

Introduction

1. Modernistic scholars and theologians continually challenge the validity of the Old Testament – its accuracy, inspiration, and authority. However, all their attempts are in vain because God says, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).
2. As Christians, we are already convinced that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16) and so we are not seeking to establish this truth. Our aim in this lesson is to set forth Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament as one that we ought to adopt; which, in turn, will help to fortify our conviction.

I. JESUS ENDORSED THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY

A. Jesus refers to the complete Old Testament using the following terms:

1. The Scriptures:

“You search **the Scriptures**, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).

2. The Law:

“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in **your law**, I said, you are gods'?” (John 10:34; Psalms 82:6).

3. The Law and the Prophets:

“Do not think that I came to destroy **the Law or the Prophets**. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17).

4. The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms:

“Then He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in **the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms** concerning Me” (Luke 24:44).

5. Moses and the Prophets:

“Abraham said to him, “They have **Moses and the prophets**; let them hear them”” (Luke 16:29).

B. Jesus quotes, cites or refers to many of the Old Testament books.

1. **GENESIS** 1:27 (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6); 2:24 (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:8); **EXODUS** 3:6 (Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37); 20:12-16; Deuteronomy 5:16-20 (Matthew 19:19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20); 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16 (Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10); 20:13 (Matthew 5:21); Exodus 20:14 (Matthew 5:27); 21:17; Leviticus 20:9 (Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10); 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21 (Matthew 5:38); **DEUTERONOMY** 6:5 (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30); 6:16 (Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12); 6:13 (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8); 8:3 (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4); 19:15 (Matthew 18:16); 24:1 (Matthew 5:31); **LEVITICUS** 19:18 (Matthew 5:43); Leviticus 19:18 (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31); **PSALMS** 2:9 (Revelation 2:27); 8:2 (Matthew 21:16); 22:1 (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34); 35:19 (John 15:25); 41:9 (John 13:18); 82:6 (John 10:34); 110:1 (Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:43); 118:22-23 (Matthew 22:42; Mark 12:11; Luke 20:17); 118:26 (Matthew 23:39; Luke 13:35); **ISAIAH** 6:9-10 (Matthew 13:15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:9-10); 13:10; 34:4 (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24); 29:13 (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7); 53:12 (Luke 22:37); 54:13 (John 6:45); 56:7 (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46); 61:1-2 (Luke 4:18-19); 66:24 (Mark 9:48); **JEREMIAH** 7:11 (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46); **DANIEL** 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14); **HOSEA** 6:6 (Matthew 9:13); 6:6 (Matthew 12:7); 10:8 (Luke 23:30); **MICAH** 7:6 (Matthew 10:36); **ZECHARIAH** 13:7 (Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27); **MALACHI** 3:1 (Matthew 11:10; Luke 7:27).

THE ANVIL OF GOD'S WORD



“Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

“‘How many anvils have you had,’ said I,
‘To wear and batter all these hammers so?’
‘Just one,’ said he, and then with twinkling eye,
‘The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.’

“And so, I thought, the Anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone.”

—Attributed to John Clifford

2. As well as directly quoting from the Old Testament, Jesus also makes references to the Law and several accounts of recorded events, e.g., The gift to be offered as a testimony for one's cleansing in the Law of Moses (**Matthew 8:4** < **Leviticus 14:1-22**); The murder of Abel by Cain (**Luke 11:51** < **Genesis 4:1-15**); The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Matthew 10:15** < **Genesis 19:24-25**); God feeding Israel with manna (**John 6:31-51** < **Exodus 16:1-31**); David and his men eating the showbread (**Matthew 12:3-4** < **1 Samuel 21:1-6**); The account of Jonah and the whale (**Matthew 12:38-41** < **Jonah 1:4-2:10**); The queen of Sheba visiting Solomon (**Matthew 12:42** < **1 Kings 10:1**); Noah and the flood (**Matthew 24:37-39** < **Genesis 6:1-7:24**).

II. JESUS ACKNOWLEDGED THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. Jesus regarded the Old Testament as the inspired word of God:

1. When referring to the Old Testament writings, Jesus used the term "Scriptures" seven times (**Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Mark 12:24; 14:49; John 5:39**). He meant by this term what every devout Jew understood by it: In a debate with the Sadducees regarding the resurrection, Jesus highlighted their ignorance of the scriptures, saying, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures..." (**Matthew 22:29**). In order to prove the doctrine of the resurrection, Jesus preceded a quote from the book of Exodus with the words, "Have you not read what was spoken to you by God" (**Matthew 22:31**). The connection is clear "...the Scriptures...what was spoken to you by God". The Scriptures were acknowledged to be the word of God.
2. Some people claim that it was merely the *general thoughts* of what was written that was inspired by God, not each and every word. However, on more than one occasion, Jesus proved a point on the significance of a *single word*. (i) Concerning the Messiah's identity, Jesus emphasized the word "Lord" that David used (**Mark 12:35-37**): "The Lord said to my **Lord**, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" (**Psalms 110:1**). (ii) Jesus proved the reality of the resurrection based on the tense of a verb (**Matthew 22:31-32**): "Moreover He said, I **am** the God of your father - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God" (**Exodus 3:6**).

B. If the Scriptures are inspired of God, then it naturally follows they are authoritative and have the final word. Indeed, Jesus used the Scriptures in this way:

1. Many of the verses we have already cited are examples of how Jesus proved a point regarding marriage and divorce (**Matthew 19:3-9**), silenced His critics regarding plucking heads of grain on the Sabbath (**Matthew 12:1-8**), and exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees regarding the command to honor one's father and mother (**Mark 7:1-13**).
2. The authoritative nature of the Scriptures is seen in Jesus' statement "The Scriptures cannot be broken" (**John 10:35**). Benson comments, "Nothing that is written therein can be censured or rejected" and Thayer says the word "broken" means "to deprive of authority." Jesus also said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (**Matthew 5:17-18**).

III. JESUS CLAIMED THE SAME AUTHORITY FOR HIS OWN WORDS

A. It was acknowledged by many that Jesus taught as one having authority:

1. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount "the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (**Matthew 7:28-29; cp. Mark 1:21-22; Luke 4:31-32**).
2. Jesus spoke with authority because what He spoke was from God: "Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (**John 7:16-17**).
3. At His ascension, Jesus made this extraordinary claim, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (**Matthew 28:18**).

- B. Jesus not only taught “as one having authority”, He made some extraordinary claims regarding His own teachings:
1. Jesus said of His teachings, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but **My words will by no means pass away**” (Matthew 24:35), and, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him - **the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day**” (John 12:48).
 2. The teachings of Jesus consist of all that we find recorded in the gospels and in the New Testament.
 - a. General claims: (i) The Hebrew writer made this general comment regarding Jesus’ teachings: “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which **at the first began to be spoken by the Lord**, and was **confirmed to us by those who heard Him**, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Hebrews 2:1-4). (ii) Paul declares that all that had been previously kept hidden had now been revealed through the apostles: “But God has revealed them to **us** [the apostles] through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10; cp. vs. 12-13).
 - b. Specific claims: (i) To the Corinthians Paul said, “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). (ii) Peter said that he spoke the commandment of the Lord: “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior” (2 Peter 3:1-2).
- C. How can we be certain that Jesus’ teachings – and thereby the teachings of the apostles – are of God? Simply put, if Jesus were a false prophet, then God would not have raised Him from the dead, would He? Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).

Conclusion

1. Modernistic scholars and theologians continually challenge the validity of the Old Testament – its accuracy, inspiration, and authority; and if we are continually exposed to their erroneous opinions, then there is a very real danger that we will begin to believe them! To counter such a bombardment of erroneous opinions, we must continually remind ourselves of the truth – Jesus had absolute confidence in the accuracy, inspiration, and authority of the Scriptures. If anyone should think, “Yes, but how can we trust Jesus’ views on anything!” Quite simply, because He was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). God would hardly raise a false prophet from the dead, would He?
2. Further, Jesus claimed that His words were just as authoritative as the Old Scriptures, and that His words will judge us in the last day. This is why the Hebrew writer says, “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Hebrews 2:1-4).
3. Modernistic scholars and theologians will, no doubt, continue to challenge the validity of the Scriptures, but we must not pay heed to their opinions. Instead, let us be sure to listen to Jesus and adopt His attitude towards the Scriptures. Also, we ought to remember that (i) “Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4), and, (ii) “They were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Corinthians 10:11). Let us, then, study with confidence.