

Jesus' View of the Bible The Basis of Inerrancy

By Chuck May

- *Did Jesus believe the Bible is God's Word?*
- *Did Jesus believe the Bible is inerrant?*
- *Did Jesus believe the Bible is historically reliable?*

The New Testament has proven to be a historically reliable ancient document. (See the Relational Concepts' brochure *The Authenticity of the Bible*.) In the New Testament, Jesus claimed to be God (John 10:30). The New Testament also records that Jesus proved to be God by performing miracles, living a sinless life, and accomplishing His own resurrection. (See the Relational Concepts' brochure *A Case for the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth*.) Therefore, Jesus is God. Since God, by definition, cannot lie or err, then Jesus can neither lie nor err. Therefore, what Jesus taught about the Bible is both true and inerrant.

It is, therefore, useful for disciples of Christ to know and defend what Jesus taught about the Bible.

Jesus taught that the Bible is inspired. In other words, what the Bible says, God says.

In Genesis 2:24, Moses, the author of the passage, wrote, *for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife*. But when Jesus quoted this passage in Matthew 19:4-5, He didn't say that "Genesis said" or "Moses said." Jesus said, ... **He [God] ... said**.... That means that Jesus taught that what Moses wrote—God said, and what God said—Moses wrote.

In Matthew 22:43, Jesus said that David spoke *by the Holy Spirit*. In 2 Samuel 23:2 David said that *The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me*, Therefore, what David said in Scripture—God said.

In Matthew 4:4, 7, and 10, Jesus rebuked Satan and said, *Go, Satan! For it is written*, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." But when this passage appeared in Deuteronomy 6:13, the author said these are God's words (Deuteronomy 6:1). Therefore, Jesus believed that *it is written* is the same as what God said. He believed that Scripture equals God's Word.

Therefore, Jesus taught that what God says—the Bible says, and what the Bible says—God says. Jesus taught—***The Bible is the Word of God***.

Jesus taught that all Scripture is inerrant.

In Matthew 22:29, Jesus said, *You do err, not knowing the Scripture*, implying that the Scripture does not err. In this passage, Jesus also taught that even the tenses of the verbs in Scripture are inspired and inerrant. The Sadducees, in this passage, said there is no resurrection. Jesus said there is a resurrection because the Old Testament doesn't say "I **was** [past tense] the God of Abraham." It says, *I **am*** [present tense] *the God of Abraham*. And if God still **AM**, then Abraham is still **AM** (bad English, but good theology). Jesus defended the doctrine of the resurrection by basing it on the inspired tense of a verb.

In John 17:17, Jesus said, *Thy Word is truth*. He didn't just say "Thy Word is true." He said, *Thy Word is truth*. In truth, there is no error. Therefore, as we have already shown, if the Bible is God's Word, then it follows logically that the Bible is inerrant.

Jesus taught that the Scripture is infallible.

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said that not the smallest letter of a word or stroke of a pen will pass away from the Bible. In other words, the Word of God will stand forever. It cannot be broken.

John 10:34-35 says, *Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, You are gods'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken) ...* Jesus said four things about the Bible in this passage:

- (1) It is Law (torah).
- (2) It is the Word of God.
- (3) It is Scripture (writings).
- (4) It cannot be broken.

Put them all together and you have what Jesus thought about the Bible. It is the written, unbreakable Law of God—infallible.

Throughout Scripture, one of the most often repeated phrases with theological significance is *it is written*. It appears 92 times in the Bible.

- (1) Jesus established the final authority of Scripture by saying, *it is written*.
- (2) Jesus rebuked the devil by saying, *it is written* (Matthew 4).
- (3) Jesus refuted heresy (Mark 12:18).
- (4) Jesus established His Messianic credentials (Matthew 11:5).
- (5) Jesus condemned hypocrisy (Matthew 12).
- (6) Jesus predicted His resurrection (Matthew 12:39).

Jesus based everything in His life on the authority of Scripture.

Jesus taught that the Bible is historically reliable and scientifically accurate.

Some say you can trust the Bible on moral or spiritual issues but not on other issues, such as science or history. They say that the Bible tells you how to go to heaven but not how the heavens go. In John 3:12, Jesus said the opposite is true. If you can't trust Him when He speaks of *earthly things* (science, creation), how will you believe Him when He speaks of *heavenly things* (eternal life)?

Liberal critics dispute the following (but Jesus affirmed them):

1. The literal creation of Adam and Eve—In Matthew 19:4, Jesus said that God literally ... *created them from the beginning ... male and female*. He affirmed the creation of man in the image of God. Since 1859 to the present, the vast majority of all scientists have rejected the idea of creation and have accepted the theory of evolution. Jesus said that they are all wrong. He said that God literally created a man and a woman, who literally produced literal offspring according to their kind. And Jesus ought to know—as Creator, He was there! (Colossians 1:16).

2. The worldwide flood—In Matthew 24:38-39, Jesus said there was a flood, and it took all mankind away.

3. The story of Jonah—In Matthew 12:40, Jesus said that Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale.

Jesus affirmed that the Bible was sufficient for faith and practice.

People in Jesus' day (and ours) say that if we saw a miracle, we would believe. Jesus said, *If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets [God's Word], neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead [miracles]* (Luke 16:31). ***The Scripture is sufficient!***

Some say that you need the Bible plus tradition. Christ said they are wrong. He called the followers of tradition *blind guides* (Matthew 15:14).

In effect, Jesus' position on the Bible was this:

The Word of God—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else

In other words, *the Bible is all you need!*

Concluding Thoughts

Now, what follows from these points? This means that if someone says there is even a tiny error in the Bible, that person is attacking the authenticity of God. This is shown from the following:

God cannot err.

The Bible is God's Word.

Therefore, the Bible cannot err.

Jesus, as God, cannot lie.

Jesus said the Bible is unbreakable.

Therefore, the Bible is unbreakable.

I'm trying to ward off a very silly thing you hear people say today. "Why are we worrying about the trivial errors in the Bible that don't mean anything?" My response is, "What would you say if someone says God has lied, Christ is wrong, and the Holy Spirit uttered error?" Is this a trivial matter to you or is it very important?

Since God cannot err, it follows logically that if there is one error in the Bible, then it is not the Word of God. Because of this fact, it is very important that you, as a disciple of Christ, know how to use and defend the Bible.

Questions and Answers

Q: *Did Jesus believe the Bible is God's Word?*

A: Yes. In numerous places in the New Testament Jesus affirmed that what the Bible says, God says, and what God says, the Bible says.

Q: *Did Jesus believe the Bible is inerrant?*

A: Yes. Everything in Jesus' life was based on the fact that the Bible was the inerrant Word of God.

Q: *Did Jesus believe the Bible is historically reliable?*

A: Yes. In fact, Jesus used the historicity of the Bible to teach many spiritual truths.

*Much of this material is taken from the works of Dr. Norman Geisler. I highly recommend his works for more in-depth study.