

# Not a Word of Christ Shall Ever Fail

by R.A. Torrey

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*Jesus Christ's words are absolutely sure and will always be true, no matter what happens.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:32-33, Matthew 24:35, Matthew 25:31-34, Mark 2:10, John 3:3-10

**Topics:** "Eternal Truths", "The Reliability of Christ's Words"

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## Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the eternal stability of Christ's words, asserting that they are more enduring than heaven and earth. He argues that despite opposition, the passage of time, rigorous scrutiny, and historical tests, not a single word of Christ has failed or been proven flawed. Torrey highlights the certainty of Christ's promises regarding eternal life, forgiveness, and the necessity of being born again, reinforcing that these truths are unchanging and reliable. He calls on listeners to recognize the significance of Christ's declarations and to respond to His call for faith and acknowledgment. Ultimately, Torrey concludes that while all else may fade, the words of Jesus will endure forever.

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## Transcript

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Matt. 24: 35.

JESUS CHRIST here asserts that His words are more stable and enduring than heaven or earth: that while heaven and earth shall pass away, His word shall not pass away. When we consider the position that Jesus Christ occupied when He made this extraordinary claim, it appears absurd in the extreme. He was an uneducated artisan of an obscure and despised people. Furthermore, it was only a few days before His crucifixion. The man who uttered these words in less than a week was to be the butt of the scorn and ridicule of jeering mobs as He ended His life as a condemned malefactor on a gibbet, only a short walk from where He was now speaking. If these words spoken by such a man, at such a time, prove true, then He must be more than appears at first sight. Indeed, He must be as He claimed to be, Divine. Heaven and earth are God's own handiwork, and if Christ's words prove more stable than they, then He Himself must be Divine.

### I. CHRIST 's WORDS ARE SURE.

But these remarkable words of Christ after the lapse of more than eighteen centuries are proven to be true. This stupendous claim of Christ that not a word of His shall ever fail has been substantiated. That the words of Jesus Christ shall never pass away is proven by the tests that they have already stood.

1. First of all, the words of Jesus have stood the test of bitterest opposition. No sooner had Christ's words fallen from His lips than they were hated. They have been hated through the nearly nineteen centuries that have elapsed since they were spoken. This hatred has been most bitter, most relentless, most energetic, most skilful, most wily, most powerful, but it has been utterly ineffective. This hatred manifested itself in literary attacks upon the words of Christ, like that of Lucian the great master of satire in his day, in philosophical attacks like that of the great philosopher Porphyry, in learned attacks like that of the scholar Celsus, in physical attacks like that of the great Roman Emperor Diocletian, in which he summoned all the political and military forces of the empire with torch, and stake, and prison, and wild beast to obliterate from the pages of history the memory of Jesus Christ and His words. From those early days to this, this opposition has gone on, more than eighteen centuries of it. All the artillery of science, literature, philosophy, political intrigue, sarcasm, ridicule, worldly ambition, force, all the artillery of earth and hell, have been trained upon the words of Christ, and for centuries at a time an almost incessant cannonade has been kept up. Sometimes weak hearts have been shaken by the roar of battle, but the words of Christ have remained absolutely unshaken. There has not been one single stone dislodged from these fortifications. Words that can come out of eighteen centuries of such experience as that unscathed, unscarred, unmarred, will stand forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Christ shall not pass away.

2. In the next place, Christ's words have not only stood the test of bitter opposition, but they have also stood the test of time. The test of time is a severe test of men's utterances. What seemed like wisdom when uttered a few years ago is seen to-day to be consummate folly. Ptolemy was by far the greatest astronomer of antiquity, and his utterances were considered the sum of all wisdom, but they have not stood the test of time, and his theories are to-day the laughing-stock of the schoolroom. What is true of the words of Ptolemy is true of all other books of the past but one; they are outgrown, but the utterances of Jesus Christ are not outgrown, they are as precious to-day as in that long-ago time when they were first spoken. They are as perfectly applicable to present-day needs as to the needs of that day. They contain the solution of all modern individual and social problems; they have perpetual youth. There is not one single point at which the teachings of Jesus Christ have been outgrown or become antiquated. The human mind has been expanding for more than eighteen centuries since Jesus Christ spoke here on earth, but it has not outgrown Him. Words that can endure eighteen centuries of growth and still prove as thoroughly adequate to meet the needs of the race and each member of it as when first given will stand forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the

words of Jesus Christ shall not pass away.

Let me say in passing that in the light of history it is nothing short of preposterous, and even ludicrous, to hear men put forward the claims of the newly hatched philosophies of a day against the utterances of Jesus Christ that have stood the test of more than eighteen centuries, especially in view of the well-known fact that just such philosophies, full of self-confidence, have appeared by the thousands in the past, and after a brief day of notoriety have flashed out again into the darkness from which they had so recently emerged. The history of eighteen centuries of human thought is largely a history of men who counted themselves wiser than Christ, but whom it took only a few years to prove utter fools.

3. The words of Christ have stood a third test, the test of rigid scrutiny. No other words have ever been so examined, scrutinized, analyzed, pulled to pieces, subjected to the most minute, microscopic and unsparing examination, as have the words of Christ. They have undergone eighteen centuries of scrutiny, and what is the result?

a. The first result is, not one single flaw has been discovered. What would not men give to find one real flaw in the words of Jesus? What would not Ingersoll have given in his day? What would not some of our liberal teachers who would like to set themselves up by putting Jesus Christ down, give? What would not some of our professedly orthodox preachers, who care far more for a petty reputation for originality and advanced scholarship than they do for the untarnished splendour of the Son of God, give? They have searched for a flaw generation after generation of the enemies of Christ. One generation failing to find such a flaw has bequeathed the search to another, and this search has gone on for more than eighteen centuries with the best microscopes that could be devised, and the search has failed, utterly failed. The words of Jesus stand out absolutely flawless. The words that have stood eighteen centuries of such scrutiny will stand forever. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the words of Jesus Christ shall not pass away.

b. But there is a second result of this scrutiny: the words of Christ have not only proven themselves flawless, but inexhaustible. These eighteen centuries

have not only been centuries of scrutiny, they have also been centuries of profound, earnest, and honest study as well. Men have dug and dug for eighteen centuries into this mine of precious metal that they have found in the words of Christ. Thousands and tens of thousands have dug and the mine has proven absolutely inexhaustible. There is more for the new miner that comes to-day than there was for the first digger. Eighteen centuries of digging and discovery and no hint of touching the bottom of the mine. The bottom is farther off than ever. The mine that has endured eighteen centuries of such digging and not given out never will give out. With the confidence born of eighteen centuries of experience, we can shout, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Jesus shall not pass away."

4. The words of Jesus Christ have stood another test, the test of history, measuring the accuracy of His prophecies. Jesus Christ was a prophet. He undertook to tell the things that were to be. History is the touchstone of prophecy. The prophet who is not of God falls before the test of history, but Jesus Christ stands. Jesus Christ, while Jerusalem and the temple were still standing in their pride, magnificence and seeming security, foretold that the armies of Rome would come and besiege the city, that there would be a siege of such horror as was absolutely unparalleled in history; that not one stone should be left upon another, and that for long periods of time to come Jerusalem would be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. So it has come to pass to the letter, and so it is being fulfilled even to our day. Jesus foretold that the Jew, though crushed, scattered throughout the earth, subjected to unparalleled tyranny, would preserve his race identity until the Christ should come again. Centuries have rolled on, nations have arisen, fallen, been obliterated and forgotten, the Jew has not had a foothold anywhere for centuries, yet the Jew retains his race identity to this day as perfectly as he possessed it in the first century. It is the miracle of history, and the words of Christ stand. Jesus Christ predicted furthermore that the little church He was founding of obscure men in that obscure corner of the earth would spread throughout the earth until the nations of the earth took shelter under the branches thereof. The prediction seemed utterly wild and preposterous, but it has come true. The words of Christ have stood the test of history. He predicted furthermore that His church having spread thus outwardly, corruption would begin inwardly and that this corruption would spread "until all was leavened." It was a passing strange prediction to make about one's own kingdom, but it has been fulfilled to the letter. The apparently preposterous and impossible words of Christ have stood the test of more than eighteen centuries of history. The words of prophecy that can stand the rigid test of eighteen centuries of history will stand forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away.

5. The words of Christ have stood the test of more than eighteen centuries of practical application. Through these more than eighteen centuries men and women have had these words of Christ before them to live by if they would, and thousands and tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, have decided that they would. Men and women have tested the words of Christ, His promises, His moral precepts, His commandments, His warnings, in all the relations of life. They have tested His promises and His precepts in the home, they have tested them in the church life, in the place of business ; they have tested them in prosperity and in adversity ; they have tested them in sickness and in health ; they have tested them in the joys of peace, and in the horrors of war ; they have tested them in life, and when face to face with death; they have tested them in the sweet fullness of the unbroken family circle, and in the desolation when every earthly friend has been taken away. For eighteen centuries men have tested these words of Christ from the cradle to the grave, and the words of Christ have stood the test. They never fail, they never will fail. In all, these words of Christ have stood millions upon millions of tests and not one single case of failure. What may we say then without the shadow of the shade of a doubt? Not one word of Christ shall ever fail.

Heaven and earth shall pass away but the words of Jesus Christ shall not pass away.

If there is anything absolutely sure it is the words of Jesus Christ. Heaven and earth may pass away, they are material and subject to the changes and decay that are always going on in matter. They have stood for ages, but they will not always stand. There was a time, as both the Bible and science tell us, when the heavens and earth did not exist, and there will be a time when they do not continue to exist in their present form; but Christ's words are spiritual not material, unchanging not changing, eternal not temporal, and while the endless ages of eternity roll on they will still endure. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Jesus Christ shall not pass away.

## II. SOME OTHER THINGS THAT ARE SURE ALSO.

We see that Christ's words are absolutely sure. Not one word of His shall ever fail. But, if Jesus Christ's words are sure, some other things are sure also.

1. It is sure that there is a future eternal heaven and eternal hell. This, Jesus Christ plainly declares. The doctrines of an eternal heaven and an eternal hell are not speculations of the theologians, but proclamations of the Son of God. Jesus says that at His coming again all nations then living on the earth shall be gathered before Him and He shall separate them one from the other as a shepherd separateth his sheep from the goats, and that He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats to the left, and of those on the left hand He says, "These shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46.) Remember that these are not the words of some antiquated, mediaeval, bigoted theologian, they are the words of the Son of God, the words of Him not one word of whom shall ever fail.

2. It is sure again that anyone who believes in Jesus Christ shall receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life, no matter how greatly nor how long he may have sinned. Jesus says that He "has power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2: 10). He says again, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,

even so must the Son of man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him may have eternal life" (John 3: 14, 15). These words seem incredible. They seem

too good to be true, but Jesus Christ is the speaker and not one word of His shall ever fail. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away. This statement that there is pardon and eternal life for anyone who will believe in Jesus Christ is absolutely sure. Is there anyone here to

night who is heartily sick of sin, and heartily tired of death? Come, believe on Jesus Christ and be saved and get pardon and eternal life to-night.

3. It is sure again that no one who rejects Jesus Christ shall see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him. Men do not like that doctrine. They like to

think they can reject Jesus Christ and yet be saved by their imagined morality, or in some other way. There is absolutely no foundation for such a hope.

It is not the doctrine of "fierce old John Calvin" nor of "bigoted Jonathan Edwards," it is the declaration of Jesus Christ, who says in John 3 : 18, 19, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned. But he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." He says again in the 14th and 15th verses of the same chapter, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness: even so must the Son of man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," the unmistakable implication of which is that the one who does not believe shall perish, no matter what else he may do, and John sums up the teaching of the Lord Jesus on this point by saying, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on Him." Before you dare question the statement to your own eternal ruin, remember who makes it, the One not one of whose words shall ever fail.

4. There is another thing that is absolutely sure, it is sure that if a man is not born again he shall not enter into the kingdom of God. This is the word of Jesus Christ who says in John 3 : 3, 5, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. And again, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It becomes a matter of tremendous importance to each one of us that we know whether we have been born again. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away, and Jesus Christ says that no one who has not been born again shall enter His Kingdom. Oh man, oh woman, have you been born again?

5. Still another thing is sure : it is sure if one seeks to be a Christian without letting the world know it, seeks to be a Christian in the privacy of his own heart, it is sure that Jesus Christ will not acknowledge such a disciple when He comes. His words on this point are very plain. He says in Mark 8 : 38, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels." And again He says in Matt. 10: 32, 33, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess

before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Your own deceitful heart may seek to make you think that you can be a Christian and not tell it. False friends may try to persuade you of the same thing, but He, not one word of whose shall ever fail, says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His father with the holy angels." Your opinion will pass away; your friends false arguments shall pass away, heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's

words shall not pass away.

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