



Fall 2013 Sermon Series: Bible on Trial

The Charge:

- A. The Bible is merely a human book, not the message from any God.
- B. The Bible is not true, it contains errors, it is not historically reliable and it is not accurate.
- C. The Bible's teachings are often unscientific, unethical, socially regressive and immoral.

The Plea: Not Guilty

Introduction

We at FTC claim that the Bible is the written word of God. We claim that it is true, without error and that it is authoritative. Everything we teach here has as the Bible as its basis and authority. We claim that it is not merely a truth but that its message is **exclusively the** truth. We claim that the Bible (all 66 books) is not merely a word from God, but that it is **the** word from God. All our theological beliefs are founded on the Bible. Since the Bible is God's word, it is a worthy foundation for our beliefs and practices. If the Bible were not the word of God, it would be instructive, containing much history and wisdom, but it would not be authoritative. If the Bible were not the word of God, it would be like all other books, merely the word of men.

The purpose of this series, Bible on Trial, is to learn why we believe that the Bible is the word of God. Our study will cover eight crucial topics:

Revelation addresses the issue of *what God revealed*. 9-8-13

Inspiration addresses the issue of *how what God revealed (the Bible) was written and by whom*. 9-15-13

Canonicity addresses the issue of *which books are in the Bible*. 9-22-13

Inerrancy addresses the issue of the original inspired books *being without error*. 9-29-13

Reliability addresses the issue of *how accurate our modern day Bibles are to the original books*. 10-6-13

Translation addresses the issue of what it says *in another language*. "What does it say?"

Interpretation addresses the issue of meaning, and answers the question, "What does it mean?" "How should we interpret the Bible?" Literal, metaphorical, allegorical, etc? This topic is called **hermeneutics**.

Application addresses the issue of life response. "What am I going to do about it?"

"How can we know that the Bibles we have today accurately reflect originals written 2000 years ago for the New Testament and up to 3400 years ago for the Old Testament? Communication is never perfect; people make mistakes. Copying errors are compounded with each successive generation, just like the message in the telephone game. Over 2000 years have passed; so it's anyone's guess what the original said. Plus, there are so many different translations and interpretations. Who knows what the Bible originally said!?"

The Bible makes claims about itself. The Bible requests to take the witness stand. It speaks and wants to be heard, questioned, cross-examined. So let's put the Bible on the trial.

Procedure for This Study

We will appeal to the Bible in our defense of its authority. This may appear to be circular reasoning, but think of this study as a trial. In a trial the accused is permitted to speak in his own defense. The defendant is permitted to testify in his own defense. While the defendant's testimony does not settle the matter, it is admissible as evidence and useful for evaluating the defendant's credibility. It is also fair game for the prosecution to call the defendant back to the stand for cross-examination. In our case, the defendant will not plead the 5th.

First, we need to clearly understand the claims. Then we need to weigh the evidence and come to some conclusions.

In a court of law, you don't have to prove your point *beyond all shadow of doubt*. You do have to prove your point, or make your case, *beyond reasonable doubt*.

Hey if the Bible comes to us through human authors, and to err is human, then you've got to expect some errors, right? If it doesn't have errors, is it authentically human? The Bible teaches a lot of good moral lessons, but it's not necessarily authoritative on matters of history and science. Besides, if it's the originally written books and letters (the autographs) that are error free, none of which we have anyway, what's the big deal?

INERRANCY claims that the Bible is God's true and trustworthy word to people.

The Bible is not false, deceptive, mistaken, or fraudulent in what it says.

The Bible is truthful and reliable on all matters it addresses.

INERRANCY means that the original books (autographs) are wholly true and without error.

I. The Biblical Basis of Inerrancy (The accused testifies...)

- A. The nature of a prophet as God's mouthpiece, including [tests](#) to discern false prophets. (Exodus 4:30; Num. 22:18; Deut. 4:2, 13:1-5 and 18:18; 18:20-22, Jer. 26:2)

³⁰ and **Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken** to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. Exodus 4:30

⁸ Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to **the command of the LORD my God**. Num. 22:18

² **You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it**, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Deut. 4:2

"**If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder,** ² and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, **saying, 'Let us go after other gods** (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³ **you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.** ⁴ You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you. Deut. 13:1-5

¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him. ²⁰ But **the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.** ²¹ You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ²² **When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.** Deut. 18:18-22

² "Thus says the LORD (to Jeremiah the Prophet), 'Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and **speak** to all the cities of Judah who have come to worship *in* the LORD's house **all the words that I have commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit a word!** Jer. 26:2

- B. The Scripture is [God's](#) Word.

1. "Word of God", "God spoke", "God said", "word of the Lord", "thus says the Lord" or equivalent phrases appear over 3800 times in the Old Testament, over 200 in the New Testament.
2. It is the "*Word of God*". (Heb. 4:12)

For **the word of God** is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

3. It is "*God breathed*". (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

All Scripture is **inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

4. It is the "*oracles of God*". (Rom. 3:2; Acts 7:38)

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? ² Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with **the oracles of God**. Rom. 3:2

This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and *who was with our fathers*; and **he received living oracles to pass on to you**. Acts 7:38

C. The Scripture is regarded as divine authority.

1. Citing the OT, the NT says, "*It is written*" 92 times. (Mt. 4:4,7,10)

2. It is unbreakable. (John 10:35)

If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and **the Scripture cannot be broken**),

3. It is imperishable. (Mt. 5:17-18)

¹⁷ Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, **not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law** until all is accomplished.

D. Scripture is completely true. (Psalm 119:160; Proverbs 30:5; John 17:17)

¹⁶⁰ The sum of Your word is truth,
And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting. Psalm 119:160

⁵ Every word of God is tested;
He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Proverbs 30:5

⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. John 17:17

E. God is completely truthful. (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; 1 John 1:5-6)

"God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent;
Has He said, and will He not do it?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? Num. 23:19

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written,
"THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED." Rom. 3:4

² in the hope of eternal life, which **God, who cannot lie**, promised long ages ago, Titus 1:2

¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. Heb. 6:18

⁵ This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 1 John 1:5-6

F. The Bible is historically and scientifically true. (Mt. 12:40, 19:4, 24:34; John 3:12)

⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Mt. 12:40)

And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, (Mt.19:4)

³⁴ Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. (Mt. 24:34)

¹² If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (John 3:12)

G. Scripture is equated with God's authority.

What God says, the Bible says and what the Bible says, God says.

H. Analogy of Christ and the Bible. See Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*)

The Christ-Bible Analogy (Dr. Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*)

This is a good analogy. Similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar. No analogy is perfect. Good ones, however, have crucial similarities. Of course, all analogies have

differences, or they would not be analogies. Strong similarities are seen in that both. Both Christ and Scripture are theanthropic. Both have human and divine aspects.

1. In both the human side is without error (or imperfection) (Heb. 4:15; John 17:17)
 - ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:15)
 - ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. (John 17:17)
2. Both are called the Word of God. Christ is the Living Word (John 1:1), and the Bible is the written Word (John 10:34-35)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)

“Jesus answered them, “Has it not been **written in your Law...**to whom **the word of God** came (and **the Scripture** cannot be broken...” (John 10:34-35)
3. Each has two natures, one divine and one human, so both Jesus and the Bible are divine and human.
4. The two natures of each are united by one medium. The two natures of Christ are united in one Person. And the two natures of the Bible are united in one set of propositions (i.e. sentences). So we have Jesus, the divine-human Person, and we have the Bible, the divine-human propositions.
5. Both Christ and the Scripture are without flaw. Christ is without sin (Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21), and the Bible is without error (Matt. 22:29; Hebrews 6:18)

It is impossible for God to lie (Matt. 22:29)

Jesus replied, “Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God. (Heb. 6:18)
6. Both are revelation. Jesus is God’s revelation to people in human life (1 John 1:1), while the Bible is God’s revelation to people in human language. Jesus is incarnate revelation, while the Bible is inscripturated revelation.

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life...” (1 John 1:1)
7. Significant differences are noted in that only Jesus is God, not the Bible.

The strong similarities between God’s living and written Words notwithstanding, some significant differences must be noted lest one fall into bibliolatry. Unlike Christ, who is God, the Bible is not God, and therefore, the Bible should not be worshiped.

POINT: The Bible affirms the doctrine of Inerrancy.

II. The following list explains what inerrancy does and does not necessitate.

- A. Not every writer gives all of the truth. No account is exhaustive.

Writers write accounts in which they give *only the truth*, but *not all of the truth*. Scripture speaks *truly* but not *exhaustively*. (For example, see the different Gospel accounts of the day Jesus rose from the dead.)
- B. A *partial* report is not a false report.

The part recorded is wholly true. Both Matthew and Mark mention an angel at the empty tomb. Luke and John give a fuller account, specifying that there were two angels. All four accounts are true. Neither Matthew nor Mark says that there was only one angel present.

Illustration: You may say that a policeman stopped you, asked for your registration and license and wrote you a ticket. Your friend’s account of the stop may state that two officers pulled you over. While your accounts differ, both accounts are true.
- C. Differing accounts are *contrary* not *contradictory*. Differing accounts are complimentary.

For example, Matt. 27:5 says that Judas hanged himself, while Acts 1:18-19 explains that he fell headlong and burst open. We can piece together a scenario, which allows both accounts to be true.
- D. Not everything *recorded in* the Bible is *approved by* the Bible.

For example, in Titus 1:12, Paul quotes a Cretan poet to make a point, but he himself is not claiming that the poet has spoken truth. Also, throughout the OT we see God’s people doing ungodly things, but the writer does not state that these things are approved by God. The Bible does not necessarily commend that which it contains. We must look for the commitment of the author. Accounts which are *descriptive* are not necessarily *prescriptive*. The Scripture may *describe* what happened without *prescribing* the behavior as normative for others to practice. For example, see Hosea 1:2 (NIV). When the LORD began to speak through Hosea,

the LORD said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD.”

E. Biblical language is *observational, not technical*. The Bible is a [pre](#)-scientific book, not an unscientific book. We cannot fault the Bible for not explaining things in twenty-first century technological terms. We still speak today in observational terms even in our hi-tech world. For example, everyday the TV, radio and newspapers tell us what time sunrise and sunset will be, even though we know that the sun neither rises nor sets; the earth spins.

F. NT citations of the OT need not be word for word exact.

First, we have translation from one language to another. Second, we have some indirect citations where the NT person correctly reports the “jist” of what the OT speaker said. He gives the true meaning and application. The point is that indirect citing of someone can be accurate without using someone’s exact words.

G. Transmission errors have occurred. Copyists and scribes have made some [copying mistakes](#).

Fortunately, we have a plethora of NT manuscripts (5795 Greek MSS, plus over 20,000 translations into other languages from Greek MSS) and a multitude of citations and allusions (over 36,000 prior to 300 AD) so we can discern most of these variant readings rather simply. A few are more difficult textual variants, but none of these affect any doctrines.

H. To err is not essential to humanness.

There are many times when humans do not err. People are finite, limited in knowledge, but limitation of knowledge does not necessitate distortion of knowledge. The finitude of God’s spokesmen does not necessitate that God’s spokesmen erred when delivering God’s message.

“Even apart from inspiration, it is not necessary for a human being to err in order to be human.

So if it is possible for an uninspired person to speak the truth without error, how much more will it be the case for one who us under the influence of inspiration.” R.C. Sproul

“If someone is infallible, that means he cannot err, and if he cannot err, then he does not err.” R.C. Sproul

POINT: The Doctrine of Inerrancy claims that the autographs (the original books) are wholly true and without error. The writings God inspired cannot contain error because God cannot err. If the Bible (the original writings God inspired) contains error, then it is not God’s word.

The philosophical shifts in epistemology in the 17th and 18th centuries led to the theory of biblical errancy in the 19th century. Careful scholarship and the science of archeology in the late 19th and 20th centuries have refuted these errancy theories. But like other pre-Civil War theories, worldviews have been built on the denial of Biblical authority. Many people are simply unwilling to allow the facts to change their views.

III. POINT: The denial of the Inerrancy of the Bible is an attack on

- A. The [authenticity](#) (integrity) of the Father, Who originated it
- B. The [authority](#) of the Son, Who affirmed it
- C. The [activity](#) of the Holy Spirit, Who inspired it
- D. The [stability](#) of the Church, which is built upon it.

Message

The Bible speaks truly and accurately on all matters it addresses.

Action Points:

- ✓ If you’d like to talk about this topic, I would love to discuss it with you.
jtalone@fardaletrinitychurch.org or 201-825-1823
- ✓ Join a fold here at FTC so you can read, study and discuss God’s Word with your spiritual family.
- ✓ Read a book of the Bible this week. Pick a book, any book!
- ✓ **Translation** addresses the issue of what it says *in another language*. “*What does it say?*”
And Reliability addresses the issue of *how accurate* our modern day Bibles are *to the original books*, and that’s what we will look at next Sunday.

