

# God on Trial

by John Fischer

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*We don't have to prove the Gospel through our experiences, because God has already stood trial and been vindicated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:27, John 8:32, Romans 3:23, 1 Corinthians 15:14, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Gospel Truth", "Christian Apologetics"

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## Description

John Fischer addresses the challenge of convincing the world of Christianity's truth by emphasizing that the core of the message must be the historical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not personal experiences. He critiques common defenses used by Christians, such as claiming to have more fun or portraying non-Christians as miserable degenerates, highlighting the need to appreciate the dignity of all individuals as bearers of God's image. Fischer stresses the importance of not baiting the world with worldly enticements but presenting the simple truth of the Gospel that sets everyone free, emphasizing the need for humility in facing and confessing sin rather than trying to prove one's righteousness.

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## Transcript

There is a major problem that confronts popularized ministry in America today: How do we convince the world that Christianity is true? We tend to take the witness stand and try to prove the truth of the Gospel by our experience. It is a sad state of affairs, however, when God has to stand trial, waiting to see if our testimony is going to overpower the testimony of the world. At best, I fear He's headed for a hung jury.

I have been at est meetings in which the testimonies of changed lives and the enthusiastic support of others have run circles around any Christian testimony meeting I have ever attended. The Mormon family commitment and the evangelical fervor of the Jehovah's Witnesses put us to shame. There is more love and compassion expressed on one Jerry Lewis telethon than there is in a whole year of Sunday morning services in our average Christian church. Pagan Africans speak in tongues and Christian Scientists are healed. And let's face it, Johnny Carson is certainly more entertaining than most of today's Christian talk-show hosts.

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So what?

If the historical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not enough proof, then all the experiences of all the Christians who have ever lived will not prove anything either. The core of our message must not be our experience; it must be the truth. Satan can imitate (and often outshine) any Christian experience, but he is helpless against the truth of the Gospel: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If we can understand this, we will be set free from the unnecessary theological defenses we use to confront the world. Let's look at a few of the usual defenses:

#### Defense No. 1

Christians have more fun.

I don't find the evidence for this in the Scriptures, unless you call being rejected, beaten, thrown in jail, sawn in two, or hung on a cross fun. Exciting maybe, but certainly not fun. Let's face it, the pleasures of the world are fun -- momentary, for sure, but fun. A Christian's job is not to compete with the pleasures of the world but to get on with living out the Gospel.

#### Defense No. 2

Non-Christians are all miserable degenerates.

Either they are helplessly trapped by the lure of sin or they are aggressively pursuing (and thoroughly enjoying) a malicious way of life, out to make as many recruits as possible on their highway to hell. What happens when we find non-Christians who are disciplined, moral, generous, kind, and relatively happy? We immediately begin to hunt for that fatal flaw in their character which will prove that they really have been miserable, Christless wretches, and even their apparently good deeds have sprung from an evil source.

Instead, we must realize every man and woman bears the image of God and as such is capable of producing some goodness on this planet. Christians must learn to appreciate the dignity of man regardless of salvation. Worth is not the result of salvation, it is the reason for it, and the reason hell is such a tragedy.

Until we realize that we have something to learn from every

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human being who walks the face of this earth, and that our humanity lies in even the most despicable of sinners, we will never be able to present the untainted, simple truth of the Gospel that will set us all free.

#### Defense No. 3

Donna Summer's testimony carries more weight than my mother's.

My mother, along with countless others like her, spends hours in her closet praying people into the kingdom. But we never showcase her or any of the rest of these intercessors. Instead, we constantly parade the sensational, the attractive, trying to draw the attention of the world and convince them that Christ is real. But in doing so, aren't we baiting the hook with the very enticements from which Jesus wants to set us free?

#### Defense No. 4

Christians don't fall into "big" sins. Unfortunately, we're getting over this one the hard way: by having the dirty laundry dragged out and hung in the street. The sad part is we should have done this ourselves. It's called confession. But it is hard to agree that sin is in your life when you're trying to prove you're a Christian by how much better you are for being one.

Christians need to recognize the difference between the problem of sin -- on the one hand -- and how we face it and deal with it -- on the other hand. Sin was taken care of 2,000 years ago on the cross. The problem with Christians is getting up enough courage and belief in that cross to confess the sin and enough humility to accept the forgiveness that is offered. That's hard to do when you have so much to prove.

The answer to all this is really very simple: We don't have to prove a thing by our experience, or by anything else for that matter. God has already stood trial, been sentenced, and put to death -- never to be put on trial again. His resurrection is the final proof.

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