

Intro:**What do we know about God?**

We only know what God reveals about Himself, either through discerning about Him through what He made (creation), or hearing and understanding his voice through what He said (Scriptures).

We've recently discussed:

1. Veracity: always telling the truth without any deception
2. Omniscience: always knowing all the truth and never deceived
3. Omnipotence: always able to deliver all he promised
4. Clarity: communicating truth understandably

Today:*Jesus and Trustworthiness*

Jn 10.35 ... the Scripture cannot be broken ...

"What Jesus said about the Old Testament demonstrates what He believed about it, and what Jesus believed about the Old Testament has to matter to believers."¹

Goals of this lesson

1. Not to prove what Jesus believed about the OT
2. Rather, demonstrate Jesus' confidence in the trustworthiness of God's words

"Every time Jesus said 'as it is written' He was affirming the trustworthy authority of God's Old Testament words. Every time He asked His learned detractors, 'Have you never read?' it was an implicit assertion of the reliability of God's words to settle whatever challenge they had thrust at Him." [86]

I. Assumptions about God's Old Testament Words

"Anyone who is unwilling to take the statements of the Old Testament at face value — about prophecy, or creation, or

¹ Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God's Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 85 (All other quotations will be noted merely by a page number [in brackets]).

whatever else it records or affirms — has to explain why Jesus so clearly did.” [86]

A. Historical reliability of Scripture

1. Jesus' references

a. Jesus referred to many individuals as historical persons

- 1) Abel
- 2) Abraham
- 3) Adam and Eve
- 4) David
- 5) Daniel
- 6) Elijah
- 7) Elisha
- 8) Isaac
- 9) Isaiah
- 10) Jacob
- 11) Jonah
- 12) Lot
- 13) Moses
- 14) Naaman (Lk 4.27)
- 15) Noah (Lk 17.25-26)
- 16) Queen of Sheba
- 17) Solomon
- 18) Zechariah
- 19) Widow of Zeraphath (Lk 4.25-26)

As well as places:

- 20) Nineveh
- 21) Sodom and Gomorrah (Lk 17.28-29)

b. Jesus specifically cited extraordinary or miraculous events connected with these people or places

c. Jesus referred matter-of-factly to:

- 1) Creation
- 2) The burning bush
- 3) Manna (Jn 6.49)
- 4) Serpent in the wilderness
- 5) Jonah's great fish

2. The nature of Jesus' references

a. Not merely literary

"I might allude to Prospero, Aslan, hobbits, or Marley's ghost without implying that I believe any of them to be historical realities." [87]

b. Consider these references however:

Mt 11.23-24 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.²⁴ "Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the* day of judgment, than for you."

- 1) Jesus bases his rebuke of Capernaum on the judgement that happened against Sodom

Mt 12.39-40 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- 2) Jesus compared Jonah's experience with his coming experience after the crucifixion

Mt 12.41 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

- 3) The men of Nineveh, on the last day, will rise up and rebuke the rebellious men to whom Jesus spoke

"Is it possible to understand a reference like this on the non-historic theory of the book of Jonah? The future Judge is speaking words of solemn warning to

those who shall hereafter stand convicted at His bar. Intensely real He would make the scene in anticipation to them, as it was real, as if then present, to Himself. And yet we are to suppose Him 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 impenitence of those His actual hearers, that the fictitious characters of a parable shall be arraigned at the same bar with the living men of that generation.”²

3. The underlying assumption of Jesus’ words

a. Jesus would speak of “God” and “Scripture” in interchangeable terms

1) Jesus attributed Moses as a source (Mk 7.10)

2) In the same passage, he attributed God as a source (Mk 7.13)

Mk 7.10 “For Moses said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER’; and, ‘HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH’;

Mk 7.13 *thus* invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

b. Jesus attributes to God words that the OT doesn’t report directly as God’s words:

Mt 19.4-5 And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,⁵ and said, ‘FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH’?

Gn 2.23-24 The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman,

² T. T. Perowne, *Jonah* (Cambridge: University Press, 1878), 15.

Because she was taken out of Man.”²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

II. Teaching about God’s Old Testament Words

A. God will do exactly everything he has said (Mt 5.18)

Mt 5.18 “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

KJV Mt 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

CSB Mt 5:18 For I assure you: Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass from the law until all things are accomplished.

1. Three translations to show how the NAU and the CSB clarify “jot and tittle”
2. Notice the emphatic statement “truly” (KJV “verily”)
3. Notice the emphatic details: “jot or tittle ... smallest letter or stroke”

“Jesus is so convinced of the inviolable reliability of every word of God that He unhesitatingly hangs all His weight from the tip of the slenderest branch: *not a letter or penstroke* will be left dangling and unfulfilled.” [89]

4. Strong statement of verbal (every word) inspiration

B. God’s words are irrefutable (Jn 10.35)

Jn 10.35 “If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

1. Comments on this passage:

Warfield: “the meaning of the declaration is that it is impossible for the Scripture to be annulled, its authority to be withstood, or denied.”³

Morris: “It means that Scripture cannot be emptied of its force by being shown to be erroneous.”⁴

2. Key points in favor of this strong view of Scripture

- a. The comment Jesus makes is an *offhand* remark (Warfield uses the term “casual.”)
 - 1) He didn’t make an argument for it
 - 2) He just stated it and passed on
- b. The Lord’s comment is on an obscure passage, Ps 82.6, not a major theological section of the OT
- c. The Lord’s comment elevates the obscure to the level of the most prominent: it is *all-inclusive* — it has authority because it is Scripture

III. Usage of God’s Old Testament Words

Next lesson...

³ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co, 1948), 139.

⁴ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1971), 527.