



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*. 2-29-13

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*.

General revelation is what we have in nature. It's what we can understand about God from what we observe in the universe, (creation and conscience) without Him speaking directly to us.

Special revelation is God's particular direct communication to people. God wanted some of His particular communication preserved and passed on so other people could have it too. *The process whereby the revelation has been written down is called inspiration.* The product of inspiration is God's written word, the Bible.

So the Bible is what God has revealed to people. The Bible is God's word written for our information and instruction.

Inspiration is the process by which God moved human authors, using their own individual personalities, to compose and record, without error, His revelation to man in the words of the original books of the Bible. We call this process *verbal, plenary inspiration* in order to state that it extends to the actual words (verbal) and to *all* of the actual words (plenary, which means "full, entire, complete, absolute").

A. How did inspiration work? Let's see what the Bible says...how the Bible describes it.

1. God-breathed writings- The Bible itself claims to be God breathed.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3:16) The word translated "*inspired*" is *theopneustos*, which literally means "*God breathed*". The writings are inspired, not the writers.

2. Spirit-moved writers- "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:21) It says "...men *moved by* the Holy Spirit spoke from God." The word is *pheromenoi* and is also used in Acts 27:15 and 17 where it is translated "*borne along*", "*carried along*" or "*driven by*" the wind and sea.

¹⁵ and when the ship was caught *in it* and could not face the wind, we gave way *to it* and let ourselves be driven along. ¹⁶ Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the *ship's* boat under control. ¹⁷ After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on *the shallows* of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along.

So the writers were moved by God to write the words they wrote, such that the words (books) they wrote are inspired. *Over 40 writers wrote the 66 books of the Bible over a span of 1500 years! They wrote in a variety of literary forms, such as narrative history, prophecy, poetry, wisdom literature, personal letters, etc.*

3. The process whereby God moved people to speak or write His words is frequently described in the Bible.

For examples see the following: Note that the italicized words and phrases describe the process.

"...Moses...*recounted*...all the words of the Lord and ...*wrote* down all the words of the Lord..." Exodus 24:3-4

"...I will *put My words in his mouth*, and he shall speak to them all that I command him...My words which he shall speak in My name..." Deut. 18:18-19

"The Spirit of the Lord *spoke by me*, and His word was *on my tongue*." 2 Sam. 23:2

"...the book of the law of the Lord *given* by Moses." 2 Chron. 34:14

"...My words, which I have *put in your mouth*..." Isaiah 59:21

"...speak...all the words *that I have commanded* you to speak to them. *Do not omit a word*." Jer. 26:2

"Take a scroll and write on it *all the words which I have spoken* to you...from the first day I spoke to you..." Jer. 36:2

"Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah after the king had burned the scroll and *the words which Baruch had written at the dictation of Jeremiah*, saying..." Jer. 36:27

"...the words which the Lord of hosts had *sent by His Spirit through* the former prophets..." Zech. 7:12

"...how does David *in the Spirit* call Him (The Christ) 'Lord', saying 'The Lord said to my Lord...' " citing Ps. 110:1 in Matt. 22:43

"...who *by the Holy Spirit*, (through) the mouth of our father David Thy servant, did say..." citing Ps.2:2 in Acts 4:25

"...The Holy Spirit *rightly spoke through* Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying..." Acts 28:25

"Now we have *received...the Spirit* who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also *speak, ...in words...taught by the Spirit*..." 1 Cor. 2:12-13

"God, after He *spoke* long ago to the fathers *in the prophets* in *many portions* and in *many ways*, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son..." Heb. 1:1-2

"...He (God)...*saying through* David..." citing Ps.95:7 in Heb. 4:7

“God bears witness, John wrote it, the one who does not believe it, implies or accuses that God is a liar” 1 John 5:9-13

In summary, God used people to record His revelation. Heb. 1:1-2 explains the process as God “speaking in the prophets in many portions and in many ways.” From the verses just studied we see a variety of “ways” in which the Holy Spirit moved people such that the words they wrote are God-breathed.

B. Specific ways God used:

- Dictation, where God speaks and *the man writes verbatim* what God says. (ten commandments)
- Dictation, where *the spirit-moved author dictates the message* he received from God to a penman such that what he writes is called the word of God. (Baruch, Jeremiah’s scribe)
- Undefined expressions, like “words...sent by His Spirit”, “in the Spirit”, “the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me...”, etc.
- Through human personality, such that the writer’s style and particular interests show clearly. (Kings/Chronicles, the four Gospels)

C. What the Bible Says, God Says (Old Testament)

As they were first revealed and recorded, the words of the Law and the Prophets (whole OT) are attributed to God. “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. New Testament persons and writers agree. They refer to the Old Testament as God’s word and equate God and Scripture. According to the speakers and writers of the New Testament, what God says, the Scripture says, and what the Scripture says, God says.

Bible Said

God Said

Genesis 2:24

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Matt. 19:4-5

⁴ And He answered and said, “Have you not read that **He who created them** from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, ⁵ and **said**, ‘FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH’? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

Psalm 2 (a song of David)

Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
² The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed

Acts 4:24-25

²⁴ And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, “**O Lord, it is You** who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, ²⁵ **who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said**,
‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE,
AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?
²⁶ ‘THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND,
AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER
AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.’

Isaiah 55:3

“I will make an everlasting covenant with you according to the faithful mercies shown to David.”

Acts 13:33-34

God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus...*As for the fact* that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He **has spoken in this way**: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY *and* SURE *blessings* OF DAVID.’

Psalm 95:7-9

For He is our God...
Today, if you would hear His voice,
⁸ Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,
⁹ “When your fathers tested Me,
They tried Me, though they had seen My work.

Hebrews 3:7-9

Therefore, **just as the Holy Spirit says**,
“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
⁸ DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME,
AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,
⁹ WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED *Me* BY TESTING *Me*,
AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS.

THE POINT: The point is that what the OT scriptures said, God said. God said Gen. 2:24, Psalm 2, Isaiah 55, and Psalm 95. NT persons and writers equate the OT writings with God's words. If the OT said it, God said it.

God Said

Bible Said

Gen. 12:3 "Now **the Lord said** to Abram... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

THE POINT: The point is that what God said, the OT Scriptures said.
God's word is the Scripture. The Scripture is God's word.

Gal. 3:8

"And **the Scripture...preached** the gospel beforehand to Abraham, **saying**, All the nations shall be blessed in you."

Exodus 9:16
Thus says the Lord... For this cause I have allowed you to stand, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name in all the earth."

Romans 9:17

"For **the Scripture says to Pharaoh**, For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name may be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."

D. Jesus' View of the Old Testament *Jesus affirmed the Old Testament's: (Dr. Norman Geisler)*

1. **Authority**, by citing it to silence critics and "win" arguments (Matt. 4:4,7,10; 22:41-46, John 10:35)
2. **Reliability**, by acknowledging that what the Scriptures (OT) says will happen must happen (Matt. 26:53-54). "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"⁵⁴ How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, *which say* that it must happen this way?" Jesus describes the written word of God (OT) as Scripture which cannot be broken (John 10:35)
3. **Sufficiency**, by stating that Moses (Law) and the Prophets (i.e., the entire OT) is enough of a witness to move a person to repent of sin (Luke 16:29-31).
²⁹ But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' ³¹ But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"
4. **Indestructibility**, by stating that not even the smallest letter or part of a letter will fail to be fulfilled, or pass away (Matt. 5:17-18).
"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."
5. **Unity**, by explaining that Moses (Law), the Prophets and the Psalms, all pointed to Himself (Luke 24:27,44)
²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures... ⁴⁴ Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
6. **Historicity** and factuality, by referring to OT accounts as historical events that actually happened (Matt. 12:40, Matt. 19:3-5).
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." (Matt. 12:40)
³ Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" ⁴ And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, ⁵ and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?" (Matt. 19:2-5)
7. **Inerrancy**, by citing the OT as the standard for truth (Matt. 22:29, John 3:12, John 17:17).
²⁹ But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. (Matt. 22:29).
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).
¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. (John 17:17).

THE POINT: Jesus believed that the OT was the authoritative word of God.

E. Jesus Promised the New Testament

1. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to You." (John 14:26)
2. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." (John 16:13)

F. New Testament Writers' View of Their Writings

1. Paul views his letters as the [Lord's](#) commandment. (1 Cor. 14:37-38; 1 Thes. 4:1-2)

³⁷ If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. ³⁸ But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized. (1 Cor. 14:37-38)

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. ² For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority* of the Lord Jesus. (1 Thes. 4:1-2)

2. Paul quotes the Gospel of Luke (10:7) and Deuteronomy 25:4 as [Scripture](#). (1 Timothy 5:18)

Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. (Luke 10:7)

For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," (in Deut. 25:4) and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (in Luke 10:7) (1 Timothy 5:18)

3. Peter identifies Paul's letters as Scripture. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

4. Paul views the Apostles as [equal](#) authority with the Prophets (who were recognized as God's mouthpieces). Together he says they are the foundation of the Church. (Eph. 2:20)

"...having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,..."

5. John viewed the things he himself had written as "*the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.*" (1 John 5:9-13)

6. The writer of Hebrews says, "*God... has spoken to us in His Son....*" (Heb. 1:1-2) "*For this reason we must pay closer attention to what we have heard...After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit ...*" (Heb. 2:1-4)

7. John declared that what he wrote in the book of Revelation is the word [of God](#). (Rev. 1:1-3)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

8. The NT church devoted itself to the Apostles' teaching. (Acts 2:42) The NT is the Apostles' teaching.

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

9. The Apostolic preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ is called God's word, or the word of God, which is also how they referred to the OT. (Acts 4:29; 6:2,4,7; 8:4,14,25; 10:36; 11:1,16,19; and 22 more times in Acts, and about 200 times in the NT. Check an exhaustive concordance.)

THE POINT: The NT writers believed that their gospel message, their teaching and writings were the authoritative word of God, *in the same way* and *on the same plain* as the OT Scriptures.

Message

The Bible claims to be the God's word to people.

Action Points:

- ✓ Let's talk about it. Review these notes and give me your comments and questions.
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!
- ✓ **Canonicity** addresses the issue of *which books are in* the Bible, and that's what we will look at next Sunday.