

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE BIBLE

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STUDY THREE: ACKNOWLEDGE THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

Acknowledging the absolute authority of the Bible opens up its ability to impact our understanding and our lives. If we approach the Bible as if it a mere human book, or one of many authentic 'words' from one among many authentic 'gods', then its teaching will lack authority, its message will lack relevance. It will be merely one option among many.

The Bible however presents itself as authoritative, and expects to be read, believed and obeyed on that basis.

A. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IS GROUNDED IN ITS INSPIRATION

Go back to Study One and review the teaching on the inspiration of the Bible.

The Bible is God's word. Repeatedly we find the words:

- 'the Lord spoke'
- 'the Word of the Lord came'

Hebrews 1:1 states:

'In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways'

Task 1: Check these references: Exodus 20:1; Isaiah 1:1,2; Jeremiah 1:2; Ezekiel 1:1,2; Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:2,3,6,9,11; 2:1,4,6; 3:1,12; 4:1; 5:1; 7:1; 8:1; Obadiah 1; Micah 1:1; 6:1; Zephaniah 1:1; Zechariah 1:1; Malachi 1:1.

In what ways do these verses give authority to the messages of these prophets?

B. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IS CONFIRMED BY JESUS CHRIST

If we believe the claims of Jesus Christ

- to equality with God, [John 10:30],
- to be the truth [John 14:6],
- and to be the light [John 8:12],

then we also acknowledge that he knows what the truth is. If he, who claimed to be the truth, acknowledges the authority of the Scriptures, we who acknowledge *him* can do no less, for we have committed ourselves to his trustworthiness.

Task 2: Personal challenge: Write out your personal commitment to Jesus Christ and his authority. How does this commitment put a boundary around your attitude to the Bible?

B.1 Jesus Christ upheld the authority of the Bible

Task 3: Read the references below. Discuss and comment on the way Jesus acknowledges the authority of the Old Testament scriptures in these passages.

Matthew 5:17-19

Matthew 15:1-9;

Mathew 19:1-6

Matthew 22:34-40

Mark 11:17

Luke 16:17,18

Luke 18:18-20

B.2 Jesus Christ personally submitted to the authority of the Scripture

Although he is the Lord of all, the Author of the Word, during the time of his incarnation Jesus Christ submitted to the authority of that Word.

Task 4: Compare the following Scriptures. Discuss what it meant for Jesus Christ to submit to these regulations

Genesis 17:12	Luke 2:21-24
Exodus 13:2	
Exodus 20:12	Luke 2:51
Deuteronomy 8:3b	Matthew 4:4

Add further examples from your knowledge of the Scriptures

B.3 Jesus believed the Old Testament records, treating them as fact

Task 5: Look up the references below and describe Jesus' attitude to the Scriptures.

Matthew 19:1-6
Matthew 11:20-24
Matthew 12:1-8
Matthew 12:38-42
John 3:14
John 6:49

B.4 Jesus deliberately aligned himself with the prophecies of the Old Testament

Task 6: Compare these references, and comment on Jesus' acknowledgement of their validity and authority, evidenced in his personal alignment with them.

Matthew 12:15-21	Isaiah 42:1-4
Matthew 13:10-17	Isaiah 6:9,10
Matthew 21:42-44	Psalms 118:22,23
Matthew 26:31-35	Zechariah 13:7
Matthew 26:53-56	Isaiah 53:7-10
John 5:39	Luke 24:24ff

C. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IS AUTHENTICATED BY THE FULFILMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW

Task 7: Check out these Scriptures. In what way does this fulfilment of the Scriptures authenticate their authority? Discuss the implications for our confidence in the Scriptures.

Old

New

Comment and implications

About the birth of Jesus Christ

Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:22-23
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Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:5,6
Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:13-15
Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18

About John the Baptist

Isaiah 40:3	Matthew 3:3
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About the ministry of Jesus Christ

Isaiah 9:1,2	Matthew 4:12-16
Isaiah 29:18,19	Luke 7:22
Isaiah 35:4-6	
Isaiah 61:1,2	Luke 4:16-21
Isaiah 43:4	Matthew 8:16,17
Isaiah 42:2-3	Matthew 12:14-21
Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-5
Psalms 128:16	Matthew 21:9

About the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:31
Jeremiah 32:6-9	Matthew 27:7-9
Zechariah 11:13	
Psalms 22:18	John 19:24
Psalms 69:21	John 19:28
Exodus 12:46	John 19:31-36
Zechariah 12:10	John 19:37
Psalms 16:10	John 20:9

D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss these questions in your study group, or personally consider their relevance to your Christian faith.

1. To what extent should the Bible be authoritative for my life?
2. In what ways is Jesus Christ a pattern or example of the role the Bible should have in my moral choices and everyday decisions?
3. To what extent do I personally and habitually submit to the authority of the Bible?
4. If I start with the premise that the Bible speaks with the authority of God, how will this affect the way I respond to its
 - Its statements
 - Its promises
 - Its commands