

Judging the Bible

In modern times it's increasingly common for Christians to judge the Bible. There are many people who call themselves followers of Christ who read the Bible and criticize its teachings. If they agree with a verse then they decide it must be true, but if they disagree with it they say it must be in error.

It's also common for Christians to say that while the Bible does contain some truth, it's not entirely perfect. Many claim there's error and superstition in it, and it's up to each person to decide what parts are right and what parts are wrong. People don't have a problem with rejecting whole passages (or even entire books!) if they disagree with them. To them the Bible can't be trusted and instead must be judged. Who does this judging? Why, people do. They decide, based on either their own authority or on what our culture believes, what's right and what's wrong.

There are even many seminaries which no longer teach that the Bible is inerrant. They teach students that each person must make up their own mind about what parts of the Bible can be believed. The Bible is no longer viewed as the infallible Word of God. Instead many people within the church see it as a collection of spiritual truths that are only true as long as they agree with what people already believe.

The reason people believe this is *not* because there's evidence the Bible has been corrupted. In fact, there's a tremendous amount of evidence that the Bible has been faithfully copied throughout the centuries. Scholars have found manuscript fragments of the New Testament that date to within a few decades of when those books were actually written, and there are copies of the Old Testament that date back to several centuries *before* Christ was born in Bethlehem. When these manuscripts are compared to today's Bible it's found that the text has *not* been corrupted. In fact, no errors of any significance have crept in over the past several thousand years! The Bible that we have today accurately

reflects its original manuscripts.

People aren't rejecting the Bible because it's been corrupted. They're rejecting it because they don't like what it says. It all comes down to the issue of *authority*. Who gets to decide what's right and what is wrong? Who gets to define truth and error? Is it God through His Word or is it left up to each individual? Does God want us to read the Bible and believe it, or should we do whatever is right in our own eyes?

It amazes me that so many people within the church have rejected the authority of the Bible and set *themselves* up as the ultimate authority. If a person decides on his own what's right and what's wrong then he's set himself up as God. He is the giver of truth and the master of his life. He bows the knee to no one but himself. Why? Because he is living by *his* rules. He who makes the rules is king.

If we live by God's rules then He is our king. If we live by our rules then we are the king – and it's silly to edit the Bible to our liking and then pretend we're still living by God's rules. After all, at that point anything goes. The Bible becomes nothing more than a prop people use to justify whatever they're doing. People might as well write their own Bibles because if you reject the teachings of the Word of God then that's what you're doing anyway. It is *your* word, not God's, that counts. How can you claim to be a follower of Christ when you refuse to believe what He had to say?

The Lord Jesus Christ certainly didn't take a “pick-and-choose” approach to believing the Word of God! In fact, Jesus once defended the resurrection of the dead based on **the tense of a single word** in the Old Testament. When the Sadducees attacked the resurrection, Christ responded as follows:

Matthew 22:31-32: “But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead,

but of the living.”

Jesus taught that because God said I *am* the God of Abraham instead of I *was* the God of Abraham, that means Abraham must still be alive and therefore there's a resurrection. Jesus clearly believed what the Old Testament taught about the Bible:

2 Samuel 22:31: “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.”

Psalms 12:6: “And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.”

Psalms 18:30: “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.”

Proverbs 30:5: “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”

In case we missed it, this idea is emphasized in the New Testament:

2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

This says that Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. In other words, *we must take it seriously and believe what it says* instead of editing it

so it teaches something more to our liking.

A lot of people would rather believe whatever they want to believe. The Bible has something to say about that:

Proverbs 3:7: "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil."

Proverbs 16:2: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits."

Proverbs 26:12: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

What did Jesus believe about the Scriptures? Let's take a quick look. Since Christians are commanded to be followers of Christ it would be great if they had the same view of the Bible that He did.

Christ quoted the Old Testament many times. For the purposes of this document I'm going to focus on just a few controversial areas where He upheld the Bible at the very points where modern scholars disregard it.

Christ believed Abel was a real person

It's common for scholars to teach that the first 11 chapters of Genesis are a myth. There was no Adam and Eve, no Cain and Abel, and no Noah and the Ark. However, Christ strongly disagreed. He believed that Abel was a real person who died a martyr's death:

Luke 11:50-51: "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zechariah, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.”

Jesus believed that Abel was just as real as Zechariah. If Abel was just a myth then this would have been a great place for the all-knowing God to mention that, but He did no such thing. Instead He upheld the historicity of Genesis.

Christ believed in Noah and the Great Flood

Jesus was also clear about where He stood regarding the story of Noah and the Flood:

Luke 17:26-27: “And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.”

Jesus did *not* dismiss the story of Noah and the Flood as a myth. He believed that Noah really existed and the Flood really happened. He did *not* believe in a local flood, as modern scholars do. Instead He taught that the Flood destroyed the whole world and Noah survived by entering the Ark. Jesus said that the Genesis Flood was just as real as his Second Coming was going to be.

Christ believed in the story of Lot

Christ also believed that the story of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was real history:

Luke 17:28-29: “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.”

Jesus compared the destruction of these cities to the destruction that will come upon the world when He returns. The wicked inhabitants of those cities were going about their lives without a care, right up until the moment God destroyed them. Likewise, when Jesus returns at the end of this age the people of this world will also be going about their lives – only to be suddenly destroyed by the wrath of God, which they never saw coming.

Christ believed in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Jesus believed that there was a real Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were historical individuals, not mythological figures:

Matthew 8:11: “And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

Christ believed in the story of Jonah

It's common for modern scholars to dismiss the story of Jonah as a myth that has no basis in history. However, Jesus believed that the story was true. In fact, He said that just like Jonah spent three days in the great fish, so He would spend three days “in the heart of the earth”:

Matthew 12:39-41: “But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Ninevah shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.”

If the story of Jonah was just a myth then Jesus could certainly have told us that, but He didn't. Instead He upheld it as a real historical event – and the reason He did that is because it really happened.

Christ believed that the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon

Jesus believed that the Queen of Sheba (here called the “queen of the south”) really existed and actually did visit Solomon:

Matthew 12:42: “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.”

According to Jesus, Solomon wasn't a myth. He was a real king. Likewise, the wisdom of Solomon wasn't a myth either. The Queen of Sheba also wasn't a myth; she was a historical person who went to hear Solomon. Jesus affirmed that the Old Testament

is real, genuine history – not mythological accounts.

Christ believed in Daniel and his prophecies

Modern scholars claim that the book of Daniel wasn't written by Daniel. They claim those prophecies were written by someone else long after the events actually happened. The reason scholars say this is because they don't believe in prophecy and therefore insist that all prophecies *must* have been written after the fact. However, Jesus taught that Daniel was a prophet and that the words in the book of Daniel were written *by him*, centuries *before* the events took place:

Matthew 24:15-16: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:”

According to Jesus, the book of Daniel was written by Daniel himself. Those prophecies were written by him, not by someone else.

Christ believed that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible

Some modern scholars teach that Moses didn't write the first five books of the Bible. However, Jesus disagreed. This can be seen in a number of different passages but I'll just quote one:

Mark 12:26: “And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?”

Other verses to check out include Matthew 19:7, 8; Mark 7:10, 12:26; Luke 5:14; 16:29, 31; 24:27, 44; John 1:17; 5:45, 46; 7:19. Jesus clearly believed that Moses was the author of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Let's also not forget what Christ had to say about the rest of the Old Testament:

Luke 24:44: “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.”

Christ believed that Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah

Modern scholars claim that the book of Isaiah had multiple authors. They say this because Isaiah makes many prophetic statements and moderns scholars don't believe in prophecy. Therefore any prophetic statements must have been written by someone else long after they happened. However, Christ attributes the *entire book of Isaiah* to that prophet:

Mark 7:6: “He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”

John 12:37-41: “But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.”

Notice how clearly Jesus attributed the book of Isaiah to that prophet. Jesus said that *Isaiah* prophesied and *Isaiah* said those things. The all-knowing God left no doubt as to who was responsible.

Christ condemned people for not knowing the Scriptures

Here we get to the heart of the matter. It's common for Christians to know almost nothing about the Bible. However, Jesus criticized people for not knowing the Scriptures:

Matthew 22:29: “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.”

Christ obeyed the Scriptures and was subject to them

Most importantly of all, Jesus not only knew the Scriptures but He *obeyed them*. He believed that He – the Son of God and the Creator of the Universe – was subject to them and had to do whatever they commanded:

Matthew 26:24: “The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for

that man if he had not been born.”

Matthew 26:53-54: “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”

This last point is key. You *never* see Christ attack the Bible, or say that it's wrong, or claim that it's riddled with errors and people must decide for themselves what's true. In every single case Jesus upheld the Scriptures – believing in Noah, Jonah, the prophets, and so forth. But most notably of all *Christ obeyed the Scriptures!* He didn't judge them or change them to something that was more to His liking. God Himself submitted to them and obeyed them! If *God* is required to obey the Scriptures then all of us must obey them as well. None of us are greater than God! Why would they be binding on God but not on us?

Those who are followers of Christ must be in agreement with Him. Since He knew the Scriptures and obeyed them we must do the same. But it seems we're living in the time spoken of by the apostle Paul:

2 Timothy 4:3-4: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

To all those who call themselves followers of Christ, I urge you to *follow Christ* and not yourselves. Ask yourself this: who makes the rules which govern your life? Who do you answer to? Who decides what's right and wrong? Is Jesus your Lord or are *you* your own master?

This is a very important question. In order to be saved

Jesus must be your Savior *and* your Lord. There is no salvation that says “Jesus, I refuse to repent of my sins and make you my Lord but I don't want to go to Hell. I'm going to keep on serving myself and living in sin. I want You to take me to Heaven when I die, but other than that stay out of my life. You have no right to tell me what to do.” That prayer won't save anybody. In order to be saved you *must* give your life to Jesus. You *must* repent of your sins. This doesn't mean that you'll never sin again, but it does mean Jesus is your master. There is no salvation that rejects the Lordship of Christ.