

# Is the Bible the Word of God?

## By R. Torrey

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Is the Bible the Word of God? If the Bible is the Word of God, an absolutely trustworthy revelation from God Himself, of Himself, for His purposes and His will, of man's duty and destiny, of the spiritual and eternal reality, then we have a starting point from which we can proceed to the conquest of the whole domain of religious truth. But if the Bible is not the Word of God, if it is the mere product of man's thinking, speculating, and guessing, not altogether trustworthy in regard to religious and eternal proof, then we are all at sea, not knowing whither we are drifting. But we may be sure that we are not drifting toward any safe port. I did not always believe the Bible to be the Word of God. I sincerely doubted that the Bible was the Word of God. I doubted that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. I doubted whether there was a personal God. I was not an infidel, I was a skeptic. I did not deny, I questioned. I was not an atheist, I was an agnostic. I did not know, but I determined to find out. If there was a God, I determined to find that out, and act accordingly. If there was not a God, I determined to find that out, and act accordingly.

If Jesus Christ was the Son of God I determined to find that out, and act accordingly. If Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, I determined to find that out, and act accordingly. If the Bible was the Word of God I determined to find that out, and act accordingly. And if the Bible was not the Word of God I determined to find that out, and act accordingly. I found out. I found out beyond the [unintelligible] that there is a God, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That the Bible is the Word of God. Today this would mean not a matter of mere probability, nor even of mere

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belief, but of absolute certainty. I'm going to give you some of the reason why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. Not all the reasons, it would take months to do that. Not even the reasons which are the most conclusive to me personally, for these are of such a personal and experimental character, that they cannot be conveyed to another. But I will give you reasons that will prove conclusive to any [unintelligible] seeker after the truth. To anyone who desires to know the truth and is willing to obey it.

They will not convince one who is determined not to know the truth, or who is unwilling to obey it. If one will not receive the love of the truth, he must be left to his own deliberate choice of error, and given over to strong delusions to believe a lie. But if one is searching for the truth, no matter how completely he's in the fog today, he can be led into the truth. I believe the Bible to be the Word of God, first of all, because of the testimony of Jesus Christ to that fact. We live in a day in which many men say that they accept the teaching of Jesus Christ, but that they do not accept the teaching of the whole Bible. They say that they believe what Jesus Christ said. But as to what Moses said, or is said to have said, and what Isaiah said, or is said to have said, and what Jeremiah said, and Paul said, and John said, and the rest of the Bible writers, they-they do not know about that. Now this position may at the first glance seem rational. But in point of fact it is utterly irrational. If we accept the teaching of Jesus Christ, we must accept the whole Bible. For Jesus Christ has set His stamp of His authority upon the entire book. And if we accept His authority, we must accept all that upon which He sets the stamp of His authority.

As Christ endorses the Old Testament, turn first of all to Mark 7:13. Jesus has just quoted from the law of Moses, not merely from the Ten Commandments, but from other portions of the law

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of Moses as well. He has said over again the teaching of the law of Moses, the traditions of the Pharisees, and in this verse He says, "Ye do make the Word of God of none effect through your traditions." Now here He distinctly calls the law of Moses the Word of God. It is oftentimes said that the Bible nowhere claims to be the Word of God. Why here Jesus Christ Himself distinctly asserts that the law of Moses is the Word of God. If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we must accept the law of Moses as the Word of God. Of course, this only covers the first five books of the Old Testament, but if we can accept this as the Word of God, we will have little difficulty with the rest of the Old Testament, for it is here that the hottest battle is being fought today. Turn again to Matthew 5:18, here Jesus says, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all—"

[Audio pops]

Now every Hebrew scholar knows that a jot is the Hebrew character "yodr," the smallest character in the Hebrew alphabet. Less than half the size of any other character in the Hebrew alphabet. And the tittle is a little horn that the Hebrews put on their consonants, and here Jesus asserts that the law of Moses, as originally given, is absolutely infallible down to its smallest letter, and part of a letter. If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we must accept the authority of the law of Moses as originally given, and as contained in the old testament scriptures. Turn next to John 10:35. Jesus has just quoted in proof of a point which He is making from one of the Psalms, and adds, "The scriptures cannot be broken." Thus setting the stamp of His authority upon the absolute irrefragability of the Old Testament Scriptures. Turn again to Luke 24:27, and you will read that Jesus, beginning at Moses, and all the prophets expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And in the 44th verse He says, "All

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things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and the Psalms."

Now every scholar knows that the Jews divided their Bible. Our present Old Testament scriptures into three parts: the law, the first five books of the Old Testament, the prophets, most of the books which we call prophetic and some of those which we call historical, and the remaining books of the Old Testament, the Psalms, or sacred writing. Jesus Christ takes up each one of these three recognized divisions of these Old Testament scriptures, and sets the stamp of His authority upon each one of them. If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we are driven logically to accept the entire Old Testament scriptures. In Luke 16:31, Jesus says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one be raised from the dead." Thus in the most emphatic way endorsing is the proof of the Old Testament scriptures. In John 5:47, Jesus says, "If ye believe not his writing," Moses' writing, "how shall you believe My word." Thus setting the stamp of His authority upon the teaching of Moses as being as fully from God as was His own. We must then, if we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, accept the entire Old Testament.

But how about the New Testament? Did Jesus set the stamp of His authority upon it also? He did. But how could He, when not a book of the New Testament was written when He departed from this earth? He did it by way of an-anticipation. Turn to John 14:26, and you will hear Jesus saying, "The comforter," which is the Holy Ghost, "whom the Father will send in My name. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Thus, setting the stamp of His authority, not only upon the apostolic teaching as given by

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the Holy Spirit, but upon the apostolic recollection of what He Himself had thought. The question is often asked, how do we know that in the gospel record we have an accurate reproduction of the teaching of Jesus Christ? It is asked, did the Apostles take note at that the time of what Jesus said? There is reason to believe that they did, that Matthew and Peter, from whom Mark derived his material, and James, from whom there is reason to believe Luke obtained much of his material, took note of what Jesus said in Aramaic, and that John took note of what Jesus said in Greek, and that we have, in the four gospels, the report of what they put down at the time.

But whether this is true or not does not matter for our present purposes. For we have Christ's own authority for it, that in the apostolic record, we have not the apostles' recollection of what Jesus said, but the Holy Spirit's recollection of what Jesus said. And while the Apostle might forget and report inaccurately, the Holy Spirit could not forget. Turn furthermore to John 16:12 and 13, and you will hear Jesus saying, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. How be it when He the Spirit of Truth will come, He will guide you into all truth." Here, Jesus sets the stamp of His authority upon the teaching of the Apostles as being given by the Holy Spirit, as containing all the proof, and as containing more proof than His own teachings. He tells the apostles that He has many things that He knows to tell them, but that they are not ready yet to receive them. But that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will guide them into this fuller and larger [unintelligible]. If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we must accept the apostolic teaching, the New Testament writings, as being given through Holy Spirit as containing all the truth, and as containing more truth than Jesus taught while on earth.

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There are many in our day who cry, "Back to Christ! Back to Christ!" by which they usually mean "We do not care what Paul taught, or what John taught, or what James taught, or what Jude taught. We do not know about them, let us go back to Christ, the original source of authority, and accept what He thought, and that alone." Very well, back to Christ. The cry is not a bad one, but when you get back to Christ, you hear Christ Himself saying, "On to the apostles! They have more truth to teach than I have taught. The Holy Spirit has taught them all the truth. Listen to them." If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we are driven to accept the authority of the entire New Testament. So then, if we accept the teaching of Jesus Christ, we must accept the entire Old Testament and the entire New Testament. It is either Christ and the whole Bible, or no Bible and no Christ. There are some in these days who say that they believe in Christ, but not in the Christ of the New Testament. But there is no Christ but the Christ of the New Testament.

And the other Christ than the Christ of the New Testament is a pure figment of the imagination. And the other Christ than the Christ of the New Testament is an idol made by man's own fancy. And whoever worships Him is an idolater. But we must accept the authority of Jesus Christ. He is accredited to us by five unmistakable divine testimonies. First, Christ is accredited to us by the testimony of the divine light that He lived. For He lived as never man lived. Let any man take the four gospels for himself and read them carefully and attentively. He will soon be convinced of two things. First, that he's reading the story of a life actually lived, that no man could have imagined the character there set forth, unless the life had been actually lived. Much less could four men have imagined the character, each one of the four making his own account of that character not only consistent with itself, but consistent with the other three. To suppose that these

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four men who wrote the gospel imagined the light here set forth, would be to suppose a greater miracle than any recorded in the gospels.

He will see in the second place, the light here set forth is apart from all other human lives. That it stands by itself. That it is manifestly a divine light, lived under human conditions. Napoleon Bonaparte was a good judge of men. He once said regarding the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel, which he had been reading, "I know men, and Jesus Christ was not a man." What he meant was of course that Jesus Christ was not a mere man. Secondly Jesus Christ is accredited to us by the Divine Word that He spoke. If anyone will study the teaching of Jesus Christ, with candor and faithfulness, he will soon see that it has a character that distinguishes it from all other teachings ever uttered upon the earth. Third, Jesus Christ was accredited to us by the divine work that He wrought. Not only healing the sick, which many others have done, but cleansing the leper, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, stilling the tempest by a word, turning water into wine, and feeding five thousand with five small loaves and two small fishes, which was a creative act. These miracles of power are clear credentials of God come to [unintelligible]. We cannot study them candidly and not come to the same conclusion as Nicodemus did. "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God or no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him."

Of course, we bear in mind the fact that strenuous effort had been made to eliminate the supernatural element from the story of the life of Jesus Christ. But all these efforts have resulted in failure, and all similar effort must result in failure. One of the most able efforts of this kind that was ever made was that of the great German theologian David Strauss in his "Leben Jesu."

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David Strauss was a man of remarkable ability and gift, a man of real and profound scholarship, a man of notable genius, a man of [unintelligible] power of critical analysis, a man of indomitable perseverance and untiring industry. He brought to bear all the rare gift of his richly endowed mind upon the story of the life of Jesus with a determination to discredit the miraculous element therein contained. He spent his best years and strength in this effort; if anyone could have succeeded in such an effort, David Strauss was the man. But he failed utterly. For a time, it seemed to many that he had succeeded in his purpose. But when his "Life of Jesus" was itself submitted to rigid critical analysis, it fell all to pieces, and today is utterly discredited.

And those who wish to eliminate the miraculous element in the story of Jesus feel that they must make the attempt anew, since the attempt of Strauss has come to nothing. Where Strauss failed, the French writer Ernest Renan tried again. He had not by any means the ability and genius of Strauss, but he was a man of brilliant genius, supple imagination, of rare literary skills, and a singular adroitness and finesse. His "Vie de Jesus" was read with interest and admiration by many. The work was done with fascinating skill. Some fancied that Renan had succeeded in his attempt. But his "Life of Jesus," naturally enough, was discredited even in a shorter time than that of Strauss. All other attempts have met with a similar fate. It is an attempt at the impossible. Let any candid man take the life of Jesus and read it for himself with attention and care, and he will soon discover that the life there pictured could not have been imagined, but must have been really lived. But the teachings reported as uttered by Jesus are no [unintelligible] teachings, put into the mouth of a fictitious person, but the real utterances of a real person.



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He will also discover that the character and teaching set forth in the Gospel are inexplicable interwoven with the stories of the miracle. He will find that if you eliminate the miracle, the character and the teaching disappear. That the character and the teaching cannot be separated from the miraculous element without a violent entreatment that no reasonable man will permit. Today, this much at least is proven: that Jesus lived and walked substantially as is reported in the four gospel records of His life. Personally, I believe that more than this is proven. But this is enough for our present purpose. If Jesus lived, and walked substantially as the gospels record, cleansing the lepers, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, stilling the tempest with His word, feeding the 5,000 with the five small loaves and the two small fishes, then he bears unmistakable credentials as God come forth to teach. Fourth, Jesus Christ is also accredited to us by His divine influence upon all subsequent history.

Jesus Christ was, beyond peradventure, one of three things: He was either the son of God in a unique sense, a divine person incarnate in human form, or else He was the most daring impostor that ever lived. Or else, one of the most hopeless lunatics. That He claimed to be the Son of God in a unique sense, and that all men should honor Him even as they honor the Father, as He said in John 5:23. And that He and the Father were one, as He said in John 10:30, and that he that had seen Him had seen the Father, as He said in John 14:9, of this there can be no honest doubt. Jesus was then either the divine person that He claimed to be, or the most daring impostor, or the most hopeless lunatic. Was His influence upon subsequent history the influence of a lunatic? No one but a lunatic would say so. Was His influence upon subsequent history the influence of an impostor? No one but one whose own heart was thoroughly tinkered with deceit and fraud would

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think of saying so. Not an impostor, not a lunatic. We have only one alternative left. He was what He claimed to be: the Son of God, God the Son.

This Jesus Christ is accredited to us by His resurrection from the dead. I shall hope to show you in another time the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will see the historic evidence of the resurrection of Christ is absolutely convincing in His character, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the best proven facts of history. But, the resurrection of Christ is God's seal, that Christ claimed. Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God. God the Son. He was put to death for making that claim. Before being put to death, He said that God would set His seal to the claim by raising Him from the dead. They killed Him. They laid Him in the sepulcher. They rolled a stone to the door of the sepulcher. They sealed that door with the Roman seal, which to break was death. And when the appointed hour of which Christ had spoken came, the breath of God swept through the [unintelligible]. And Jesus rose, triumphant over death. And God spoke more clearly than if He should speak from the open Heavens today, and say, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him."

We must then, if we are honest, accept the authority of Jesus Christ. But if we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we must accept the entire Old Testament, and the entire New Testament as being the Word of God. Therefore, I believe the Bible to be the Word of God, because of the testimony of Jesus Christ to that effect. A school of criticism has arisen that assumes to set up its authority against the authority of Jesus Christ. They say, for example, Jesus says that the 110th Psalm was by David and was messianic. But we say that the 110th Psalm is neither by David, nor is it messianic. They ask us to give up the authority and infallibility of

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Jesus Christ and the Bible, and accept their authority and their infallibility in their place. Very well, but before doing it we demand their credentials. We do not yield to the claim of authority and infallibility of anyone, until he presents his credentials. Jesus Christ presents His credentials. First of all, He presents the credentials of the divine fact that He lives. What have they to place in comparison with that?

Oh, we hear much about the beauty of the life of some of the school of critics, we have no desire to deny the claim. But against the beauty of their lives, we put the life of Jesus. Which suffers by the comparison? If there is any fort in the argument, that if a man's life is in the right, doctrine cannot be in the wrong, and there is fort in the argument, it bears immeasurably more for the authority of Jesus Christ than it does for the authority of any critic or school of critic. Second, Jesus presents the credential of the Divine Word that He spoke. What have they to put up against that? The words of Jesus Christ have withstood the test of nineteen centuries, and shine out with greater laughter and glory today than ever. What school of criticism has ever stood the test of eight- of nineteen centuries? If one has to prove between the teaching of Christ and that of any school of criticism, it will not take any thoroughly sane man long to choose.

Third, Jesus Christ presents His third credential, the divine work that He wrought the unmistakable feel of God upon His claim. What has the school of criticism to put up against that? Absolutely nothing. It has no miracles, but miracles of literary ingenuity in the attempt to make the preposterous appear historical. Fourth, Jesus Christ presents the credential of His influence upon human history. We all know what the influence of Jesus Christ has been, how benign and how divine. Everything that is best in modern civilization, everything that is best in national,

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domestic, and individual life is due to the influence of Jesus Christ. Alas, we also know the influence of the school of criticism. We know that it is weakening the power of ministers and Christian workers everywhere. We know that it is emptying churches. We know that it is depleting missionary treasury. We know that it is paralyzing missionary effort in every field where it has gone.

I know this by personal observation, and not by hearsay. This may not be their intention, with some of them it is not their intention. But nonetheless, it is a [unintelligible]. The influence of Jesus has been thoroughly beneficial. The influence of this school of criticism is utterly bad. Fifth, Jesus presents His fifth credential, His resurrection from the dead. What has the school of criticism to set up over against that? Nothing whatever. Jesus Christ established His claim, the opposing school of criticism stands dumb. Therefore, we refuse to bow to the assumed and unsubstantiated authority and infallibility of any school of criticism, of any priest, or pope, or theological professor. But most gladly do we do we bow to the authority and infallibility of Jesus Christ. So completely proven and upon His authority we accept the entire Old Testament and the entire New Testament as the Word of God. Let us close our worship as we stand to sing "Amazing Grace."

[Music plays]