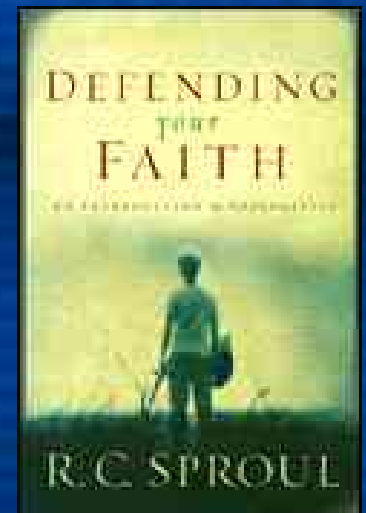


Why believe the Bible?

December 17, 2006



Why ask the question?

- Ok so really, why ask the question?
- “I’m a Christian but I don’t believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God.”

Prologue

- If the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God what authority can test this truth claim?
- Who can attest to God's authority?
- Compare and contrast...
 - God is logical?
 - Logic can attest to God?

A Syllogism

- “The Bible is the Word of God. The Bible, being the Word of God, declares that it is the Word of God. Therefore the Bible is the Word of God.”
 - Is this a rational argument?
 - If this is a rational argument then what about other holy books that claim to be the inspired word of god? (e.g. Koran, Book of Mormon)?

Self-authentication

- The good and bad
 - Self-authentication should not be a syllogism
 - Self-authentication does mean that IF the “Bible is indeed the Word of God then would it not carry the weight of its own authority?”

Some popular but BAD logic

- What's wrong with this bumper sticker?
- Symbolically:
 - $A + B = C$; where A and B are necessary elements in order for C
 - Is this true of God?

God said it,
I believe it,
that settles it!

The Heavensness of the Matter

- The Bible substantiates its own authority in its coherency, symmetry and consistency over centuries and multiple different authors.
- The transcendent majesty of the scope of Scripture attest to its authority.
- The inner “ring of truth” of its claims about human character.

External Authentication of Scripture

- What would constitute external authentication of the Bible?
 - Secular historical and archeological evidence
 - Check out the web - there is a lot!

Faith and Reason

- Supernatural events...Can they be proven?
- How are supernatural events to be believed?
 - Faith
- How are supernatural events to be defended?
 - Faith?
 - Not entirely...The Bible makes claims
 - If the Bible is Inspired we would demand it make good on every one of its claims
 - God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)
 - God knows everything (Heb 4:13)
 - Scripture is “breathed out” by God (2 Tim 3:16)
 - Therefore the Bible must be true

The Question of Canon

- 2 Tim 3:10-14
 - Paul exhorts Timothy to “continue in what you have learned” “knowing from whom you learned it”
 - Who or what is the source of his instruction?
 - What is Paul’s next claim about sacred writings?

Canon conundrums: What about the New Testament?

- 2 Peter 3:14 - 18
 - Peter is aware of Paul's writings
 - What category does Peter assign Paul's writings?
 - "as they do the other Scriptures"
 - "knowing *this* beforehand"
 - "This" is a reference to what?
 - What keeps you from not being "carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability"?

Inspired vs. Expired?

- 2 Timothy 3:16
 - Paul says Scripture is *theopneustos* or “God-breathed” or “exhaled” by God
 - Indeed men penned the Bible but what is the source?
 - This is a claim of the Bible’s source and therefore a basis or ground for its authority
 - ***How do we defend the claims that the Bible is divine in origin?***

Survey says...

- As Christians we accept the authority of Jesus Christ and His teachings on Scripture - Is it a syllogism to declare that the Bible is God's Word on the basis of Jesus' sayings about it?

The Argument...

- The Bible is historically reliable
- The Bible describes Jesus' flawless character
- Jesus claims of prophecy (and more) are reliable because his character is reliable as is attested by historically reliable biblical accounts
- If Jesus' teaching is established as accurate then we can accept his teachings on Scripture
- *Note - this argument is unique to Christianity*

What did Jesus say about the Bible?

- If we accept the Bible is reliable then the next step is to make some judgment on the person of Jesus...who claims nothing less than deity
- What if Jesus was just a prophet?
 - Would he be a true prophet if some portion of his claims (those that include his deity for example) are false?
- What did Jesus say about Scripture?
 - Matt 5:18; Luke 16:17; Luke 24:25-27; John 10:35; John 13:18; John 17:12

More than basically reliable

- **The authority of the Bible rests upon the testimony of Jesus**
- “The Church believes the Bible is more than basically reliable because that reliable source informs us that Jesus taught that the Bible is not merely generally reliable but is altogether reliable because it is the very Word of God”
RC Sproul

Can we trust Jesus' teachings?

- Some scholars have argued that Jesus was wrong about Scripture (he did not know, for example, that the pentateuch was not written by Moses)
 - What is the problem with introducing the notion Jesus' teachings on Scripture are not reliable?

Omniscience, supernatural knowledge, ignorance, and error

- Was Jesus omniscient?
 - Mark 13:32
 - John 1:46-49 - *meeting Nathanael*
 - Matthew 24 - *destruction of Jerusalem*
 - How do we define the tension between Jesus' humanity and his divinity?
 - Would ignorance be OK
 - John 12:49, 50; John 5:19; 8:28; 14:9-11
 - John 14:6 - *I am truth*
 - How could Jesus remained sinless and claim to know things he really did not know?

Calvins internal evidence

- Scripture is old
- Scripture is “heavenly”
 - Scripture is superior to all human wisdom
 - No other book surpasses the Bible in its morality, justice or harmony
- Scripture OT prophecy is accurately revealed in the NT
 - >200 specific, detailed prophecies about the coming Messiah
- But...

Holy Spirit activities

- Can we convince the unbeliever the truth of the Bible?
 - No - they lack the certainty of the arguments imparted by the Holy Spirit
- Should we not bother to defend the veracity of the Bible to the unbeliever?
 - No
 - 1 Peter 3:14-16
- Are Christians just doped by the Holy Spirit into believing the Bible?
 - Sort of - The Spirit allows valid arguments to take hold in an otherwise hostile heart

My Hope is Built

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

Refrain

On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

The coming weeks...

- Dec 24 Prologue/1st Commandment
- Jan 7 No other gods ...
- Jan 14 2nd commandment Brian Dellinger
- Jan 21 No graven images ... Brian Dellinger