



# Unbreakable

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# Introduction:

## WHERE DO WE START?

Books and talks on the Bible, in general, start from one of three places.

Some begin with the questions and problems people have with the Scriptures, and go through them one by one, explaining how best to think about them. I get that. The Bible contains puzzling details (swapping sandals in the middle of a love story), and upsetting stories (destroying Canaanite cities), and dramatic miracles (parting the Red Sea, really?), and factual difficulties (how did Judas die, again?), and unpopular teachings (sex is only meant for one man and one woman in marriage), and a confusing canon (what on earth is the apocrypha, and why don't we read it?), and so on. Therefore most of us have questions about the Bible – big,





difficult, sticky questions – and engaging carefully with them is very important. But if we start from there, we risk putting ourselves immediately on the defensive and implying that our questions (which are different, as it happens, from the questions many cultures have asked) are the most important thing on the table. The chances are they're not. So that's not where this book begins.

Others begin with what the Bible says about the Bible. As circular as that might sound, it's actually quite sensible, because all sets of beliefs have to start somewhere; you trust reason because it's rational, you trust experience because it fits with your experience, you trust the Bible because it's biblical, and so on. Personally, though, I don't tend to do that, mainly because it looks suspiciously random (as in, why didn't we start with the Qur'an as our ultimate authority, or the Bhagavad Gita, or for that matter the *Daily Mail*?). So that's not where this book will start, either.

Instead, this book will use Jesus as the starting point. (That's controversial, I know.) Ultimately, you see, our trust in the Bible stems from our trust in Jesus Christ: the man who is God, the King of the world, the crucified, risen and exalted rescuer.<sup>1</sup> I





don't trust in Jesus because I trust the Bible; I trust the Bible because I trust in Jesus. I love him, and I've decided to follow him, so if he talks and acts as if the Bible is trustworthy, authoritative, good, helpful and powerful, I will too ... even if some of my questions remain unanswered, or my answers remain unpopular.<sup>2</sup>

Don't worry: we'll get to some of the big questions, and the witness of the rest of the Bible, as we go. But we begin where the gospel does, and where Christianity does. We begin with Jesus.

