

Jesus Christ on the Infallibility of Scripture

by Dr. David Livingston

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There is considerable debate these days concerning the inerrancy (infallibility) of Scripture. The authority of God's Word is the main issue. But, if one yields to the authority of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*), he must, in turn, yield to Christ's view of the Scripture itself. Anyone and everyone who claims to be a Christian (a believer under the authority of Christ) must hold to the same view He did! What was it?

I. Negative aspects (an argument from silence—but a loud silence!)

Jesus never belittled Scripture (as some modern critics do), or set it aside (as the Jewish leaders of His day had done with their Oral Traditions), or criticized it (although He criticized those who misused it), or contradicted it (although He rejected many interpretations of it), or opposed it (although He sometimes was free or interpretive with it), nor spoke in any way as "higher" critics do of the Old Testament (*Tanakh*).

II. Christ's use of Scripture

As Louis Gaussen has asserted, "We are not afraid to say it: when we hear the Son of God quote the Scriptures, every thing is said, in our view, on their divine inspiration—we need no further testimony. All the declarations of the Bible are, no doubt, equally divine; but this example of the Savior of the world has settled the question for us at once. This proof requires neither long nor learned researches; it is grasped by the hand of a child as powerfully as by that of a doctor. Should any doubt, then, assail your soul let it behold Him in the presence of the Scriptures!"¹

1. He knew the Scriptures thoroughly, even to words and verb tenses. He obviously had either memorized vast portions or knew it instinctively: [John 7:15](#).²
2. He believed every word of Scripture. All the prophecies concerning Himself were fulfilled,³ and He believed beforehand they would be.⁴
3. He believed the Old Testament was historical fact. This is very clear, even though from the Creation (cf. [Genesis 2:24](#) and [Matthew 19:4, 5](#)) onward, much of what He believed has long been under fire by critics, as being mere fiction. Some examples of historical facts:
 1. [Luke 11:51](#)—Abel was a real individual
 2. [Matthew 24:37–39](#)—Noah and the flood ([Luke 17:26, 27](#))
 3. [John 8:56–58](#)—Abraham
 4. [Matthew 10:15](#); [Luke 10:12](#)—Sodom and Gomorrah
 5. [Luke 17:28–32](#)—Lot (and wife!)
 6. [Matthew 8:11](#)—Isaac and Jacob ([Luke 13:28](#))
 7. [John 6:31, 49, 58](#)—Manna
 8. [John 3:14](#)—Serpent
 9. [Matthew 12:39–41](#)—Jonah (*vs.* [42](#)—Sheba)
 10. [Matthew 24:15](#)—Daniel and Isaiah
4. He believed the books were written by the men whose names they bear:
 - o. Moses wrote the Pentateuch (Torah): [Matthew 19:7, 8](#); [Mark 7:10, 12:26](#) ("Book of Moses"—the Torah); [Luke 5:14](#); [16:29,31](#); [24:27, 44](#) ("Christ's Canon"); [John 1:17](#); [5:45, 46](#); [7:19](#); ("The Law [Torah] was given by Moses; Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.")⁵

1. Isaiah wrote “both” Isaiah’s: *Mark 7:6–13*; *John 12:37–41* [**Ed. note:** Liberals claim that Isaiah 40–66 was composed after the fall of Jerusalem by another writer they call “Deutero-Isaiah”. The only real “reason” for their claim is that a straightforward dating would mean that predictive prophecy was possible, and liberals have decreed *a priori* that knowledge of the future is impossible (like miracles in general). Thus these portions must have been written after the events. However, there is nothing in the text itself to hint of a different author. See [The Unity of Isaiah](#). In fact, even the Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll was a seamless unity. But as Dr Livingston said, since Jesus affirmed the unity of Isaiah, the deutero-Isaiah theory is just not an option for anyone calling himself a follower of Christ.]
2. Jonah wrote Jonah: *Matthew 12:39–41*
3. Daniel wrote Daniel: *Matthew 24:15*
5. He believed the Old Testament was spoken by God Himself, or written by the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, even though the pen was held by men: *Matthew 19:4, 5*; *22:31, 32, 43*; *Mark 12:26*; *Luke 20:37*.
6. He believed Scripture was more powerful than His miracles: *Luke 16:29, 31*.
7. He actually quoted it in overthrowing Satan! The O.T. Scriptures were the arbiter in every dispute: *Matthew 4*; *Luke 16:29, 31*.
8. He quoted Scripture as the basis for his own teaching. His ethics were the same as what we find already written in Scripture: *Matthew 7:12*; *19:18, 19*; *22:40*; *Mark 7:9, 13*; *10:19*; *12:24, 29–31*; *Luke 18:20*.
9. He warned against replacing it with something else, or adding or subtracting from it. The Jewish leaders in His day had added to it with their Oral Traditions: *Matthew 5:17*; *15:1–9*; *22:29*; (cf. *Matthew 5:43, 44*); *Mark. 7:1–12*. (Destroying faith in the Bible as God’s Word will open the door today to a “new” Tradition.)
10. He will judge all men in the last day, as Messiah and King, on the basis of His infallible Word committed to writing by fallible men, guided by the infallible Holy Spirit: *Matthew 25:31*; *John 5:22, 27*; *12:48*; *Romans 2:16*.
11. He made provision for the New Testament (*B’rit Hadashah*) by sending the Holy Spirit (the *Ruach HaKodesh*). We must note that He Himself never wrote one word of Scripture although He is the Word of God Himself (the living Torah in flesh and blood, see *John, chapter 1*). He committed the task of all writing of the Word of God to fallible men—guided by the infallible Holy Spirit. The apostles’ words had the same authority as Christ’s: *Matthew 10:14, 15*; *Luke 10:16*; *John 13:20*; *14:22*; *15:26, 27*; *16:12–14*.
12. He not only was not jealous of the attention men paid to the Bible (denounced as “bibliolatry” by some), He reviled them for their ignorance of it: *Matthew 22:29*; *Mark 12:24*.
13. Nor did Jesus worship Scripture. He honored it—even though written by men.

The above leaves no room but to conclude that our Lord Jesus Christ considered the canon of Scripture as God’s Word, written by the hand of men.

Although some religious leaders profess to accept Scripture as “God’s Word,” their low view of “inspiration” belies the fact. They believe and teach that Scripture is, to a very significant degree, man’s word. Many of their statements are in essential disagreement with those of Jesus Christ. From the evidence of their books, we conclude that some Christian leaders are opposite to Christ in His regard for the authority, the inspiration, and the inerrancy of Scripture.

And now, the most important point.

III. Jesus Christ was subject to Scripture

Jesus obeyed the Word of God, not man. He was subject to it. If some leaders' view of inspiration were true, Jesus was subject to an errant, rather casually thrown-together "Word of Man." Jesus would have been subject, then, to the will of man, not the will of God.

However, in all the details of His acts of redemption, Jesus was subject to Scripture as God's Word. He obeyed it. It was His authority, the rule by which He lived. He came to do God's will, not His own, and not man's. Note how all of His life He did things because they were written—as if God had directly commanded. He fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about Himself. The passages are found all over the Old Testament. We cite here only a very few quoted in the New Testament: [Matthew 11:10](#); [26:24, 53–56](#); [Mark 9:12, 13](#); [Luke 4:17–21](#); [18:31–33](#); [22:37](#); [24:44–47](#).

He Himself is the Word of God. All the words from His lips were the Word of God. ([John 3:34](#)). If He had desired, He could have written a new set of rules and they would have been the Word of God. But, He did not. He followed without question the Bible already penned by men.

This is the sensible thing for every believer to do. May all who read this adopt Jesus' attitude and become subject *both* to Him as Living Word (living Torah) *and* to the Bible as the infallible, written Word of God.

The holy Scriptures ... make you wise to accept God's salvation (Hebrew *Yeshua*) by trusting in Christ Jesus (Hebrew *Yeshua HaMashiach*). The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone. – II Timothy, Chapter 3, Verses 15–17, Living Bible

(This paper is an excerpt from Dr Livingston's M.A. Thesis titled, "A Critique of Dewey Beegle's book titled: *Inspiration of Scripture*". Copyright 2003 David Livingston, reproduced with permission.)

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Footnotes

1. Gaussen, L., *The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, (Chicago: The Bible Inst. Colportage Association, n.d.), p. 93. [Back](#)
2. Jesus need not verify every passage in the Canon or else we would find the whole Old Testament requoted in the New Testament, which is unnecessary. He verifies enough of it to assure us of complete approval of it all, including passages from all but a few books. Yet those also were in His Canon. He did not refute any of them. [Back](#)
3. A good summary of fulfilled prophecy, see: Wenham, J.W., *Our Lord's View of the Old Testament*, London: Tyndale Press (1953), pp. 23, 24. [Back](#)
4. See: [Matthew 26:53–56](#); [Luke 24:25–27](#); [John 5:39–47](#). [Back](#)
5. The Pentateuch (Torah) is but one book in five parts. Meredith Kline's *Treaty of the Great King* has demonstrated convincingly that it was written by one person as a unity. Therefore, Christ's reference to any part of it as written by Moses infers He believed it was all written by Moses. [Back](#)

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