctrine of the Bible must be based on the teaching of the Bible, but the teaching of the Bible itself is suspect. The way out of this dilemma is to recognize that belief in the Bible comes through faith in Christ, and not vice versa; and that it is possible to proceed from faith in Christ to a doctrine of Scripture without sorting out problems of criticism.”

Christ and the Bible, Pg. 13, John Wenham

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“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? To give an affirmative answer is to suggest that Jesus was in some way mistaken in His view of the Bible’s authority. It is to hold a kenotic view of Jesus, one that suggests His assessments were governed either by the frailty of human insight or that he was simply “a man of his time” Either way, we are not to rely upon His judgments as in any way absolutely true for all times...If Jesus is mistaken about one issue (the doctrine of the absolute authority of the Old Testament), He may well be mistaken about every other thing He said...”

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

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### Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics

#### Articles of Affirmation and Denial

Article I. WE AFFIRM that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. WE DENY the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.

<https://divinity.carolinau.edu/chicago-statement-biblical-hermeneutics>

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2 Peter 3:15-16

15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

#### ESV Study Notes

2 Pet. 3:16 In all his letters shows awareness of some kind of collection of Paul's letters, with the number unspecified here. Some things ... hard to understand does not say that everything in Paul's letters is hard to understand, nor does it say that anything is "impossible to understand," but it does imply that correctly interpreting some hard passages of Scripture requires much effort and God-given wisdom. The ignorant and unstable twist Paul's teachings as they do the other Scriptures, implying that Paul's writings were also considered Scripture in NT times, on the same level of divine authority as the OT Scripture. Greek *graphē*, here translated "Scriptures," occurs 51 times in the NT, and every time it refers to the canonical OT Scripture, and not to any other writings, except that twice (here and 1 Tim. 5:18) some NT writings are also included. This indicates that NT books written or authorized by Christ's apostles were recognized, at a very early date, to be God's Word.

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#### Revelation 1:3

3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

#### ESV Study Notes

In the early church one would read aloud while others listened. Revelation's message and its blessing can be received even by hearing it read, but only if that hearing is accompanied by obeying as well.

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#### Luke 11:28

28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

#### John 8:51

51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

#### 1 John 2:3

3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.

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#### 1 Cor 14:37-38

37 If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. 38 If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

#### ESV Study Notes

1 Cor. 14:37 a command of the Lord. A very strong affirmation of the absolute divine authority of Paul's writings. Paul seems to have been aware that when he wrote to the churches with his apostolic authority, his words had authority equal to the OT Scriptures (cf. also 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Pet. 3:15–16).

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### **Internal Evidence: Jesus Christ's and the Holy Spirit's Recorded Testimonies**

God's perfection, power, and authority naturally endow His Word with these same attributes. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, attested to this truth when He prayed, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17 ESV). Christ told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and confirm this truth in the heart of believers (John 16:13).

Jesus confirmed the authority of Scripture when He said, "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" (Matthew 5:18 ESV). In Luke 16:17, He said, "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void."

Jesus again showed His confidence in Scripture's authority when He said to the religious leaders, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me" (John 5:39 ESV).

After His resurrection, Jesus walked along the road to Emmaus and spoke with two disciples. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27 ESV). Christ trusted in the accuracy and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Peter, led by Christ's Spirit, spoke to the New Testament's divine authority. "Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21 ESV). The God who breathed out the Old Testament and faithfully preserved it is the same God who chose every New Testament author and spoke through them.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/what-is-the-authority-of-scripture-and-how-can-we-trust-it.html>

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### **1. The Bible Claims To Be A Revelation Of God.**

This claim is found in a large number of places in the Bible. It is summed up in two short readings as follows:

Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination, for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20-21).

<https://bible.org/seriespage/chapter-one-authority-bible>

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**The strongest argument for the divine inspiration of the Bible is the testimony of Jesus.**

Jesus claimed to be the divine Son of God and confirmed His claims through His sinless, miraculous life and resurrection. The events of His life have been recorded in the four Gospels, which have proven to be historically accurate and written by first century eyewitnesses.

Since Jesus is God incarnate, whatever He taught is true, and anything opposed to His teaching is false. Jesus directly affirmed the authority of the Old Testament and indirectly affirmed the New Testament. In Luke 11:51, Jesus identified the prophets and the canon of the Old Testament. He names Abel as the first prophet from Genesis, and Zechariah the last prophet mentioned in 2 Chronicles, the last book in the Jewish Old Testament (which contains the same books we have today although placed in a different order).

In Mark 7:8-9, Jesus refers to the Old Testament as the "commands of God." In Matthew 5:17, Jesus states that the "Law and the Prophets" referring to the Old Testament is authoritative and imperishable. Throughout His ministry, Jesus made clear His teachings, corrections, and actions were consistent with the Old Testament. He also judged others' teachings and traditions by the Old Testament. He thus demonstrated His affirmation of the Old Testament to be the Word of God.

Jesus even specifically affirmed as historical several disputed stories of the Old Testament. He affirms as true the accounts of Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:4-5), Noah and the flood (Matthew 24:39), Jonah and the whale (Matthew 12:40), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15), and more.

Jesus confirmed the Old Testament and promised that the Holy Spirit would inspire the apostles in the continuation of His teaching and in the writing of what would become the New Testament (John 14:25-26 and John 16:12-13). The apostles demonstrated that they came with the authority of God through the miracles they performed as Jesus and the Prophets did before them. The book of Acts, which records the miracles of the apostles, has also proven to be a historically accurate record written by a first century eyewitness.

<https://bible.org/article/authority-bible>