

Why Should We Believe The Bible Was Divinely-Inspired?

by Jeffrey D. Breshears

[NOTE: Beginning in late August, the Areopagus will offer two seminar courses: “**How Should We Now Live? The Challenges and Opportunities of Living in a ‘Post-Christian’ Culture;**” and “**Bibliology: A Study of the Origins, Composition, Divine Inspiration, Canonicity, and Preservation and Transmission of the Bible Through the Centuries.**” Both will be 12-week semester-length courses. I wrote a brief synopsis of the “How Should We Now Live?” seminar in our January/February 2013 Areopagus Update, and the following is a brief excerpt from an article we will discuss in our upcoming seminar on Bibliology.]

The Fundamental Question

Three of the foundational tenets of Christian apologetics are (1)the existence of God; (2)the reality of absolute Truth based on the nature and character of God; and (3)the revealed Truth of God as recorded in the Bible. It is no coincidence that these principles correspond to the central themes of Francis Schaeffer’s apologetics trilogy: *The God Who Is There, Escape from Reason, and He Is There and He Is Not Silent.*

For Christians, the ultimate source of authority for what we believe and how we live our lives is (or should be) the Bible. But when we read the Bible or hear it referred to as “the (written) Word of God,” how do we know that it has been divinely-inspired? How many sermons have you ever heard, or how many books have you read, that offer plausible and convincing reasons for why we should take the Bible seriously as an infallible source of spiritual and moral authority? Ironically, there are scores of Bible study courses and programs, many of which are quite in-depth or even

comprehensive, yet none address this fundamental question.

Simply studying the Bible without a thoughtful and defensible philosophy of the Bible is like building a castle in the clouds. There is no solid and objective foundation. Everything depends upon one’s own subjective faith and interpretation (and perhaps one’s own personal experiences). But nonbelievers want to know – and certainly, Christians *should* want to know – why it is reasonable to have faith and confidence in the Bible as the divinely-inspired written Word of God. Simply studying the Bible without a thoughtful and defensible philosophy of the Bible, it is easy to miss the forest – the overall purpose and worldview of Scripture – for the trees (or as is often the case, individual branches, limbs, twigs or leaves) – specific stories, scenarios, principles, pronouncements, etc. Historically, this has been the root of many misunderstandings and even some prominent heresies....

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The Areopagus Calendar

Seminars

Christianity Thru the Centuries

Part II: The Apostolic Age To Constantine (c. 100-313 AD)

Sundays, beginning Sept. 1
11:15 AM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church
Room 276

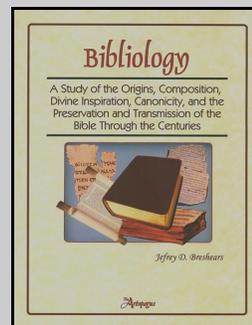
Bibliology

A Study of the Origins, Composition, Divine Inspiration, Canonicity, Preservation and Transmission of the Bible Through the Centuries

Why should we believe the Bible was divinely-inspired, and how do we know it has been accurately preserved and transmitted through the centuries?

Tuesdays, Aug. 27 - Nov. 19
7:15 PM

Perimeter Church / Midtown Auditorium



How Should We Now Live? The Challenges and Opportunities of Living in a ‘Post-Christian’ America

An interactive seminar in cultural apologetics that focuses on the current state of American culture.

Wednesdays, Aug. 28 - Nov. 20
7:00 PM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church / Room 105

Why Should We Believe the Bible Is Divinely-Inspired?

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Part 1: Three “Bad” Arguments

In their efforts to defend the integrity of Scripture, Christians often resort to arguments that are, to say the least, unconvincing. The following are three commonly-used “bad” arguments for making the case for the divine inspiration of the Bible. These arguments are bad not necessarily because they are fallacious, but simply because no thoughtful spiritual seeker or skeptic would accept them as being in any way persuasive. These arguments can, however, be effective when used as supplements to the “Five Good Arguments” put forth in Part 2.

1. The Argument from Authority

The basic argument from authority goes something like this: “I believe the Bible is divinely-inspired and authoritative because that’s what my pastor (or church or denomination) teaches.” These sources of authority may be right, but nonetheless this is a poor argument. After all, what matters are the factual and rational reasons for believing in the Bible – not who or what authority claims that it is.

Furthermore, there are many acknowledged “authorities” – liberal pastors, priests, Bible scholars, seminary professors, etc. – who will argue that the Bible is *not* in fact divinely-inspired and authoritative. So unless we want to get into a battle of competing authorities, this argument is not a prime reason for accepting the authority of Scripture and is best relegated to supplemental status.

2. The “Spiritual” Argument

We have all heard Christians say things such as, “I know the Bible is true because I feel it in my heart” or “I know the Bible is the Word of God because it has changed my life,” or “I believe in the Bible because God’s Spirit bears witness with my spirit that it is true.” Perhaps you have said things like this yourself.

Now all of this may be true, but we should understand that such affirmations sound like merely subjective personal opinions to nonbelievers. We might think that testimonials such as these have a strong impact on skeptics, but in fact they are quite unconvincing. This kind of “spiritual” argument can often be dismissed as simply an emotional response that we have to reading the Bible. Furthermore, devotees of other religions and cults often claim the same thing: they get a “warm feeling” when they read their favorite religious texts.

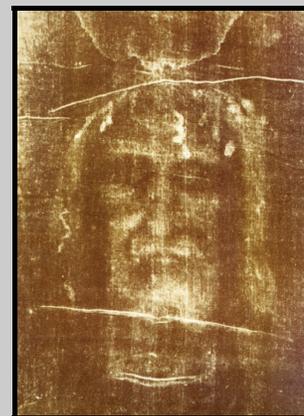
Many things in life, including interacting with various forms of literature, stir people’s emotions and evoke strong sentiments. Therefore, like the argument from authority, the claim that one’s life has been profoundly transformed by reading the Bible may very well be true. But it is also personal and subjective. We should understand, both for our own sake and that of others, that there are other reasons for believing in the Bible that are more effective because they are essentially objective rather than subjective....

*(The full text of this article is available at
www.TheAreopagus.org/articles/bibliology/)*

The Areopagus Calendar

Forums

The Shroud of Turin: A Witness to the Resurrection?



A special presentation by

Russ Breault

President of the Shroud of Turin
Education Project

Wednesday, September 11th
7:00 PM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church

– and –

Thursday, September 19th
7:30 PM
Perimeter Church / Fellowship Hall

Areopagus Associates

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