



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 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*.

REVELATION is what [God](#) revealed.

A. What? A disclosure; especially God's communication to man.

1. Revelation assumes a Revealer. God is [there](#).
2. Revelation claims a Communicator. God is [not silent](#).

In this series we are not arguing for the existence of God, we are arguing for the authority of the Bible.

B. How?

1. General Revelation: through the [creation](#).

a. Psalm 19 Evidence seen in nature, the creation.

"The mathematical precision of the universe reveals the mathematical mind of God." - Albert Einstein

b. Romans 1:18-21 Creation reveals that God exists and something of what He is like: powerful, intelligent, designer, personal, creative, etc.

"I shall always be convinced that a watch proves a watchmaker, and that a universe proves a God." - Voltaire

c. It stands to reason that since there is a personal God Who is there, Who created man as a personal, communicating being, that He would communicate with him.

2. Special Revelation: God's particular communication to specific people at definite times and places.

a. [direct](#) verbal communication (Gen. 6:13)

¹³ Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

b. dreams and [visions](#) (Gen. 28:12-16)

¹² He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.

¹⁴ Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."

c. angels (Acts 12:7)

⁷ And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands.

d. miracles (John 2:11)

¹¹ This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

e. providential dealings in history (Deut. 29:5, Rom.8:28)

I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandal has not worn out on your foot.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

f. prophets (1 Sam. 3:19-21)

¹⁹ Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail. ²⁰ All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

g. Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2)

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

h. Holy Spirit (Acts 8:29)

²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

i. Bible (1 John 5:9-13)

⁹ If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. ¹⁰ The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. ¹¹ And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

C. Why Special Revelation?

1. Man's need / problem

a. Broken relationship due to [sin](#), effected forever separation.

b. The inadequacy of general revelation; [sufficient](#) to condemn (Romans 1:18-23; 2:14-16), but not save.

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. (Romans 1:18-23)

¹⁴For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, ¹⁶on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:14-16)

c. Man's spiritual and moral limitations obscured his understanding of spiritual matters. The image of God in man was marred at the Fall.

d. Man needs a word from God. Man needs God to reach down.

2. God's gift / solution

a. While the content of special revelation is informational, the goal is relational. Knowledge about God is revealed for the purpose of knowing God personally.

b. The problem of sin, separation, guilt, human inability, etc. had to be [addressed](#).

c. The solution of atonement to effect restoration of relationship with God forever to all who would receive it had to be [explained](#).

God's plan for a sacrifice, ransom, substitute to accomplish redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation such that forgiveness, cleansing, justification and adoption could be offered to people had to be proclaimed and explained.

Summary: Special revelation is God's particular communication to specific people at definite times and places. God's design was that some of His particular communication be preserved and passed on to others. His communication has been written down or *inscripturated*. The Bible is God's particular revelation to people.

Message

The Bible is God's message to people, that includes you.

Action Points:

- ✓ *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!*
- ✓ **Inspiration** addresses the issue of *how* what God revealed (the Bible) *was written and by whom*, and that's what we will look at next Sunday.