

Jesus Christ and OT Authority

Building a Christian Mind

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If you would, turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5:17 and 18. I just want to read a Scripture to set the stage for what we'll be considering this evening as we consider the theme "Jesus Christ and Old Testament Authority." Jesus Christ and Old Testament authority, and I just want to read verses 17 and 18 from Matthew 5 where our blessed Lord said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 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." In the context of the Sermon on the Mount here in what Jesus is saying, he says this at this particular point to guard his hearers from a false misunderstanding of the nature of his ministry. As Jesus is teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, he is confronting the nature of the teaching that they had become accustomed to under the Pharisee, and as we've said in the past, the Pharisees were viewed as the upholders of God's law at the time. They were viewed as so authoritative that if they said anything it was taken as though God himself had said it. Jesus comes and challenges the teaching of the Pharisees and that's a problem in the first century. Think about it, if they have a mindset that the Pharisees are the guardians of the law, the guardians of the word of God, and Jesus is contradicting and confronting the Pharisees, then it would seem it would be a natural corollary in the first century mind, "Oh, well, he's attacking the word of God also. He's attacking the Old Testament in what he says." Jesus is clarifying and guarding them against that conclusion, saying, "Don't go there. Don't think that about my teaching. I haven't come to set aside the Old Testament, I've come to fulfill it." And then he goes on in the rest of Matthew 5 in verses 21 through 48 and gives a half-dozen different ways where the Pharisees had distorted the law of God with the nature of their teaching. And so, Jesus says, "You've heard the Pharisees say but I say unto you. You've heard them say, but I say unto you." The point was not that Jesus was introducing something new on top of the law, it's not that Jesus was contradicting the law, Jesus was contradicting the Pharisees' misinterpretation and misapplication of the law, and was actually upholding the Old Testament law in the process. That's very important for understanding the Sermon on the Mount and also our theme for this evening.

On Sunday, I started a new series which we've titled "How to Know the Bible is True," and that's part of an even broader series that we're doing on "Building a Christian Mind," and one of the things that is essential to a Christian mind is that it must be clear in your mind the nature of biblical authority; the trustworthiness and the authority of Scripture is

absolutely fundamental. It is a cornerstone of biblical thinking and having a biblical mind. If you're not clear on biblical authority, if you're not clear that only the Bible, the Bible alone is the authority, then you are going to eventually run into difficulty in your spiritual life and be far more easily misled by claims from others who say, "Yes, we believe the Bible but we also believe this." This is a common problem in so many false religions that they will pay lip-service to Scripture but they will add something else, "In addition to the Bible we believe, you know, in these other writings or other traditions," or whatever the case may be.

And so to understand the unique and exclusive authority of Scripture is essential to building a biblical mind and being able to live a biblical life in response to it, and we're going to build on all of this over a few weeks of time and I do want to say just a word about that. You know, we've spent a half-dozen messages saying how to know that God exists and we're probably going to do 7 or 8 or 9 messages on this theme of how to know the Bible is true, and I want you to understand something. I ask you for your patience, I guess, as we do this, but also to be earnest and eager as you receive this kind of teaching. Way back in January, when I introduced all of this, I made the point that the, you know, the church today, the evangelical church is just in a terrible mess. You know, there are just so many false philosophies filtering through passing for New Testament Christianity, and part of the reason that that is possible is that these fundamental themes are not clear in the minds of Christian people and even in the minds of Christian pastors and seminary graduates, and these things are not acquired quickly. You know, to build a Christian mind is to undertake a process and a task that takes months and years and even decades to accomplish. It's not something that's done in a three-part series. It's certainly not done in a three-part sermon and then you move on to something else that you like. These things require time. They require deep thought. They require a consideration of details that are essential to be deeply grounded and firmly established in them, and my thinking on it is this: if we're going to do this, we might as well do it right. If we're going to do this, we might as well actually have something to show for it at the end of a few months of considering these things and a sloppy approach to these critical themes is going to lead to sloppy thinking and I'm not willing to contribute to that. There's plenty of sloppy thinking around. I want to be part of the solution to that, not part of the problem by being in a hurry to get through these things, and tonight's message is a good example of that.

When we come to Jesus Christ and the question of Old Testament authority, beloved, there are so many things in the New Testament gospels that support and illustrate and set forth the attitude of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament that it's breathtaking, and to actually consider all of it would be a series of messages all on its own just on Christ and the nature of Old Testament authority. The passages are virtually endless that you could consider and that bear on this theme. We're only going to consider this one message here this evening, but it will be enough to point us in the right direction and to show that we're not basing our assertion of Christ and his view of the Old Testament on an isolated text, on one isolated text, it permeates everything about his teaching and ministry, and it's essential for us to know that.

Now we state the theme, how to know the Bible is true, and I said that you can answer that question with two words and the two words are Jesus Christ. And as we say that, we say Christ is our ultimate authority on which we receive the authority of Scripture, and we'll review some of the things that we looked at on Sunday just to lead into tonight's material. Now one of the things that we did last time, and just by way of brief review here, is that we considered the traditional way that Christians and evangelicals have told us that we can know that the Bible is true, and we said that this is the evidential approach, and I'm not going to go through it all like I did last time. But the evidential approach points to different aspects, different proofs that they find that they think are compelling to establish a probability case that the Bible is the word of God. So they will point to the indestructibility of the Bible. You know, people have tried to burn the Bible, cancel the Bible, eliminate the Bible and they've failed and the endurance of the Bible against the efforts to destroy it show that there must be a divine element to it because men have tried to destroy it and they have failed. That's one aspect. Second aspect that we looked at is people will talk about the character of the Bible, that, you know, the Bible is written by 40 authors over a period of 1,500 years and there's a unity to its teaching, and surely that character points to the fact that it is probably the word of God. And thirdly, we talked about the influence of the Bible. The indestructibility, the character, the influence of the Bible and the influence of the Bible talks about how the Bible has contributed to achievements in art and literature and science and architecture and music. It's influenced the laws of nations throughout the course of history and produced social reforms and changed the lives of many, many people. Now, beloved, all of those things are true. It's not that any of these arguments are false. But the whole approach, the evidential approach itself, is flawed, as I'm going to remind you in a moment.

People will also look to fulfilled prophecy and that many prophecies over the course of about the course of human nations have been fulfilled, and that this points to the fact that the Bible must be the word of God. All of those things are true, and they're good for us to know but, beloved, it is not the right way to establish the authority of the Bible. It is not the right way to establish that the Bible is the word of God because what the evidential approach does, and by its very approach and by the very label that is given to it, what the evidential approach does is it leaves the final judgment about whether the Bible is the word of God or not up to you. It says here's all the evidence, you know, and it's as if an attorney is presenting its and said, "Here's my case and now the verdict is up to you," and the evidence demands the verdict that I am trying to persuade upon you. But beloved, even the proponents of this view, even the proponents of it say this does not prove that the Bible is the word of God but it shows that the Bible is unique. That's a fatal flaw, in my opinion, to try to argue that the Bible is the word of God when ultimately you say, "I'm only making a probability case and I acknowledge that this doesn't prove it conclusively." Well, to me, that's just an unthinkable way to stand up and assert the word of God. The word of God does not come to us in suggestions and probabilities. It comes to us in authority and in assertions that are to be believed and to be obeyed upon pain of eternal judgment if you don't.

And so Scripture is not pleading a probability case about itself, and the very fact that they say this doesn't prove that the Bible is the word of God leaves us saying there must be

something else, there must be a different way to approach this. And one of the things that I said to you on Sunday is that ultimately the evidential approach backfires really badly on us because Muslim apologists make all of the same kinds of arguments for their claim that the Koran is the word of God, and if we're making the same kind of argument, pointing to the same kind of evidence, then it ought to really disturb us as Christians to think that we're making the same case that a Muslim can make for their book. I won't dignify it by calling it a holy book. They consider it such, but I won't dignify it even for the sake of argument by calling it that. If a Muslim can make the same kind of arguments, we must be missing something and, you know, the truth of the matter is that it does.

And so we, after having considered the evidential approach on Sunday, we turned instead to consider the biblical approach, what I consider to be the biblical approach, and we laid it out this way. You start not with the question of is this book the word of God, but rather you start with a different question. And so often – this is a tangent – but so often that's the nature of things. People want to frame an issue, frame the question in one direction, when actually a whole different question needs to be framed and asked and answered before you get to the question that's at hand. Before we get to the question is the Bible the word of God, the question is who is the ultimate authority on such things? Who has final authority to declare what the truth is? And beloved, it isn't you and me. The final authority in the universe is the Lord Jesus Christ. The final court of appeal is always going to be Christ. And so we ask not what we think about the evidence but what does Christ say? What does Christ think about it? And that takes us into a whole different realm of thought and analysis and it leads us not into our minds thinking about how we evaluate certain kinds of human evidence, to say what does Christ say about it leads us into the mind of Christ where there is a sure foundation for us to think.

And so we pointed to what Jesus said in John 13:13, John, double 13. Jesus said, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am." And beloved, when God saves someone, when the Spirit brings someone out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God's marvelous light, he doesn't simply save them from sin and, you know, and give them a ticket to heaven so that they don't go to hell, he delivers them from the bondage of Satan and brings them under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as we said, we're under his authority not simply for the way that we behave, but we are under his authority for the very way that we think, that our responsibility is to line ourselves up in every possible way to the best of our ability as the Holy Spirit helps us, to think like Christ does and to embrace what he thinks as the way that I think. If my thinking is not lined up with Christ, if my thinking is inconsistent with Christ, then my thinking is wrong and my thinking is even sinful if I am not thinking God's thoughts after him. And because he is our teacher, because he is the one who instructs us on all that we are to believe, then it seems obvious that we should ask ourselves as the first order of concern, "What does Jesus Christ think about Scripture? Forget about what I think about it. Let me know what Christ said about it."

We start with what Christ thinks about Scripture, and last time we saw in a general way, we looked at several Scriptures, let me just remind you of a couple what Jesus said, he said in John 10, Scripture cannot be broken. He said in Matthew 24:35, "heaven and earth

will pass away but my words will not pass away." And so we started there in Matthew 5, there's not a jot, not a tittle, that will be violated by the law. Christ came to fulfill it all. He says Scripture cannot be broken. "My words cannot pass away. The created universe, that will pass away. My words, uh-uh. My words will not pass away. They will not change. They will not be altered. They will be fulfilled."

Now, beloved, let's just step back from that for a moment and just let that sink in. When we hold a Bible in our hands, Jesus Christ says that we are looking at something which can never be violated which is completely true, completely trustworthy, completely authoritative, without error, that no aspect even down to the smallest detail in what it affirms could ever be violated. That's stunning. So when we examine Scripture, Christ's view is what matters to us because, and I repeat myself, and I repeat myself because it takes a lot of repetition for these things to sink in as they need to, Jesus Christ is Lord, beloved. Jesus Christ is the final authority. He is the firstborn of all creation. He is the firstborn of the church, meaning that he is in the place of highest authority. And so there is no other appeal. There is nothing like this. There's nothing saying, "Okay, well, that's what Christ says but what does someone else say? You know, what do today's scholars say about it? Or, you know, that doesn't feel right to me. I feel like something different. You know, I feel like every, you know, every view should have equal validity." Beloved, that's, that's foolishness. That's foolishness.

Do you see that even the best of Christian scholars is not worthy to be compared to the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you see that your sinful, frail, finite mind is not at all capable of comparing to Christ in wisdom, perspective and understanding? We go to Christ to see these matters of supreme importance. We look to understand what he said, what he taught, what he believed, what he acted upon, and we line ourselves up with him. We're not interested in being independent of Christ. We are dependent on him. We are dependent upon him, upon his righteousness, upon his shed blood to reconcile us to God. We are dependent upon him to know what the truth is and so we gladly own our dependence upon Christ. We gladly submit to him because we know there we are safe. There we know that we are in a place where we will not be led astray. We believe him when he said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." We believe that and so, of course, we go to see what Christ said and when we go there, we see that he makes these broad statements, "The word of God is perfect. The word of God cannot be broken." And we get these general statements that help us to have a high general view of Scripture. That's kind of a review of last time.

Now what's stunning about these considerations, in my opinion, is that we're only getting started and let me set forth a proposition to you to consider. If that was Christ's view of Scripture in general, that the word of God is perfect, Scripture cannot be broken, if that's his view – oh, follow me here because this transition is really, really important. If that indeed is his general view of Scripture and we are intended to rely upon that as our defining view towards Scripture, then we should expect something to happen when we look at details. We should expect to find when details about Scripture come up in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, that they would be consistent with the general view that he set forth. So in general he says Scripture cannot be broken. Well, then, how does that

work itself out, for example, when he speaks about the Old Testament and he looks at the Old Testament? That is a very interesting and important question.

So for the rest of the evening, we've looked point number 1 at the evidential approach, number 2, we looked at the biblical approach. Jesus Christ tells us what's true, you know, that's our final authority, not some version of the evidence. Thirdly, now what we come to here today is, thirdly, our third point we see this, is that Jesus affirmed the Old Testament. Jesus affirmed the Old Testament. You could go on to say that Jesus affirmed it without qualification or diminishment. And just to repeat myself, if in general Jesus Christ viewed Scripture as true and authoritative, then we would expect that view to show up in the way that he handled specific Old Testament texts and themes. Jesus, beloved, consistently treated Old Testament narratives as historical fact. That is true, especially on the events that are most vocally rejected by biblical critics today, and what I want to do, I'm going to give you four different areas to consider the way that Christ approached the Old Testament, and then I'm going to give you three illustrations within each of those four areas. So it's going to be a total of 12 subpoints here tonight, but we'll handle them rather quickly.

First of all, and I just want to point out we're pointing out patterns. This is not exhaustive by any means. We're just pointing out patterns. Jesus affirmed the Old Testament, first of all, and we can show this and illustrate this by general historical examples. If you're taking notes, that would be a subpoint under number 3: general historical examples. I'm just going to cite a few random examples that could easily be multiplied in many different directions.

So you remember the story of how Cain killed Abel in Genesis 4, right? Early on in Scripture this came to mind. Well, look at the gospel of Luke and we're just going to, you know, we're going to turn to several different passages and turn to them quickly. Look at the gospel of Luke 11:51. What did Jesus Christ think about the story of Abel? Was Abel a fable or was it a fact upon which we are able to rely? Luke 11:49. "Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation," look at what he says in verse 51, "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary." Jesus in establishing the authority of the prophets and in establishing the ministry of the prophets and the apostles which is foundational to truth, foundational to God's revelation, in support of that principle Jesus points back to the life of Abel who was killed in Genesis 4. He cites it as a real historical example that illustrates the spiritual principle that he is teaching in his ministry at that point. The blood of Abel, he accepted it. It's almost a passing reference but he accepts it and teaches it and refers to it as something that should be accepted out of hand. He casts no doubt on the historical narrative. He believed it and used it to make an even broader point.

You will remember the patriarch Abraham, Genesis 12 through Genesis 25, and you know the life of Abraham. Jesus refers to the life of Abraham in his historical look back as he talks about his own life and ministry. Look at the gospel of John 8. John 8:48. The

Jews are challenging the authority of Christ. They are accusing him of being demonically inspired. In verse 48, "The Jews answered him, 'Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?'" How does Jesus respond to that charge? "Jesus answered, 'I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.'" Now, beloved, understand what's just happened here. A direct confrontation to the veracity of Christ has just been laid at his feet. He's been accused of having a demon. That is a frontal assault on the very plan of God and the authority of God. How does Jesus respond to that? How does he answer it? What does he rely upon in order to make his point and to refute the accusation? Verse 52, "The Jews said to him, 'Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, "If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death." Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?' Jesus answered, 'If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, "He is our God." But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.'" Now here it is, beloved, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." When Jesus, the eternal Son of God was challenged as one who had a demon, being a son of the devil himself, when that challenge was laid at his feet what Jesus did was he pointed back to Abraham, and to do that is to recognize the historicity of Abraham. It is to accept everything that Scripture says about the life of Abraham.

His defense of his deity, his defense against the charge of demonic influence rests in part upon the historicity, the accuracy of the biblical account, the biblical narrative of Abraham. If the story of Abraham was not true, Christ could never have relied upon it. Christ could never have pointed, and he never would have pointed to something that was a fable or was considered a fable in order to defend the very nature of his person. The defense depends on the truth of what he uses to support it. And so in defending the foundation of God's revelation on the prophets and the apostles, Christ says from the blood of Abel, it's true. He assumes that as he makes even more foundational points when it comes to his person and who he is by nature, he points to the Old Testament in defense of the claim.

Now you'll remember the story of the wilderness, the serpent in the wilderness, how God sent serpents to judge the Israelites, and they would bite them and there was a bronze serpent that was upheld that they were to look at in Numbers 21 in order to live and not die from the bite of the serpent. That's in Numbers 21. Well, look at John 3. Jesus had told Nicodemus what is universally true, "You must be born again if you're going to enter the kingdom of heaven," and so the very nature of eternal life is now at stake in what's being said here. I mean, even as I'm teaching these things, I'm overwhelmed by the significance of the principles that Jesus bases and supports and defends from the view of general Old Testament history, the nature of God's revelation, the nature of the person of Christ, and now the nature of eternal salvation. Jesus told Nicodemus, "You must be born again." In verse 9, Nicodemus said, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?' How did you ever

get into this position? Who gave you your job if you don't understand this? Verse 11, "we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man." And here it is, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." Jesus in speaking about the nature of the new birth, the nature of the forgiveness of sin, the nature of receiving eternal life, he premises it on an Old Testament illustration, saying remember what happened in Numbers 21. "Remember, the serpent lifted up in the wilderness and realize that that is a model, that is a type for what is going to come and what the truth and reality is now that I have come."

Abel, Abraham, the wilderness serpent. Now beloved, if I wanted to stretch this out for hours I could show you far more examples to illustrate that Jesus effortlessly quoted Old Testament history and he assumed it to be true, and it wasn't simply a history lesson that he was giving, he was showing that the Old Testament proved it to be the foundation for the most essential aspects of the program and plan and revelation of God. He based these great principles on the reliability of the Old Testament. Time forbids us from considering the way that he spoke about Sodom and Gomorrah from Genesis 18. Isaac and Jacob in the last half of Genesis, Genesis 26 to 37, thereabouts. The way that he spoke about King David, King Solomon, the prophet Elijah and others. You could go on and on and on on this theme, and what we've just spent 20 minutes doing, you could multiply many times over and you would find the exact same principle at work. Jesus points to the Old Testament, assumes it to be true, assumes that his audience should know it, and draws conclusions and principles from it that are meant to advance the revelatory purposes of God.

Now step back and remember the way that we framed these things. I don't know about you but when I consider these things it just makes me feel really small. I am in awe of Christ and of the Old Testament as we consider these things and the force and the power just of these general historical examples. Now when it comes to building a Christian mind and understanding on what basis we receive the Old Testament, I hope that you see that what we are considering in the view of Christ is far superior to the evidential approach that talks about earthly history from a perspective that maybe this is true, maybe it's not. Maybe it's more probably true than not and so, you know, if you want to get with the club, you ought to accept the Bible as the word of God. I don't want to be a part of that club. I'm too overwhelmed by the genius, the authority of Christ and the way that he respected the authority and the teaching and the truthfulness of the Old Testament Scriptures. It's not that I say these other evidential arguments are false, I just say that that whole method of argument is weak and impotent compared to basing our view of the Bible on Christ himself. Christ is the highest authority, not my judgment. If it satisfies Christ, it satisfies me.

But let's go beyond the general historical examples. We haven't even gotten to the difficult things yet, difficult from a human perspective, from the perspective of the critics of the Bible. Let's consider here's subpoint number 2 or subpoint B depending on your

numerical system that you prefer. Let's consider some controversial historical examples. Some controversial historical examples. Let's consider matters that people use that humanistic, atheistic, agnostic critics would use to mock the Bible, to deny the Bible, to intimidate believers away from relying on the Scriptures alone for their source of absolute truth and the basis upon which they have hope for eternal life and the forgiveness of sin. Let's consider the matter of creation. Billions and billions of years, 13.4 billion years. You know, a Big Bang explosion that gave rise to the universe as we know it and then there were just billions of years that followed. There's nothing like that in Scripture. I realize that some so-called biblical scholars try to make the case, but that's not what you find. You read the account in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, and if you haven't been pre-polluted by those insinuations, it just reads like a natural six day period of time. Morning and day, first day, morning and evening, I should say, first day. Morning and evening, second day. Morning and evening, third day. What's so hard about this? As you read on in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, you read that God created humanity male and female, no third option, binary, in the language that has to be repeated today. Genesis 2:21 through 25, he took a rib from Adam, formed a woman, brought her to Adam. Adam said, "This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. For this cause a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh." Straightforward narrative of what God did in creation. At direct odds with what modern science teaches, at direct odds with what much of a bad wing of evangelicals would teach and affirm, forget all of that. What did Jesus say in this realm of controversy?

Look at Matthew 19. Look at Matthew 19:3, the "Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?'" It's another critical matter, beloved. The institution of marriage has now been put into issue. And what did Jesus do in order to uphold truth? What did he point to? He points to the Old Testament. He points to it in a direct, uncomplicated way and affirms it as historical fact. He answered in verse 4, "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'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Again, beloved, here the whole matter of creation, Jesus looks at the whole account of creation and says that is a reliable guide for us, what the Old Testament says, what Moses said is a reliable guide for us to determine what the right thing to do is and to believe going forward.

He did the same thing with the account of Noah. A worldwide flood, Genesis 6 through 9. Genesis 6 through 9. What did Jesus do with that truth? Matthew 24. You know, after a while this becomes as simple as, you know, like shooting fish in the barrel. You can't miss because there's so much to hit as we look at Jesus affirming the Old Testament. Now Jesus, I'm just overwhelmed by this, beloved, the nature of revelation, the nature of the Son of God, the nature of eternal salvation, the nature of the institution of marriage. Now the matter of eschatology. What will happen in the future? How will world history come to an end? What does Jesus look to? What does Jesus speak to in order to assert and define the truth? Verse 36. The disciples had asked him when the end of the age was going to come earlier in Matthew 24. In verse 36, Jesus says, "concerning that day and

hour no one knows," when heaven and earth will pass away, he says, "concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." And he illustrates and where does he go to illustrate such a crucial point about the outcome of world history, beloved? What is all of this, what is everything driving toward? He goes to the Old Testament. He says, "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." Jesus says you can look at the historical narrative about Noah and the flood and judgment and the suddenness upon which it came upon the world, the unbelieving world, and you get a picture of what my return is going to be like, what the coming of the Son of Man is going to be like.

Don't you see that if the underlying narrative was false or untrustworthy that his whole argument collapses? That these things about the nature of revelation, the nature of the essence of the Son of man, the nature of the institution of marriage, the nature of eternal salvation, the nature of eschatology, and the return of Christ? He premises it all, the foundation that he points to again and again and again is the Old Testament and on these matters of most colossal surpassing importance. If those matters were not reliable, his entire argument collapses. The whole system of biblical truth falls in on itself because he's relying on something that actually could not be relied upon if the Old Testament was not utterly reliable. But the Old Testament is utterly reliable, and that's why Jesus could quote it in support of these magnificent doctrines.

The matter of the resurrection. You remember Jonah swallowed by the great fish in Jonah 1:17. Go back to Matthew 12. Matthew 12. You know, if ever there was an Old Testament story that uninformed critics could mock, you know, the idea of a fish swallowing a man and that man dwelling in the belly of the fish for three days in kind of a, you know, a fish submarine. If ever a story deserved to be criticized and questioned, that might be one that you would look at. Jesus points to it without apology and says, "This is a picture of my coming resurrection." Matthew 12:38, "some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, 'Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.' But he answered them, "'An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 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.'" He said the Son of Man will die and he will be buried, but just as Jonah came out of the fish, the Son of Man will come out of the fish. The resurrection without which Christianity collapses as we see in in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul said, "If Christ is not raised from the dead your faith is worthless, you're still in your sins." Something that essential Christ says, "You can look to the story of Jonah and see an illustration for this most foundational truth."

Not only, beloved, are these the historical examples that he chooses, controversial in our day, mocked in our day, he uses them to set forth the most fundamental aspects of revelatory truth. Beloved, the very things and I and I love this about our Lord, I love this about Scripture and, you know, God helping me, I never, ever want to have a molecule of

space between my thinking, what I believe, what I affirm and what I embrace both for myself and in my teaching, I don't want there to be any distance between me and Christ at all. But the very things that would embarrass scholars today to go onto, you know, to go onto a news channel to answer spiritual questions, the things that they would dodge and hide from, you know, a worldwide flood, a man being swallowed by a fish, six day creation, young earth, the things that all of them would try to evade, salvation by faith alone, the resurrection from the dead, all of those things that embarrass scholars today Jesus embraced from the Old Testament. Jesus affirmed them from the Old Testament. Jesus built the most fundamental doctrines upon them. There is no reconciling the skeptical view with the view of Christ and there comes a point where those who claim the name of Christ have to forget about what the critics say and deal with what Jesus said and ask themselves whether they believe and follow him or not. And if they don't, then they ought to resign their teaching positions and go work at Walmart because that's what they're worth to do if they're going to undermine Christ and his authority before his people.

It's that important, beloved. One day, we will literally stand before Christ when he returns, we will literally stand before him and see him face to face, 1 John 3:2 says, and we will be made like him for we will see him as he is. That will literally happen. Right now, tonight, what we are, we're face to face with Christ but it's in a different way. Right now we're face to face with Christ in all of his authority and all that he said about Scripture, and the question is whether our thinking will be transformed to accept that, to base our hope and our belief and our confidence in the word of God on Christ, or whether we'll cast ourselves on the wood, hay and stubble of lesser arguments. I know where I want to be. I know where I stand. I trust you stand right there with me.

Now there are some who say Jesus didn't really believe these things. How do you get around this? Some people say Jesus didn't really believe these things. What they allege is what Jesus did say, "So, no, Mr. Green, we appreciate your enthusiasm and your earnestness. We appreciate that but you're missing something really vital here. Tsk, tsk, tsk. You're missing something important here. See what you don't understand, Mr. Green, is that Jesus didn't really believe these things. He said them, yes, but he didn't really believe them because he knew better. What he did, you see, what he was doing was he was accommodating his teaching to the beliefs of his first century audience. He knew that they weren't ready for the full truth, the real truth about all of these matters. They weren't ready to know that these historical accounts weren't really reliable. And because Jesus knew that that's what they thought, he tried to bring them along by accommodating them, you know, kind of pretending like he was...he went along with them even though he didn't really embrace it." Now listen, that's what New Testament scholars today do. They pretend to believe things that they really don't, some of them not all of them, but some of them pretend to do that. They pretend to be one thing in front of people like you but when they get alone with each other in their scholarship circles and their scholarship meetings, they'll undermine the very things that they hold up before a so-called lay-audience, and they think because that's what they do, that that must be what Jesus did. And that's a ridiculous claim. That's foolish, false on its face, and someone ought to be thrown out to the curb as soon as they say it.

You know that that's not true. You know that Jesus was not accommodating himself to the beliefs of the first century. I alluded to it when I opened this message as we read from Matthew 5. Jesus made a direct confrontation against the religious authorities in Matthew 5. He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees," eight times in Matthew 23, and those were the religious leaders that everybody followed. Jesus wasn't afraid of what the audience thought. He didn't want to affirm them and mislead them. This is so blasphemous. The last thing that Christ, who is the truth, would do is let people continue in their false belief, if in fact their beliefs were false. He didn't allow false teaching. He confronted and condemned it. What kind of argument is that? This is what people say, attribute to Jesus that are used to lying themselves. No. No. As we've seen from his general teaching on Old Testament history, on controversial historical matters, Jesus insisted on the accuracy in his specific handling of the Old Testament text. And beloved, what you've got to remember is this all comes together, that's why I'm so glad you're here on a Tuesday night because all of these messages that we're doing, they're all linked together and if you miss some of them, the links in the chain start to get broken in your mind and I worry over that happening for some. All of these things are linked together. Remember what we've said, Jesus affirmed in a general matter the Scriptures cannot be broken. What we're seeing now is that he worked that out in general history and controversial history. He's perfectly consistent in the way that he handles it all and the point for building a Christian mind is this, is that you and I, our responsibility, our duty before a holy God, is to recognize what Christ did and taught, receive it, believe it, affirm it, accept it, defend it like he did, and to realize that we receive the Old Testament on the authority of Christ.

Now, thirdly, let's consider specific ethical examples. Specific ethical examples. We've looked at general history, controversial history and seen the way Jesus affirms the Old Testament. I'm just going to cover these in 90 seconds here. When we talk about ethical examples, what we're saying is that Jesus enforced Old Testament morality on his hearers. Jesus upheld the ethic of the Old Testament, the commands of the Old Testament on his hearers. Just three examples, again, we could multiply these.

In Deuteronomy 6, we see that we're supposed to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind." Go to Matthew 22, go to Mark 12, you'll see Jesus repeating that and enforcing it. In Leviticus 19:18, we see an admonition to love your neighbor as yourself. We see Jesus repeating that, applying it to his first century hearers in Matthew 22 and again in Mark 12, this time verse 31. The fifth commandment in Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and mother," expanded on in Exodus 21:17 that, "He who reviles his father and mother shall be put to death." You see Jesus quoting that, affirming it, applying it in Mark 7:9 to 13. It's not just a matter of Jesus affirming the historical accuracy of the Old Testament, he's affirming the ethical accuracy of the Old Testament and saying, "The morality that you see laid out in the Old Testament, it applies in continuity with my ministry and in the new covenant ministry as well." There are aspects of discontinuity. We don't do animal sacrifices. We don't have a literal temple anymore, but that's because Jesus fulfilled those things. He fulfilled the

ceremonial law. But these moral matters of enduring moral law, Jesus continues them and repeats them and enforces them. You know, Matthew 5:21 to 48 and his explanation of the inner aspect of the moral law. It just goes on and on. It just doesn't stop.

Now fourthly, finally, this fourth aspect let me state it this way, get the point out, the fourth subpoint: you can look at his own hours of testing. His own hours of testing and this is really sweet. It brings us into, you know, it brings us into a kind of spiritual fellowship with Christ as we consider these things. We realize what the word of God meant to him in his humanity and we have a faint echo of that in what the word of God means to us in our humanity as we draw strength from the promises of God found in Scripture. In our times of trials, our times of tears, our times of temptation, our times of testing, we turn to the word of God for clarity, for strength, for direction, because the word of God is precious to us and nothing else is like it anywhere in the universe. That's part of being a Christian is the uniqueness of Scripture to the believing heart. And we look at this and we see Jesus in his own hours of testing, his own times of testing.

Look at how Jesus used the Old Testament. Look at Matthew 4. I do want to just turn to these with you. You know the story in Matthew 4. Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Satan was assaulting him with temptations and what did Jesus, what was Jesus' strength, what was his response in those temptations? It was the Old Testament word of God. Verse 4, "he answered, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" That's from Deuteronomy 8. Verse 7, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." It is written, Satan be gone. Verse 10, "You shall worship the Lord your God and only shall you serve him." You know, and so we see Psalm 91 and Deuteronomy 6 and Deuteronomy 8, my point being that when he was tempted Jesus turned to the Old Testament. It's a sign of the authority and the strength and the God-inspired power that was found there.

Well, turn to Matthew 27. Matthew 27. Beloved, on the cross, on the cross as he was crucified, as he suffered in the flesh bearing our sins in his body on the cross, as he hung exposed before men, as the bystanders mocked him, as the thieves on either side of him mocked him, what was on his tongue? The Old Testament. Look at verse 45 of Matthew 27. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." Supernatural darkness representing the pouring out of the wrath of God upon Christ in that compressed window of eternity, if I can put it that way. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Have you ever wondered where that came from? It's from Psalm 22:1, "My God. My God, why have you forsaken me?" Just as he was absorbing the wrath of God, the Old Testament Scriptures are on his tongue. Of course they're authoritative. Of course they're the word of God.

In his hour of temptation at the beginning of his public ministry, he turns to the word of God. As the wrath of God is poured out upon him for our sake, he turns to the word of God. And in the final moment of his earthly life, turn to Luke 23. Luke 23, also verse 46. Next to last chapter of Matthew 27:46, next to last chapter of Luke 23:46. "Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said

this he breathed his last." Into your hands I commit my spirit, he's quoting from Psalm 31:5 in our English Bibles.

Beloved, understand that this was not an abstract matter to Christ, this authority of the Old Testament. This was not some academic question to him. The purpose of God is bound up in the way that he handled the Old Testament. His own life, his own death was bound up in the way that he responded to the Old Testament and the way that he viewed it, general history, controversial history, human ethics, the life of Christ. Beloved, I've shown you a sample from an entire biblical library here this evening to show you that Jesus clearly, obviously, affirmed the complete accuracy and authority of the Old Testament without question. And when we ask the question, how do we know the Bible is true, you have a better understanding of why the answer to that question is Jesus Christ. We look to him in his teaching, his example, his life, his death, and we see him consistently upholding the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, saying that they point to him in his life and his ministry, his death.

There's no evading this. Why would we want to? Beloved, we accept the Bible. We know that the Bible is true on the highest authority in the universe. Our teacher and Lord has spoken repeatedly in various ways in different manners while he was here on earth and afterwards in his resurrection. He took the Scriptures that existed in his day as the trustworthy, authoritative word of God. He quoted it. He enforced it. He used it in his own humanity. That's how we know the Bible is true. We look to our Lord. We see not a preponderance of evidence, we see not a probability case, we see his statements in whole, the general statements, we see them worked out in detail, and we're left with no other conclusion but to bow before the authority of Christ, say, "Lord, you are my teacher and you are my Lord. You say the Old Testament is the authoritative word of God, I believe and I worship in response."

Let's pray together. We'll consider the New Testament next time.

Lord, by your Spirit you've brought us into the authority of your own word, the authority of the Son of God and we're lost in wonder, awe and praise. Father, won't you please seal these matters to the hearts of everyone that's here and everyone that will ever come under the sound of the voice of this message, to forsake worldly thinking, to turn from those who mislead, to turn from those that would undermine the authority of Scripture, dilute it with other things, to repent of our propensity to doubt you and by faith, confident informed faith, embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow him in his teaching, to believe as he believed, to act as he acted on these matters. And Father, we ask you to build in us a Christian mind that we would not be children tossed to and here by the waves of changing doctrine but that we would be rooted and grounded in Christ, in love for him, love for you, love for your word, love for one another. Help us, O God, to that end, however long it takes. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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