

The Word Made Flesh

What Christians Believe About the Bible

John 7:53-8:11

I. Introduction

A. Continuing the series *The Word Made Flesh*, walking verse by verse through John.

B. Recap of John 7 and the Feast of Tabernacles:

1. Celebrating God's provision of water, fire, and presence in Israel's wilderness journey

2. Anticipating God's future dwelling (tabernacling) with His people

3. John shows Jesus as the fulfillment of the Feast

C. Beginning John 8—an important and fascinating passage requiring theological clarity.

D. The sermon begins with:

1. What Christians believe about the Bible

2. How the Bible we have today was formed

3. Why this matters for John 7:53–8:11

II. What Christians Should Believe About the Bible

A. Inspiration

1. Scripture is “God-breathed”—God is the ultimate author.
2. Human authors wrote with personality, style, vocabulary under God's direction.
3. Inspiration applies only to the original manuscripts.
4. Implication: What Scripture says, God says.

B. Inerrancy

1. Everything Scripture affirms is true because God cannot lie.
2. Applies to the original writings, not every later copy.
3. Not everything is literal—genres and intentions matter.

When God Offends

4. Implications:
 - a. Scripture is true
 - b. Scripture is reliable
 - c. Doctrine can be built from Scripture

C. Infallibility

1. Scripture cannot fail because God cannot fail.
2. It will accomplish God's purposes perfectly.
3. Implications:
 - a. Everything God intended to reveal is true
 - b. Everything He inspired is trustworthy
 - c. Everything He breathed out accomplishes its purpose

D. Important Clarification

1. These doctrines apply only to the originals, not copies or translations.
2. Translations are not inspired or inerrant—but they are accurate, trustworthy, and sufficient.

III. Why Christians Believe This

- A. These doctrines come from Judaism and Jesus' own understanding of Scripture.
- B. When Paul wrote "All Scripture is God-breathed," he was referring to the OT.
- C. The NT was later recognized as Scripture because:
 1. It bore divine authority
 2. It came from apostles or close associates
 3. It aligned with Jesus' teaching and the OT
- D. The NT arose from real ministry, real churches, real pastoral needs.

IV. Quick Summary Before Reading the Passage



When God Offends

- A. Both Testaments are inspired, inerrant, and infallible in their originals.
- B. Translations are faithful and sufficient.
- C. The Bible you hold is trustworthy.

V. Reading the Passage — John 7:53–8:11

VI. The Bombshell: This Passage Is a Later Addition

- A. This entire story is absent from the earliest and best manuscripts.
- B. In John's original text, the narrative moves directly from 7:52 to 8:12.
- C. This is one of the three major additions in our modern translations.

VII. How Did the Passage Get There?

- A. The story appears in manuscripts around AD 400.
- B. The story was widely known and circulated orally in the early church.
- C. Scribes inserted it to preserve a beloved and well-known narrative.
- D. It becomes widely included in copies from AD 700–900.
- E. The KJV used medieval manuscripts, so it included this passage.
- F. Later discoveries of much earlier manuscripts revealed it was not original.
- G. The early church fathers' writings give us over one million NT quotations—enough to reconstruct the NT even if every manuscript vanished.

When God Offends

VIII. Why Modern Bibles Still Include It

- A. The story is ancient.
- B. It is known in church tradition.
- C. It reflects Jesus' character and matches His teachings.
- D. Translation committees choose transparency over erasure.
- E. Brackets and footnotes tell you exactly what is original and what is not.
- F. The presence of notes strengthens—not weakens—trust in the Scriptures.

IX. To the Person Who Feels Uneasy

- A. The fact that you *know* this is proof your Bible is trustworthy.
- B. Nothing is hidden; everything is transparent.
- C. We can identify additions because:
 - 1. Manuscript evidence is overwhelming
 - 2. Early Christian writings confirm original readings
 - 3. Scholars are forthright, not secretive
- D. This story is not part of John's autograph, but:
 - 1. It is ancient
 - 2. It aligns with the Gospels
 - 3. It reflects Jesus' mercy and truth
 - 4. God has used it for centuries
- E. Your Bible is the most historically supported ancient text in existence.

When God Offends

F. No doctrine changes with or without this passage.

X. Communion Application

A. If Scripture is preserved, the gospel is preserved.

B. If God safeguarded His Word, He can safeguard your soul.

C. If God's Word in ink is trustworthy, God's Word in blood is even more so.

D. Communion is a moment to rest in the faithfulness of God to preserve His promise, His gospel, and His people.