

## Reasons to Believe Your Bible - Christological Reasons

Sign Title: Christological Reasons to Believe Your Bible

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If you are new, I would like to welcome you in the name of Christ. My name is Kurt and I am one of the pastors. This morning, we continue our teaching series called *Reasons to Believe Your Bible*. In this series, we are learning rational reasons we can trust the Bible is what it claims to be,... the very words of God. This morning, we are looking at *Christological* reasons to trust this book. What do we mean by that? Let me explain.

It began in scholastic circles but it percolated into popular culture; it is the subconscious and sometimes intentional clipping out portions of the Bible we find hard to believe. Today, the most influential biblical scholars consider most of the Old Testament stories to be like barnacles that have attached themselves to the bottom of a boat. They are considered folklore that needs to be scraped away to uncover the real facts of history.

When I talk about this, I know your initial reaction to the academic scraping of the Scriptures is to believe it hasn't affected us. After all, we believe the Bible is the word of God. It is a problem they wrestle with on college or university campuses. Is it? The scraping of the Scriptures is affecting you more than you realize.

For example, do you believe God created a literal Adam and Eve, or did we evolve? Do you believe in a literal flood with a literal ark and a literal Noah? Do you believe in a literal Moses and literal Manna from heaven as the only source of food for an entire nation in the desert? How about Jonah, did he really

survive for three days and nights in a great fish? Do you believe the literalness of these stories or is some of your confidence scraped away? For some of us, while we believe the stories, another part of our heart wonders if we should taking them literally.

This morning, while many of us are willing to trust Christ as our savior from sin, I want to challenge you to not just have Christ as our savior, but to also have him as your teacher about how to trust this book.

This morning, we will look at Jesus' opinion of the Old Testament. If we can trust him as our savior, we can trust him to teach us how to understand this book.

### **Christ believed Old Testament history.**

As I mentioned, most Bible scholars, and even many Christians, don't accept the Old Testament's miraculous stories at face value. Christ does.

### **Christ believed in a literal Adam and Eve.**

For example, Christ believed in a literal Adam and Eve as special creations of God, not evolved animals.

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? Matthew 19:4–5 (ESV)

According to Jesus, God created a literal Adam and Eve. He also created the institution of marriage to seal a man and a woman together as one flesh. We didn't evolve, according to Christ, we were created by God.

### **Christ believed in a literal Noah and flood.**

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 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, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Matthew 24:37–39 (ESV)

Christ believed in a literal Noah and a literal flood. We are just letting Christ tell us how to interpret our Scriptures. Now some people think Christ didn't believe in a literal flood but he just went along with the prevailing belief in his day and he would correct the misunderstanding later. Unfortunately, that would be completely out of character for Christ. Read the gospels. He was quite willing to confront the misunderstandings of the religious leaders in his day.

#### **Christ believed in a literal Moses and manna.**

How about Moses and the Manna? Today, the Exodus of Israel from Egypt is considered myth by scholars because it is not found in the Egyptian records of their historical triumphs. It doesn't surprise me they didn't keep a record of the exodus. After all, it is a story of their humiliation, not exaltation. But what did Jesus believe?

Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' ” Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. John 6:31–32 (ESV)

Here Jesus affirms the literal supernatural provision of manna in the wilderness and of Moses. If Jesus is our savior, we need to let him be our teacher about how to read this book.

#### **Christ believed in a literal Jonah and Ninevite repentance.**

How about Jonah. The survival by Jonah in the belly of a great fish and the massive spiritual revival of Ninevah, the capital of the Assyrian empire, are two stories many find hard to believe, but what does Jesus say about them?

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. 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. Matthew 12:40–41 (ESV)

The literalness of the Jonah story is tied to the literalness of Christ's resurrection. Jettison one, you have to throw away the other.

Do you doubt God judged Sodom and Gomorrah for their sin? Did Lot's wife look back and become a literal pillar of salt? If we can trust Jesus to be our savior, we can trust him to be our teacher about this book.

### **Christ affirmed the Authority of the Old Testament.**

Christ accepted the Old Testament as the authority. For example, in those days, the group of religious liberals was called the Sadducees. They were sad-you-see because they didn't believe in the resurrection.

### **The tense of the verbs are authoritative.**

Christ quoted a passage from the Old Testament as the authority to settle this dispute once and for all.

And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong." Mark 12:26–27 (ESV)

Christ argued for the resurrection on the basis of one word, a present tense verb! If there was no resurrection, God would have said, "I was the God of Abraham," this means Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive and their bodies

will rise again when Christ returns! The Old Testament was Christ's authority to settle that dispute because the Old Testament is accurate down to the very tense of the verbs.

**The words are the authoritative over any teachings and traditions.**

Christ also drew a line to separate the authority of God's Word in the Old Testament from traditions and teaching of men. He saw a clear distinction between the two.

You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! Mark 7:8–9 (ESV)

In this context, Christ was talking about the teachings of the Talmud. That is a collection of religious leaders interpretation on various parts of the Old Testament law. What happened was the well-intentioned but uninspired Talmud, which were mans teachings about God's Word, had come to replace the authority of God's Word in their lives. The Talmud wasn't necessarily bad, but it was not the authority, the Bible is the authority.

Today, many Christians struggle with the same thing. We don't use the Talmud, but good Christian books have replaced the authority of the Bible in our lives. Nothing wrong with reading, “Our Daily Bread”, but it is not the authority. Nothing wrong with a little Max Lucado, but he isn't the inerrant authority for our lives, only the Bible is. If we can trust God to be our savior, trust him to be our teacher about this book.

Jesus doesn't just teach us about the authority of this book over other books but he is real practical. He teaches us about the authority of this book when it comes to the grind of facing and beating temptation in our lives.

**It is the authority to decimate Satan's attacks and beat temptations.**

After forty days in the wilderness, when Jesus was tempted by the devil, how did he beat temptation? He pulled out something with authority. He battled temptation with a heavy caliber weapon which dealt a devastating blow to Satan every time he used it. He quoted the Old Testament Scriptures.

Every time the Devil tempted him he responded by saying, "It is written..." then quoting the relevant Old Testament passage. Each time Jesus said, "It is written" in the present tense, it was the equivalent of saying, "It stands written," which is the equivalent of saying, "God says." The truthfulness and power of God's Words spoken in the ancient past were just as authoritative and effective as if they were spoken in that very moment. The same is true today. God's Words in the Bible are just as authoritative when we quote them today, as the day they were first spoken.

Some of you are wondering why we are memorizing Scripture as a church. It is because there is no more affective weapon in our struggles against sin than being able to quote the very words of God as we face temptation. They are just as authoritative and powerful today as the moment God first spoke them.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

**Christ recognized the authority of Old Testament prophecies.**

Last week we learned there are over 300 prophecies about Christ's life in the Old Testament that were fulfilled by his life in the New Testament. Christ's life, death and resurrection is the most prophesied event of the Bible. Amazingly, Christ knew his life was unfolding by a divine script and he recognized the authority of these prophecies as the marks his life he must pass through.

For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment." Luke 22:37 (ESV)

Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" ...But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."... Matthew 26:53–56 (ESV)

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Luke 24:25–26 (ESV)

If the Old Testament said it, there was no wiggle room according to Jesus. For Christ, the words of Scripture were God's words. For Him to say, "Have you not read?" is equivalent to saying, "Do you not know God said?"

### **The words of Old Testament Scripture are the Words of God.**

For example, earlier we looked at Jesus talking about Adam, Eve and marriage. In Genesis 2:24 it reads...

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:24 (ESV)

But when Jesus quotes this verse, look how he quotes it. He attributes Genesis 2:24 as direct spoken words of God.

He answered, "Have you not read that **he who created them** from the beginning made them male and female, and **said**, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? Matthew 19:4–5 (ESV)

So according to Jesus, Genesis 2:24 are the actual spoken words of God, they are not the re-interpretation of a vague idea by a human author.

### **Christ considered the Old Testament to be without error.**

It is clear Christ considered the Old Testament authoritative, but just how far can we take this? How authoritative did Jesus believe the Old Testament to be?

But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void. Luke 16:17 (ESV)

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)

Christ believed in the inerrancy and accuracy of the Bible down to the smallest letter. It is the equivalent of the Old Testament being authoritative down to the dotting of the “i.”

Today, some people believe the actual words of the Bible weren’t inspired by God, it was just the concepts. The problem is words are what we use to convey concepts. If the words aren’t inerrant, then the concepts aren’t inerrant.

For example, suppose you signed a contract with a man to build you a house. The contract contains all the details of your agreement. A few days later, he deviates from the contract. You point to the paragraph that specifies what you agreed on, but he replies, “You can’t go by the actual words, it was just the concept that is binding!” I don’t think you would accept that. If the words of the Bible are not free from error, then the concepts God wants to communicate are also not free from error.



A few minutes ago, we learned Jesus argued for the existence of life after death based on the tense of one Old Testament verb in one verse of Scripture. The present tense of the verb “to be” in the story of God talking to Moses at the burning bush. That is a lot of weight to put on the tense of one verb in Scripture, but that is exactly Christ’s point, the tense of one verb can support that weight, it is exactly what God wanted to say. God didn’t stutter.

If you trust can Jesus to be your savior, trust him to be your teacher about this book.

### **Conclusion**

There was once a mathematician who tried to prove an athletic man could survive an avalanche by knowing the trajectory and speed of the individual rocks. As they came toward him, he could step out of the way. In a similar way many people try to explain away one by one Christ’s affirmation of the perfection and trust we can have in the Old Testament Scripture. But the problem is, these statements do not come one at a time, they form an avalanche of cumulative evidence all over the Bible that we can not evade.

We can not deny Christ believed in the perfection and authority of all of the Old Testament, even the hard stories. If he is our savior, we also need to accept him as our teacher about this book.

### **Benediction**

At Christ’s trial, before he was crucified, the high priest asked him a question.

...Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? Mark 14:61

Christ replied

And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Mark 14:62 (ESV)

Those who do not accept Christ as their Savior now will meet Him as their judge in the future.. Either way, a confrontation with Christ is inevitable for all of us. He will either be our savior or our judge. Today is the day, now is the time to repent of our sin, ask Christ to have his death on the cross, the only sufficient sacrifice for sin, to be the payment for your sin and to ask Christ to be the king of your life. The Bible tells us that if that is the desire of your heart, in that moment there is a supernatural transaction that takes place in your life. Your sins are forgiven, once and for all. An ability to see the identity of Christ is born and new affections are born in our heart for him allowing us to honor him more than ourself. That is the beginning of the Christian life.

Today, will you confess your sins to Christ, repent of them and trust Christ to pay for them?

If that is the desire of your heart, I will be in the front after the service and I want to invite you up front to talk with me so I can just encourage you and pray with you as you begin your walk with Jesus.

Now may the grace of God and the fellowship of the saints be with us till we meet again. Jesus, thank you for being our savior, thank you for being our teacher about how much we can trust this book. Amen.



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