

# The Bible's Authority

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**The authority of Scripture rests  
in the authority of God**



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1QIsa<sup>a</sup> Col. XXXIII Isaiah 40:8

# BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

**Matthew 21:23-32**

# What Is the Authority of the Bible?

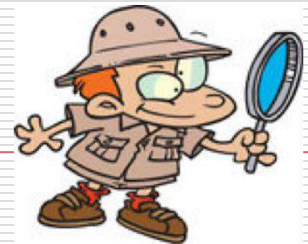
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- ☐ Reliable source of information about God, His actions, His teachings, and His salvific will for us
  - ☐ Authority on all matters of belief and of lifestyle
  - ☐ Scripture is to judge every thought and to be judged by nobody
    - For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb 4:12)
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# How Can One Prove the Bible's Authority?

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- ☐ Smell: The Bible has the „odor of truth“ (Schadewaldt)
- ☐ Philosophy: Humans need a „rock of truth“
- ☐ Characteristics of the Bible
  - e. g. Melanchthon: miracles, age of the Bible, superiority over heathen teachings, inner witness of the Spirit, martyrs, ...
- ☐ Salvific effect: faith, certainty of faith, peace, ...
- ☐ Church as origin
- ☐ Christian experience: encounter with the Word
- ☐ Contents recognized as authoritative by humans
- ☐ Divine authorship



# Witness of the Bible Itself

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## □ Word of God: Hebr 4:12

- For the **word of God** is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

## □ Word of Christ: Col 3:16

- Let the **word of Christ** richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs (Col 3:16)

## □ Word of truth: Jam 1:18

- In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the **word of truth**, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures. (Jam 1:18)
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# Witness of the Bible Itself

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## ☐ Moved by the Holy Spirit

- <sup>19</sup> And so we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, **but men moved by the Holy Spirit** spoke from God. (2 Pet 1:19-21)

## ☐ Word by the apostles = Word of God

- when you received from us the word of God's message, **you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe. (1 Thess 2:13)
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# Witness of the Bible Itself

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- The Spirit of Christ speaks to us in the words of the prophets and the apostles
  - As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the **Spirit of Christ within them** was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. (1 Pet 1:10-11)
- Rejection of prophet's words = rejection of God's words
  - Whoever will not listen to **My words which he [prophet] shall speak in My name**, I Myself will require *it* of him. (Deut 18:19)
- Torah has authority over prophets
  - To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. (Isa 8:20)

# OT Scripture in the NT

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## ☐ Torah + **N**evi'im + **K**etuvim (**TaNaKh**)

- All things which are written about Me in the **Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms** must be fulfilled." (Luk 24:44)

## ☐ OT testifies to Christ

- You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me (Joh 5:39)

## ☐ God spoke through human words

- For He says to Moses, [quote Exod 33:19] ... <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, [quote Exod 9:16] " (Rom 9:15, 17)
  - God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in *His Son* (Heb 1:1-2)
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# Witness of Humans

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## ☐ Word of YHWH

- David the son of Jesse declares, ... "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue." (2 Sam 23:1-2)

# Witness of Its Unity

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- One main message
    - “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. (Mat 12:25)
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# Witness of Its Content

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## ☐ Jesus: He could not be contrived

- <sup>21</sup> in the wisdom of God ... God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, ... <sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Cor 1:21-25)

## ☐ Highest moral norms

- Golden rule (Matt 7:12)
  - Love your enemies (Mt 5:44)
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# Witness of Its Content

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## ☐ Fulfilled prophecies

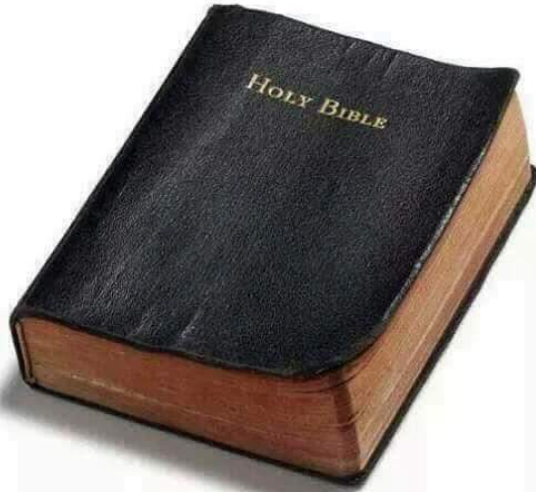
- For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure' (Isa 46:9-10)
  - e. g., Daniel & Revelation
  - Destruction of Jerusalem (e. g. Mt 24:1-2)
  - Destruction of Tyre (Ezek 26:1-14)
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# Witness by Its Continuity

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- ❑ For truly I say to you, **until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away** from the Law, until all is accomplished. (Matt 5:17)
- ❑ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words **shall not pass away**. (Matt 24:35)
- ❑ you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but **imperishable**, *that is*, through the living and abiding word of God. For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord **abides forever**." And this is the word which was preached to you. (1 Pet 1:23-25)

**THIS IS NOT EVIDENCE.**



**THIS IS THE CLAIM.**

This is not  
Proof – it is  
evidence!



# Circular Reasoning?

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- ❑ Can one derive the authority of Scripture from the supreme authority of God & Christ while relying on evidence itself derived from the Scriptures?
  - ❑ Fact: Divine authority can be affirmed only by God's own witness, by His own Word. – Who else could?
    - As God swore by Himself to Abraham when He made a promise “because He could swear by no one greater” (Heb 6:13), even so, God testifies to the authority of His Word by His own testimony, because there is no higher source than God Himself.
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# Authority of Jesus

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- ❑ “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man.” (John 5:26–27)
  - ❑ “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18).
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# Jesus' Position on Scripture

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- He trusted Scripture.
    - For him the OT, his Bible, is God's word. Through human agents God has spoken.
  - He regarded the prophets as reliable communicators of God's words and prophecies, many of which he regarded to be fulfilled in himself (Luke 4:17-21; 24:44)
  - He accepted the historical reliability of Scripture
    - including all the important events in Israel's history as well as creation (Mark 10:6), Abel (Lk 11:50), and flood (Luke 17:27).
  - He considered as author of a book that person who was identified as such in the respective biblical book.
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# Jesus' Position on Scripture

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- ☐ Divine interventions in history such as miracles posed no problem for Jesus.
  - ☐ He interpreted Scripture literally and typologically.
  - ☐ He considered Scripture not only as addressed to the original readers and hearer but also to his generation. Scripture transcends culture.
  - ☐ Jesus' understanding of God's will and his actions in history are founded on Scripture. Biblical doctrines can be derived from the O.T. At the same time, the O.T. was the standard for his life as well as a justification of his behavior.
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# Jesus' Position on Scripture

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- ❑ Scripture has practical value. It fosters faith. It can be used as the authority and weapon against temptations (“It is written”; Matt 4:4, 7, 10).
  - ❑ He expected his contemporaries to know Scripture. (Matt 12:3, 5)
  - ❑ He confirms the lasting authority of Scripture: “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35; cp. Matt 5:17–19).
  - ❑ He directs the minds of all (followers or enemies) to the Scriptures as the Word of God. (Luke 4:17–21; John 5:39–46; Luke 16:29–31; Matt 22:29–32; Luke 24:44–47).
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# Jesus' Position on Scripture

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## ☐ He used all Scripture:

- beginning with Moses and with the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (Luk 24:27).
- that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. (Luk 24:44)

# The Two Words of God

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**WORD  
INCARNATED**

**JESUS CHRIST**



**WORD  
INSCRIPTURATED**

**BIBLE**

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# The Two Words of God

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## ☐ Witness by Ellen White:

- The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all “given by inspiration of God;” yet they are expressed in the words of men and are adapted to human needs. Thus it may be said of the Book of God, as it was of Christ, that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” And this fact, so far from being an argument against the Bible, should strengthen faith in it as the word of God (5T 747)
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# Fundamental Belief No. I

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- The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, **authoritative**, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history.
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# Consequences

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- ❑ Scripture interprets itself.
  - No to hermeneutical presuppositions **based** on human sciences and philosophies. (no hermeneutic of suspicion)
- ❑ *Norma normans* (“the rule that rules”)

# The Wild Boar

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Scripture alone is the true lord and master of all writings and doctrine on earth. If that is not granted, what is Scripture good for? The more we reject it, the more we become satisfied with men's books and human teachers.

- Harold J. Grimm, ed., *Luther's Works*, 55 vols. (Philadelphia; Fortress, 1957), 32:11–12.

A simple man with Scripture has more authority than the Pope or a council without it.

- Leipzig debate with Johannes Eck, Oct. 1518.
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# Consequences

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  - No to hermeneutical presuppositions **based** on human sciences and philosophies. (no hermeneutic of suspicion)
- ❑ *Norma normans* (“the rule that rules”)
- ❑ Clarity of Scripture (accessible & clear) – Mt 12:3, 5
- ❑ Sufficiency of Scripture (for salvation) – 2 Tim 3, 16
- ❑ Intellectual recognition of authority must lead to personal obedience ... and to personal life, real life, full life, life abundantly – 2 Tim 3, 16

*„Have you  
not read?“*

