

Is the Bible the Word of God?

Elders Teaching Resource

Truth in Love Apologetics Conference, 2021

Overview

- ▶ Using the Bible as our primary source
- ▶ God communicates with his creation
 - ▶ Through events of history
 - ▶ With **his words**
 - ▶ In person
- ▶ Attributes of God's word

Using the Bible as our primary source

- ▶ Scripture speaks for itself
- ▶ Other sources can complement and reinforce

- ▶ Is this circular reasoning?

In the beginning God

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Genesis 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:1-3

God is in communication with his creation

- ▶ God is the creator, not the creation
- ▶ God communicates in ways we can understand

God communicates in multiple ways

- ▶ Through events of history
- ▶ With **his words**
- ▶ In person

In history, God is made known to all

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (suppress the truth); Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. **For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead;** so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Romans 1:18-21

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation (revealing) of the sons of God.

Romans 8:19

Redemptive history is the story of Jesus - the events where God redeems his people

- ▶ The events in history about Christ: his entire life, death, resurrection
 - ▶ Also includes those events that prepared for Christ, related to the formation and growth of the church (with Christ as the head), and Christ's return
- ▶ Redemptive history supplies the means by which mankind can be reconciled to God.
- ▶ This is the central message of Scripture, fulfilled in Jesus Christ

God's words "out loud"

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Genesis 2:16-17

And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood...

Gen 6:13-14

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Gen 12:1-3

God's words "out loud" (2)

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 3:17

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

John 12:28

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

John 8:28-29

God's words "out loud" (3)

And God spake all these words, saying, I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Exodus 20:1-2

And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

Exodus 20:19

God's words through Prophets and Apostles

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Jeremiah 1:4-5

... *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I (Elijah) stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

1 Kings 17:1-2

And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Joel 2:28-29

God's written words in the Old Testament

And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus 31:8

Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left,

Joshua 23:6

And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God...

Joshua 24:26

Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts

Jeremiah 26:18

Jesus view of the Old Testament

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5:17-18

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

Mark 12:29-30

These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

Luke 24:44

But if ye believe not his (Moses) writings, how shall ye believe my words?

John 5:47

The Apostles view of the Old Testament

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. **We have also a more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: **but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.**

Peter in 2 Peter 1:16-21

The Apostles view of the Old Testament (2)

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of (breathed out by) God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16-17

God's written words in the New Testament

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, **as they do the other Scriptures.**

2 Peter 3:15-16

God speaking to us in person

- ▶ God appearing in the form of something created (Theophony)
 - ▶ Abraham in conversation with “men” (Genesis 18)
 - ▶ Jacob wrestled with “a man” (Genesis 32)
 - ▶ Cloud / pillar of fire to lead Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 16)
- ▶ Jesus Christ - God incarnate: fully divine and fully human
 - ▶ In all aspects of God’s communication
 - ▶ Central theme of Scripture through his teaching, his life, his death, and his resurrection
- ▶ The Holy Spirit
 - ▶ In all aspects of God’s communication too
 - ▶ Inspires, brings understanding, and bears fruit
 - ▶ Lives in the believer, so that we may be imitators of Christ

What about...

Scripture attributes: truth

- ▶ Scripture is true and trustworthy

Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

John 14:6

And he that sat upon the throne said, **Behold, I make all things new.** And he said unto me, **Write: for these words are true and faithful.**

Rev 21:5

The (biblical) authors speak the truth in all things they affirm (when they make affirmations) and will eventually be seen to have spoken truly (when right readers read rightly)

Keith Vanhoozer

Scripture attributes: authority

- ▶ Scripture has the God-given authority that it asserts

Scriptural attribute: unity

- ▶ 66 books
- ▶ At least 40 authors
- ▶ Written over 1500+ years
- ▶ Many literary styles including narrative, poetry, prose discourse, law, proverb, prophecy, allegory, apocalyptic vision

- ▶ God inspired all of Scripture to reveal himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ.

Scripture attributes: clarity

- ▶ Scripture is clear enough for us to carry out our responsibilities to God

Scripture attributes: necessity

- ▶ We need Scripture: God's word alone reveals the gospel. Without the gospel, we don't know Jesus Christ, and have understanding of how to attain a reconciled relationship with God.

Scripture attributes: sufficiency

- ▶ Scripture contains all of the divine words needed for any aspect of life

Reference Materials

- ▶ The Doctrine of the Word of God, John Frame
- ▶ Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy, J. Merrick, Stephen M Garrett editors
- ▶ Explaining Biblical Inerrancy, R.C. Sproul and Normal L Geisler