



Message **Transcript**

What Does History Say About the Bible?

Jeff Schwarzentraub

With that, let's go before the Lord. Let's ask Him to continue to prepare our hearts as we've been worshiping Him, praying to Him. Let's let Him speak through His living and active word this morning. Would you pray with me?

Lord Jesus, thank you so much for who you are. Lord, we thank you for the privilege of being able to preach and hear and respond to your word. Lord, we love you so much and we praise you for who you are. And Lord, we ask for your help today as we look at history and take a look at how your word came to be. Lord, give us greater confidence in our understanding that what we hold in our hands is the true eternal living word of Almighty God. And now for all that are gathered that desire to hear the Lord believe what He says and by faith to put into practice what He shows you, would you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word Amen. Amen.

So we're in a series right now called so what? Can I really trust this book? And the reason we are is because there's always been and will always be an assault on the Bible. And so what we've taken a look at is what does the word have to say about the word? How does it testify about itself? Last week we took a look at what God says about the word, and today we're going to take a look at what does history have to say about the word of God.

Now, if you're just joining us, I want to give you a quick review so that you can be up to speed with what we've been talking about. And you need to understand because there's an assault on God's word. Whether you're a believer in Christ or you're not, the

devil has the same strategy in your life. And we talked about this from Genesis 3, that the enemy wants to place four doubts in your mind. And the first is this. When he appeared to Eve in the garden, what he was first trying to get her to do was to doubt God's word. Satan's strategy in your life whether you're a believer or a nonbeliever, is to get you to doubt God's word.

If you doubt God's word, you will ultimately doubt God's goodness. God's word tells us all the time about how good our God is, how wonderful our God is. If you doubt God's word, you'll ask questions like this. If God is so good, then why? And you'll fill in the blank. And if you doubt God's word and you doubt God's goodness, ultimately you'll doubt God's justice, because then you'll ask questions like this. "God can't be that good because look at everything that's going on in our society. And if God were really good, then why is this happening? Why is that happening? And God is not powerful enough to do anything about it. I doubt his justice." And if you doubt God's word and you doubt God's goodness and you doubt God's justice, ultimately you're going to doubt God's authority.

And when you doubt God's authority, you become an authority in your own life. You do not submit to the word of God. You submit to whatever you think is best for you. That is Satan's strategy for every single person on planet Earth. Doubt God's word, doubt God's goodness, doubt God's justice, doubt God's authority. Now, if you understand that as a framework, then what we begin to do is take a look at what the word says about the word. And we made some statements about that and we took a look at this. That the written word testifies that it's eternal. Isaiah 40:8 says the grass

withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our Lord stands forever. Jesus said heaven and earth may pass away, but my words will never pass away. This book testifies that it's an eternal book. This book also testifies that it's inspired.

We look at 2 Timothy 3:16. We said all scripture is God breathed that when we read the words on the page, we're looking at God's word that He is inspired. It's His direct word to us. And not only is it inspired, it's infallible, which means His word is trustworthy. We took a look at 2 Peter 1:20 and 21 that said, above all, you must understand this, that no prophecy had its origin in the will of man, but men were moved by the Holy Spirit as they spoke from God. It's God's word, it's trustworthy. And then we finally said, therefore it's inherent.

There are no errors in the Bible. Psalm 19 says the law of the Lord is perfect. Jesus said in John 10:35, the word of the Lord cannot be broken. The word testifies that it's perfect and there are no errors in the word. And finally, we took a look at the fact that the word of God is supernatural. From the beginning of creation in Genesis 1:1 all the way to culmination in Revelation 22, we see that the book is supernatural. Describing a supernatural God that does supernatural works and supernatural acts in our world. That's what we said, that the word testifies about itself. You may not believe that, but the testimony of the Bible is that's what we say.

And the written word reveals the living word. We said in John 1:1, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning. And in John 1:14, we said the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. That's why the word of God is sharper than any two-edged

sword that penetrates to divide both soul and spirit joints and marrow and judges the attitudes and intentions of the heart. This written word reveals the living word. And that's what we took a look at week one. If you want to see more of this, you missed out. Look at us on podcasts, check it out. We go through all of this. What the word testifies about the word.

Then we said, what does God say about the word? Well, we started with Jesus because since Jesus is God in flesh, and that's what the word reveals, what does Jesus say about the word? And the living word Jesus testifies to the fact that all of the written word testifies about Him. That everything we read in the scripture is about Jesus. Jesus said to the religious leaders of the day, "You deal diligently study the scriptures because you think that in them you have life, yet these are the very scriptures that testify about me that you refuse to come to me to have life." In other words, it's not the words on the page that save you, it's the author of the book that saves you.

And everything we read about in scripture from Genesis 1 when God spoke everything into creation out of nothing, that was Jesus Christ speaking. When we looked at the burning bush talking to Moses, the I am has sent you, we said that's Jesus. Everything in the Bible reveals that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus had no qualm saying every bit of this word testifies about me. Not only does it testify about Him, but this written word testifies that the living word is all truth.

In John 18, He said, "I came for this reason to testify to the truth." John 14 says,

I am the way, the truth, and the life. So to see Jesus, everything about Jesus He's saying is true. He said, "I could lie like you and say that I don't know God, but I do know Him because I am Him." Right? He tells the truth.

Third, we said this about the living word. That the written word testifies that the living word is God. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through Him. Many times we saw the religious leaders were trying to pick up stones and stone Him and He says, "For what have I done? What works have I done that you're going to stone me?" They said, "Nothing for what you've done. But you a mere man claimed to be God." And His response was always, "I am."

In Mark 14:62 when Caiaphas the high priest is asking him, "Are you really the Christ? Are you the Christ?" He said, "I am." And paraphrase, the next time you see me, I'll be coming on the clouds with judgment to judge you and the entire world. Right? He never backed away from the claim that He was God. And finally, the written word testifies that the living word is central to all salvation. That in Christ and in Christ alone, can a person be saved. There is no other name under heaven by which one must be saved other than the Lord, Jesus Christ. And we've spent about two hours going through what I just spent about five minutes going through, right?

That's what we've said. The written word testifies. Everything about the written word is completely true. There's nothing wrong with it. The living God testifies that everything in the written word testifies about Him and He is the way, the truth, and the life, and there's nothing wrong with Him.

Today what we're going to take a look at is what does history say? Because this is where you'll hear skeptics all the time say stuff like this. "Well, how do you know that Bible's true? It's just a bunch of people that put stories together over a period of time. You can't really trust it. It's just like any other book. There's no way you can really believe that thing, can you? Say what? You really believe God wrote that?" That's what we're going to talk about today, is the history of the word of God. And let me just say this from the outset. That the same God that the word testifies to that spoke everything into being, that's the living God. The same God that did all that, that same God who spoke the word has the ability to preserve the word. Right?

So when we talk about that, we're going to talk about the history of three different areas. And the first we're going to talk about is the history of canonization. Okay? The history of canonization. Now, when I talk about canon, we're talking about a rule, we're talking about a standard. Much like a ruler would measure something. The rule of faith. It came to mean like a catalog or a list that's been collected and preserved. In other words, how in the world did we get the books in our Bible that we got in our Bible? Why is it that we have only 39 Old Testament books and not 38 or 40? Why is it we have 27 New Testament books and not 25 or 33? Why is it we have 66 books? How come there aren't additional books? Who got to choose that? Why did it happen? Who put all that together?

And for many people they think, "Well, it was just the church and they picked whatever books that they liked." It wasn't. It was God working through His people to preserve His word. And there were standards or tests that they used for internal and

external evidence to show that God's word is true.

So I want to give you a list of about four or five things that had to be true in order for it to make the biblical literature. And the first one is this. When God preserved His word, it needed authorship and everything, and the author had to be an apostle or a prophet. In other words, the apostle or prophet had to be self-proclaimed that I'm speaking on behalf of the Lord. Now, if you know anything about Old Testament prophets, if they didn't speak the truth and if what they didn't say came true, they were to be put to death. So there weren't a lot of people applying for that job, right? There weren't a lot of fakers saying, "I want to be a prophet," because they'd be put to death.

In the New Testament when we read about the apostles and the prophets that put together the book, how do we know it meant this? They were sent directly by Jesus Christ to speak the word of God. Does Peter qualify? Absolutely. Does John qualify? Absolutely. Does Matthew qualify? Absolutely. How about the Apostle Paul who saw Jesus on his way to Damascus? Absolutely. They had to be apostolic in their gifting or prophetic in their gifting.

Now this may sound strange to us because we're looking back over 2,000 years of history, but people in the first century... The last book in the New Testament that was written was the Book of Revelation. It was finished about 95 AD. When it was finished, people in the next generation, they knew John. Even people that didn't know Jesus directly knew somebody who knew Jesus directly. So when John's talking, he's

talking as if, "I spent time with Jesus. I know Jesus. I was with Jesus. I was around Jesus." He had apostolic authority to do that and people recognized him as having been with Jesus. So authorship, being an apostle or a prophet, had to happen.

Number two. The book needed to be accepted by the Body of Christ at large. In other words, as these letters and works went out, that the Body of Christ was affirming to the fact, yep, that's true. We get them. Well, how did that work? If you've been in a Bible church like ours for a while where the Bible is preached and you know the truth of the word and you know the truth of the gospel, if someone were to come up here and teach something different than what the word of God teaches, there would be something that goes off in all of your hearts that are believers that say that didn't feel right. That's not right. That's not what we've been taught. That's not what we've been trained. So the Body of Christ was affirming that these were the very things that Jesus was doing and teaching and that they all align. That was the second test.

The third test was this. It needed to have consistency of doctrinal and orthodox teaching. It had to be centered on the truth. And there were books out there that didn't make the canon. Some of the reasons some of the books didn't make the canon is there are things in those books which go against the plain truth of the books that we have. They don't align with the orthodox truth of the scripture. That was one of the measuring sticks for the canon.

Fourth. The book had to have high moral and spiritual values reflecting the Holy Spirit's work. And what was the Holy Spirit's job? The Holy Spirit's job is to magnify the resurrected Christ. So there were books that were using what the Holy spirit was doing

to magnify Jesus that all the written word is written about. And ultimately if you want to go one step further, many of the authors would then have supernatural power to deliver what God had them deliver. The apostles that were sent out by God had on demand power to do things that little apostles today don't have the power to do. When Paul said, "I did not come to you with wise words, but with a demonstration of the spirits power", the apostles had the ability to do things in such a way that when people heard them speak, they were authenticating their message that what I am speaking about is the risen Christ. Those were internal evidences that what was being written really belonged in God's word. Okay? Those are the internal tests.

So when people got together to talk about, "Hey, did an apostle or prophet do this? Was it accepted by the Body of Christ? Is there consistent doctrinal and orthodox teaching? Is there high, moral and spiritual values? Is it accompanied by supernatural acts?" Those were tests given to every single book to see do these things really fit? That's the internal evidence.

But then there's also the external evidence. The external evidence would be those things in history that would demonstrate that the books that we have are reliable and true. Now, let me just say this from the outset. This book has been under attack from the time that it had gotten written. You can go to any one of our 50 states in the United States and you can find people that will attack this book. I just have a question for you. How come the Quran's not being attacked? How come the Book of Mormon's not being attacked? How come we don't hear about any other books that are being attacked quite like the Bible? Could it be that this is the everliving true word of the son

of God, right? So what's the evidence that what you're holding in your hand is actually come to be that you can actually trust this book and believe this book? Let me give you some evidence.

If you go to a university and you take a classic civilizations course, they will tell you that in 49 BC Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon and that is what ended up shifting the Holy Roman Empire through a civil war and all those things. Nobody will dispute that. Nobody will dispute it. They will teach you that in every university across the country. Nobody will dispute it. Do you know how many manuscripts they have saying that Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon? 10. There's 10 manuscripts that demonstrate that Julius Caesar did that and it's considered one of the most historically viable facts that ever happened.

Or how about this one? Maybe you had to read this when you were in college. I think I did. If I did, I know I read the CliffsNotes. Homer's Iliad, remember that one? Homer's Iliad was penned in 800 BC. Okay? The first copy we have of Homer's Iliad is in 400 BC. So there was a 400-year gap between the time he penned it and the first copy that we ever had of it. And guess how many manuscripts we have? We have 643 manuscripts and they're all partial. There's not one full manuscript we have of the Iliad. But yet if you go to any university, nobody ever challenges that Homer wrote the Iliad, because we have 643 partial fragments 400 years after he wrote it.

Let me just back up a second and explain what I mean when I say manuscript, because we don't understand manuscripts, because the printing press got invented in

the 14, 1500s. And when Johan Gutenberg invented the printing press, all we know is if it looks like this here, we put it on a copy machine and it looks like this over here. Prior to the printing press, the way things got distributed was through manuscripts. So there were scribes whose job it was to write down exactly what the text said in another text. That's how we have manuscripts. That's why not everybody had a copy of a book. That's why there weren't libraries because it took forever just to make a single copy of something.

When it came to the transmission of the Bible, when scribes would put a new Bible on, they were super careful to make sure that every single letter matched exactly every single letter. They would count the letter on the manuscript they had. They would count the letters that they had over here. They were excruciatingly careful to make sure that every single thing that they wrote was exactly the way it was transcribed. That's why it took a long time to develop manuscripts.

And just so you know, like the Bibles that we read, they have punctuation, they have uppercase, they have lowercase letters. When your Greek New Testament manuscripts came out, they only wrote in uppercase letters called uncials and there was no punctuation and no space between any word. So it's just letters going across the page. That's why when we have punctuation like when Jesus is on the cross and He says, "Truly, truly I tell you today, you'll be with me in paradise." What is he saying? Is he saying truly, truly I tell you today you will be with me in paradise, or is he saying truly, truly I tell you, today you'll be with me in paradise. We don't know, because there were no punctuation marks. It's just all capital letters that are coming across. They

scrutinized these. That was their job. They were very, very careful. That's what we have in manuscripts.

When we talk about we have 643 manuscripts for Homer's Iliad, it meant people sat down letter by letter, word by word, going through them, making sure they were counting the letters on the page, the letters per line, making sure everything looked exactly the same. Now think about this. Nobody that I know of ever challenges Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon with just 10 manuscripts. Nobody I know has ever challenged Homer's Iliad with just 643 partial manuscripts.

So can we talk about the Bible for just a second? Let's just talk about New Testament manuscripts that we have for the Bible. There are 5,800 New Testament manuscripts. As I told you before, the Book of Revelation was completed about 95 AD. The first copy that we have of the Book of Revelation is right around one 130 AD. Okay? That's 35 years after the writing of it, we have a copy. That beats Homer's Iliad by 365 years.

And just so you know, when you think of the New Testament... Because sometimes people feel like we got all these fragment pieces and how do we know we have everything? Have you ever done a jigsaw puzzle before? If you buy a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle, how many pieces would you expect to be in the box? You can do this. I'm only going to give you math I can do, right? You would expect 500. Now picture buying a 500-piece puzzle and 5,800 pieces come in the set and there's several pieces that can match and you have more than enough pieces to put in. When it comes to your New Testament with 5,800 manuscripts, there's less than 1% that we're having a hard

time understanding. And there's a whole group of people out there doing what's called textual criticism. I had to do some while I was in seminary and it comes down to this. There are no major doctrinal errors. There's no major doctrinal distinctions. It all comes down to this.

When the scribe wrote a word like Christ in you, the hope of glory, and then you have other manuscripts that say Christ Jesus in you, the hope of glory. And you have other manuscripts that say Jesus Christ in you, the hope of glory. And you have another manuscript that says Jesus in you the hope of glory. And you're trying to figure out, well, which one was it? Was it Christ, was it Jesus, was it Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus? And then they make you do like 14 hours of a paper, because that's what I had to do. Right? But there's no doctrinal distinctives. The original manuscripts that we have give us everything that we need to know. And there's more evidence for believing the New Testament than believing in Julius Caesar or believing in Homer's Iliad and yet what do people do? Oh, it's all made up.

We have the evidence that shows that it's reliable and it's true. So what happens is over time, over a period of about a 400 years, people begin piecing all this together to say what meets the internal test, what meets the external test, what books are true. The first canon that we have appeared in 170 AD, it's called the Muratorian Canon, and it was all your Old Testament books plus your New Testament books minus Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter and 1, 2 and 3 John. And then there were some other councils that came up. There was a Council of Laodicea 364 AD, Council of Hippo at 393 AD,

and a Council of Carthage at 397 AD. And by the time you get to there, by the time you're at 400 AD, all the books are put together. The 27 New Testament books, the 39 Old Testament books, they're all there. Right?

Now The Roman Catholic Church has added 14 other books called the Apocrypha. He said, "Well, why do they have those and we don't have those?" Do you know when the Apocrypha got put in? The Apocrypha got put in at what was called the Council of Trent, which took place in 1546 AD. Okay? Those books weren't considered authoritative until 1546 AD. There wasn't one Jew or Christian in the first or second century that deemed them authoritative. They never claimed to be the word of God. They weren't written by an apostle or prophet. They didn't pass any of the tests. That's why they're not in our canon. Right?

But the Roman Catholic Church at the time, at the Council of Trent, we could spend the whole morning on what they did. But at the Council of Trent, they put down justification by faith alone. They put down sola scriptura. In other words, they said the Bible's okay, but what the church teaches is just as important. They also continued to sell indulgences. They also talked about purgatory. There were several things that got added. And one of the things that got added were the Apocrypha. That's when they came to be. So if you're watching the Discovery Channel or the History channel and you feel like, "Oh, we're Christians but we didn't get those extra 14 books," you can read all those 14 books. There's history in them. There's good stuff in them. They're not authoritative scripture. That's why you don't need them.

Oh, by the way, you'll watch the Discovery Channel and they'll tell you stuff like

this. "There's a Gospel of Thomas out there and they don't want anybody to know about the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Philip. And they don't want you to know about that." I know about them all, right? They had 400 years to prove that they were worthy of being put in the canon and they don't measure up. And most of the people that you hear talk about, "We got to put this one in, how come they didn't put this one in?" Most of the people that talk like that haven't even read the 66 books that we have. Right? If you read the 66 books that we have and then you do what I did this week and you went back... I went back and read the Gospel of Thomas and I went back and read the Gospel of Philip. And as I'm reading through it, I'm just checking stuff. None of this stuff measures up. It doesn't even make sense. Jesus never said anything like this. That goes against everything doctrinally that Jesus is.

So here's what I'm trying to tell you. You don't need to worry when people bring the word of God under attack, because the same God who spoke His word is the same God that preserved His word. Amen? And we can trust that.

Now, here's what you need to know. The further away we get from biblical times, the more evidence there is to show that the Bible's actually true. Did you know that? People have been putting on the Old Testament for years. "There's no way the Old Testament's completely true. How do you know? It's just made up." Do you know that in 1947, there was a guy in the Qumran community, which I've been to. He was out looking after his animals, ended up throwing a rock, hit a piece of pottery, split it open. He heard the sound, went and looked, found all these scrolls. You know what he found? He found what we call now the Dead Sea Scrolls. You know what he found in

them? Here's what he found. He found an entire account of Isaiah, he found 15,000 fragments and 524 manuscripts. Every single Old Testament book is in the Dead Sea Scrolls with the exception of Esther. Every single one.

And these date all the way back to like four centuries Before Christ. So these are dating back to four centuries Before Christ demonstrating to us that the Isaiah that you have in your hands is the exact thing they were reading four centuries Before Christ. Isn't that amazing? The further you get from history, the more you realize that what the Bible is testifying to, is true. For a number of years, there was attack on the fact that Moses, there's no way he wrote the first five books of the Bible called the Pentateuch because at 1400 BC, nobody was even writing. They didn't have the skillset to do that. But wouldn't you know that upon further research they discovered, yeah a lot of people were writing back then, a lot of people were doing that. Maybe he actually did write that book. Right?

Or think about this. Here's some pushback that we've had over the years. What about the Hittites? When you read all those Old Testament stories, you read about the Jebusites and the Amorites and the Hittites and you kind of scan all the way through. Well, some skeptics came up and said, "There's no such thing as Hittites. We've never met a Hittite, there's no Hittites, the Hittites never existed." Wouldn't you know last century through archeological discovery, they found that a group of people called the Hittites lived for about 1,200 years, exactly like the Bible said? The further you get away from history, the more accurate the Bible becomes.

For years, they said there's no way Joshua and the wall of Jericho is a true story, because we can't even find Jericho and there's no wall. Because if Joshua really knocked down the wall of Jericho, it'd be right around here. You know what they found? They found Jericho. They found the wall. I've been there. I've stood right next to it. It's there. Well, then they said, "Well, hold on a second. After Joshua and his team defeated Jericho, they went to Ai and got routed and that was six miles away. And we can't find Ai. And so the Bible can't be true." I was in Israel in 2000 and they were doing archeological dig, and guess what they discovered six miles away from Jericho? They discovered Ai, right where the Bible said it was. The further you get away from history, the more the Bible demonstrates that it's true. You can believe every part of this book. The same God that spoke the word is the same God that preserved the word. And we can trust everything that God says about His word.

Now let's get into something that's going to be a little more uncomfortable for you. Then which version should I read? I don't know. What am I going to do now? Which one? How do I know which one is true? Understand this. Those that are Bible scholars that are trying to put a translation into your hand have different reasons for why they're trying to do it. Okay? Some are trying to do this. They're trying to do a word for word translation based upon the best manuscripts available to us. And by the way, the further we get from history, the more manuscripts we're going to discover. When I was in seminary, there were 5,600. Now there's 5,800. They've discovered 200 more, right? So the further we get away, the more they have.

And what they're trying to do is take the accuracy of all of that and put it into

language that fits best. So there's word for word translations. Those that take the word of the Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic and then put it into an English word, that means something as exact as it possibly can be. Those that are word for word translations tend to read a little more wooden. I preach from the New American Standard Bible. It is the most accurate Bible for word for word translation in our English language. Others that would fit that would be the ESV, others that fit that would be the RSV. Those are ones that the Bible scholars are saying, "We want to make this most accurate."

So when I'm reading the New American Standard, I know when I'm reading it and I go back and study the Greek and the Hebrew. Here's what I'm seeing. Word order is going to be about the same. The way in which it has it is going to be about the same. It's going to be very, very, very similar, right? So that's a word for word translation.

Then they have books in the middle that are called dynamic equivalence. That's a thought for thought translation. The NIV, that would be a Bible that's a thought for thought translation. New International Version, many of you use that. That's what I was given when I first got saved. That's the idea of, here's what the Greek saying in that sentence. We're going to say that in a way that's a little more understandable. New Living Translation would translate like that. Those tend to be more readable Bibles. We're like, "Oh, I get that. Okay. That makes a little more sense to me."

And then you can come all the way over here to where it's not really even a Bible, it's just paraphrase, like the message, right? The message isn't a Bible per se, the

message is Eugene Peterson paraphrasing the Bible that he has so that people will understand that. So I don't consider the message Bible a Bible, I consider the message a paraphrase of the Bible that can give color to certain passages when I have a harder time understanding them. But it's not my authoritative. I'm going to lay down on that.

So which of version should you use? I really don't care. Can we just agree at BRAVE Church we're not going to fight over which version of the Bible that you're going to use? Can you please applaud if you agree with me? Okay. I use the New American Standard, but I use several other versions of the Bible too when I'm preparing and when I'm thinking. And God's used several different to speak to my heart. The purpose of the Bible is not that we hunker down on one and say, "This is it. Everybody else is wrong, except..." No. The purpose is, as a preacher, I want to be as accurate in telling you what the word of God says. But if I'm just going to read for fun, I'm going to read from something else potentially from time to time.

Here's my heart. My heart is that you would know the living God and allow His word to speak through you. And there's really not a whole heck of a lot of difference if you understand what the authors are trying to do. Amen? So I'm just giving you facts here. Don't shoot me. Don't get mad at me. I'm just giving you facts.

Some people are King James Version-only people. So let's just talk about the King James Version for saying. King James Version is a great translation, came out in 1611. While the New American Standard and other Bibles like that would use 5,800 manuscripts, the King James Version done by Erasmus used six manuscripts. The

manuscripts that it use is called the Textus Receptus. The earliest of those manuscripts was in the 12th century. They used manuscripts from the 12th century to the 15th century. Okay? The King James Version is a good Bible. When it came out, it was put down because it was too colloquial and too modern in its English. People kind of put it down because it was too easy to understand. Okay? Now there are some in a camp that believe the King James Version is the only version and the real version. And the fact you can't understand it doesn't make a difference, but it's the only way you can understand God. I think you can get saved by reading the King James Version of the Bible.

But there are some differences like the last six verses of Revelation when Erasmus was writing, that he lost the leaf for the Greek manuscript he was using. So he back translated Latin into Greek and in the last six verses of Latin formed 16 variants that show up in no Greek New Testament that we have, because he was trying to get to the printing press really quick. There's other things in the King James I say "Ah, not totally there." But if you have a King James Bible, read the King James Bible. It is a good Bible. The reason I don't preach from it is because, in my opinion, it is not the most accurate that I can preach from and that's why I preach from what I preach. Amen?

Again, not putting down Bibles, not raising up Bibles. I'm just giving you facts about how we got the Bibles that we have. And here's what you can know about the Bible. Great Bible translators are putting Bibles into your hands so you can know the living God and serve Him. Amen? That's a history of canonization. I know there's a lot

there.

Now let's talk about a history of prophecy. Now God has the ability when He writes His book to write history before it happens. It's a beautiful thing. When God is writing prophecy, He's like, "This is history, but I'm going to tell you what's going to happen before." So this year, I don't know how many of you watched the Super Bowl, I was watching Super Bowl LIV. The Kansas City Chiefs were playing the San Francisco 49ers. And during the game in the fourth quarter, the Kansas City Chiefs were trailing 20 to 10 and Kansas City got the ball back. And I looked at everybody in the room and I was feeling a momentum shift and I said, "Here's what's going to happen. Kansas City's going to score three times and they're going to win 31 to 20." And do you know what happened? Kansas City scored three times and won 31 to 20. Do you know what that means? Nothing. It means nothing.

I've seen thousands of sports games. I've predicted all sorts of things. Sometimes I've been right, sometimes I've been wrong, sometimes I'm in close. When we're talking about prophecy, we're saying God has to be right every single time He makes a claim, because the Bible testifies that it's perfect. He can't get kind of close, He can't get okay close, He can't be wrong on one. They've all got to be true. If it's not true, if one error is there, it may well be 10,000 errors. Right?

So what about the God's history of prophecy? We took a look at types last week about how everything points to Jesus. Like when we looked at Exodus 12 and God had them paint blood on the door posts so that the angel of death would pass over, which

was foreshadowing to what was going to happen with Jesus. That He was going to be put up on a beam and shed His blood so that death would pass over all who placed their faith and trust in Him. There's types in the Old Testament when Israel was getting poisoned by snakes and getting bitten by them and God had Moses put a snake up in the wilderness. Everyone that looked at the snake would be healed. And Jesus said what the New Testament? "If I be lifted up, I'll draw people under myself."

We see types, but that's not specific prophecy. So let's talk specific prophecy. Let me just give you a couple. Here's number one. In Genesis 17:19, God promised Abraham He would establish an everlasting covenant with Isaac's offspring. Didn't have Isaac, but He promised him he was going to son, name him Isaac, and God was going to establish an everlasting covenant with him. We get into the New Testament. We get to Matthew. We have the genealogy that most of you skip over and go to Matthew 2. But in Matthew 1, what do you have? You have Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and generations coming down all the way to who? Jesus Christ who God established an eternal covenant with. Amen? He fulfilled it exactly like He said He was going to fulfill it.

In Exodus 12:46, God commanded Israel to not break any of the bones of the Passover lamb. In John 19, it's declared that not one of Jesus' bones was broken. With everything that Jesus Christ went through and everything that He endured, not one of His bones was broken. Psalm 22, which is a messianic Psalm which has so many things in it which God prophesied which came through. I'll just give you one. In Psalm 22, it says that others would divide the Messiah's clothing. In John 19 what do we have? We have Roman soldiers at the foot of the cross, and what are they doing now?

They're dividing Jesus' clothing.

In Isaiah 7:14, this is an awesome prophecy. You want to make this 750 years before Jesus is born. Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son. Here's Isaiah's prophecy. There will be a woman in the world sometime in the future that's going to bear a son that's going to save the world from his sins, and this woman that's going to bear the son will have never been with a man before. That's a pretty extravagant prophecy. But do you know what we see in the Gospel of Luke when Mary asked the angel, "How's this going to be?" He said, "Don't be afraid, for you'll be conceived by the Holy Spirit. And you're going to give birth to a son and you should call His name Jesus and He will save His people from their sins." If just that prophecy alone is pretty special, but all of them.

In Isaiah 53, we read about all different sorts of things. That the Messiah would be pierced for our transgressions and wounded for our inequities. One of the things Isaiah 53 promises is that the Messiah will die between two thieves. What do we read about in Matthew 27 when Jesus was put on the cross? Who is He between? Two thieves, just exactly as prophesied.

And how about this, just for a last one? There's so many. There's over 300 just speaking about Christ. There's prophecies in Daniel that talk about the Medo-Persians and the Greeks and the Romans and the order of how civilization would go that went exactly how it was supposed to go. How about this one? In Psalm 41:9 and in Zechariah 11, it talks about the fact that the Messiah will be betrayed, but He won't be betrayed from the outside. He'll be betrayed from the inside by one of His closest

companions. Not only that. It goes so far as to say that when one of his closest companions betrays Him, he'll betray Him for 30 pieces of silver. Now how about that? You're talking generations apart. So economies change. Guess what happened? Jesus was betrayed by one of His own, Judas Iscariot, in His inner circle. Do you care to hazard a guess as to how much He was betrayed for? 30 pieces of silver.

Now think about this. If it was just those six or seven prophecies that we're discussing and God was accurate on those, that would be enough. But we're talking about hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds. The only prophecies that haven't come true are going to come true. We just haven't lived long enough to see them. To say that the Bible is not true, the probability that it's not true is like this. Imagine the state of Colorado filled 20 feet high in just hay and straw. And that somebody would walk through the state of Colorado and somewhere that they wanted, they would take a needle and they would plant it at the bottom of all that hay somewhere in Colorado that we don't know about. And then you would be put on a plane blindfolded with a parachute. And when they said jump, you jumped. And by the time you landed, you'd have five seconds to find that needle, blindfolded. That's the probability that the Bible's not true.

It's incredible. You can't have 40 authors over 1400 years make all these extravagant claims and see every single one of them come true. The book that you hold in your hand is historically reliable. Amen? That's why I believe the Bible. And think about this. I remember I got saved in 1989. When I did, in the early '90s, I would go to

a prophecy conference and it would scare me to death when I think about the antichrist and all this stuff and the mark of the beast on your forehead or the back of your hand. And I remember these people talking about that I'm like, "Who would ever do that? Why would you put a chip in your hand or your head? How could there ever be a one world economy?" What are you going to do? Pay for stuff with a chip or something? How's that ever going to happen? I could see it happening in like five days.

Everything the Bible promises that hasn't come true will come true. When the angels said in the same way you see Him go, so you shall see Him return. When the prophecy say He's going to step his foot on the Mount of Olives, guess where He's coming back? Guess where He's going to step his foot? It'll be right on the Mount of Olives exactly the way that the Bible says.

The history of prophecy is not that God guessed a couple times and got a few things right. The history of prophecy is that God has been right 100% of the time. Which leads us to this. What about all the contradictions in the Bible? There's so many. I've been studying the Bible for 30 years. I haven't found one yet. Most of the people that tell you there's contradictions in the Bible have never read the Bible or have never spent time studying the Bible or have never asked God, how do these things align in the Bible? But let's just talk about a few of them.

In Romans 3:28, Paul is writing to the church in Rome and here's what he says. Paul says, "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law." So you're justified or made right with God by faith. It has nothing to do with your works. Nobody's going to heaven because of your works. You're only going to heaven

because of faith in Christ. That's it. But look at James. James 2:17, that's in the Bible, too. That's just as authoritative. And in James 2:17, here's what it says. Even so faith if it has no works is dead being by itself. What are we going to do?

Paul's saying you're saved by grace through faith alone. James is saying, hey, faith without works is dead. How do you do that? It's not that hard. If you study the Bible, you realize Paul was talking about justification. Paul's talking about what makes you right with God. Paul said all along, not only in Romans 3 but in Ephesians 2, 8, 9, for it is by grace you've been saved through faith. It's not your own doing. It's a gift of God, so no one should boast. It's always grace. It's always faith. It has nothing to do with your works.

Who is James talking to? James is talking to a group of scattered believers that are already saved and he's telling them, "If you've been saved by grace through faith and you have Christ on the inside and you see things that need to get done but you don't do what Christ wants you to do, the faith that you actually have is useless in the world because faith without works is dead." Isn't that just as true? It's totally true. It's the same thing Paul says in Ephesians 2:10 after he gets done talking about grace alone. He says this. "For we are Christ's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for what? Good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." So what's the problem here? God is saying you're saved totally by grace, it has nothing to do with what you do. But if you truly are saved, then God saved you because he wants to do works through you. And both are equally true. And there's no problem. And there's nothing wrong with it.

Or what about this one? An eye for an eye. Old Testament eye for eye, that mean God. But in the New Testament, Jesus said, "You've heard it said an eye for eye, but I tell you if someone strikes you on the cheek, turn the other cheek." Total contradiction. Old Testament, God mean. New Testament, God good. What are we talking about? So many contradictions. No, it's not. The same God that said an eye for eye is Jesus Christ who's telling them now, here's what I'm telling you. Here's what he's saying. An eye for an eye was to keep things from being overly retaliated. So if somebody hit you in the mouth and knocked your tooth out, an eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth meant, if they knock your tooth out, don't kill them. Retribution should be equal to what happened to you.

Jesus comes on in the New Testament, here's what He begins to say. "Because I'm going to be living inside of you and because you're a new covenant people and because I'm going to be able to do things through you that couldn't be done in generations past, here's what I'm telling you. You've heard it said an eye for an eye, but now I tell you this. If someone insults you by striking you on the cheek, turn your other cheek and let them insult you, because I'm inside of you right now and I'll be the judge of that later." Right? He's just expanding His understanding of it.

Same thing He did when He said, "You've heard it said, do not commit adultery." He doesn't say, "Now go commit adultery." What did He say? But I tell you this. Because I'm inside of you now, I'm even more concerned with your motive. So I'm telling you this. If you look lustfully upon another woman, you've committed adultery in

your heart. You've heard it said don't murder. And I'm not saying go murder. Now what I'm saying is I'm concerned about your motive. Even if you say to your brother, you idiot, you've committed murder with your heart. What is He doing? He's growing and expanding the revelation of God's word. It in perfect harmony.

And the whole thing about this Old Testament God being mean and this New Testament God being good, have you read Revelation 20? There are billions of people that are going to go to hell. Billions. The same wrathful God that poured out His wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah is the same God that's going to pour out His wrath on all those who haven't trusted Jesus Christ. And there's way more in the New Testament they're going to get punished than in the old. There's no problem here.

Or how about this one? If you study the gospels, you'll see that when Jesus was leaving Jericho, Matthew talks about two blind men that got healed and Mark and Luke talk about one guy and his name was Bartimaeus. And everybody gets all worked up. Was it two guys or one guy? Who knows?

Anybody here married? You ever gone on a date or a vacation a sporting event or somewhere where you see and experience the exact same thing, but you remember different things about the event? If my wife and I went on vacation and you kind of cornered us when we got home and you asked Kim what she saw and experience and what I saw and experienced, you would say, "Were they even in the same place?" So what you have with the New Testament writers, what they're writing is from their perspective. Is it possible that there were two blind men healed? Not only is it possible, it's what happened, because that's what Matthew tells us. Is it also probable and

possible that Mark and Luke focused on one man named Bartimaeus because he cried out the loudest, he made the biggest scene and he was the guy whose name they knew? Yeah. Just because they don't talk about the second guy, doesn't mean it didn't happen.

There's no contradictions. And the longer you spend believing the word of God and going for it, you'll realize there's explanations for everything. And some of the explanations, let me just be clear, you won't get them on this side of heaven. There'll be some things you go into heaven... I didn't understand that totally. I don't know how that works, but I trusted God's word.

Or how about this one? People will say, "Well look at all the contradictions of the Bible." Matthew 27 said that Judas went out and hung himself. But in Acts 1, the apostles talk about how he fell head long and burst open. Which was it? There's a big difference between falling head long and bursting open and strangling yourself by hanging yourself. Which was it? If you ever been to the Valley of Hinnom where Judas hung himself, he would understand that he hung himself and he died, because that's what the Bible said happened. But if he would've been hanging in the Valley of Hinnom for a long period of time, guess what may have happened? Nobody was probably going to go get Judas Iscariot off that tree. I'm not touching him. Guess what probably happened? A branch would've broke and guess what would've happened? He would've fallen 40 feet. If he fell 40 feet, guess what would've happened? He would've burst open everywhere. Right?

Could both be true? Yeah. We're both true? Yeah, because that's what the Bible said happened. There's no contradictions in the Bible. Just because you don't have the full scope of everything that happens doesn't mean there's anything wrong. And we can talk about things over and over and over again.

My cousin, I've shared this story before, he's a podiatrist. When it came to not one of Jesus's bones being broken, he said, "You think that's a prophecy that was fulfilled?" He's a podiatrist. He's a foot doctor. He's like, "How can that be? You put a foot over a foot, you drive a spike through it. It's impossible to not break several bones. So how can you believe the word?"

Now, let me tell you something. I never even thought about that before. But I told the Lord, "Lord, if your word's true, it's got to be true. So help me understand what your word means." Wouldn't you know it, it was later that year I went to Israel for the first time. And in the Israeli Museum, they have a foot bone of someone that was crucified. And on the foot bone where the person was crucified, the spike is still in the foot. Do you know where the spike was? It went through the back of the Achilles.

So then I started studying crucifixion and realized that sometimes we have this view that Jesus had to be crucified foot over foot, because that's what we've seen so much. And then we have T-shirts that say one God plus three nails equals forgiven and all that kind of stuff. It's cool. But I started going back and I couldn't find three nails anywhere in the Bible. It doesn't say they were three. And I started studying crucifixion and often times people would pull their foot up on the side like this and drive spikes into

the back of the Achilles. I wasn't there in the first century. I don't know exactly how it happened. But I personally believe that's exactly how Jesus was crucified. Because if He was crucified like that, He would've been nailed to the cross, but not one of His bones would've been broken.

So I joyously called my cousin back and said, "Hey, this is what's up." And I don't think it excited him nearly as much as it excited me. Right? But I know the word of God can't be broken. So when there's things that you don't understand, you can go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I don't know. But if it's true, help me understand what this is." And I want to tell you this. God does not yield his fruit to the lazy. God wants us to read His word. God wants us to study His word. God wants us to be about His word. God wants us to know His word. And the more time we spend, the more fruit that we'll see. That's a history of prophecy. And let mean by this one.

Now let's talk about a history of response. See, there's only two things you can do with truth. You can accept it or reject it. Nobody can make you accept it. And there has always been, and there will always be, and there are people in our generation now that I can name by name and there's been people in every generation that are skeptics. And by skeptic, I'm not talking about people that really want to know the truth. I'm talking about people that are hard and fast against there's no possible way that this book is true.

In the 1700s, there was a French writer and philosopher named Voltaire. He wrote plays, poems, novels, essays, historical, and scientific works. He wrote over 20,000 letters and over 2,000 books and pamphlets. He was a hardened atheist. As a

matter of fact, some of the things I was going to read to you, I couldn't read to in church on a Sunday morning, but he was hostile towards Christians. And he said his biggest regret about dying is that he couldn't help stop the flow of Christianity for all those idiots that believed in Christ. That was basically the thrust of his deal. He died on May 30th, 1778. Two years prior to his death, he made this bold statement. He said within 100 years of my death, no one will even own a Bible, know what a Bible is, unless they walk into a museum and see what people in antiquity actually believed in.

Do you know within 50 years of his death, the Geneva Bible Society bought his house and stored Bibles and tracks in it? And they actually used his very printing press to print Bibles and send them all over the world. Ain't that awesome? Now, Voltaire was an intelligent man that spent his life talking about how God isn't real. Voltaire knows now that he is because Voltaire's dead. Right? And there are skeptics in every generation that will try to prove the Bible wrong and they'll be pretty persuasive in their argument up until the time that they die and meet Jesus Christ face to face. But then there's others that are just curious. Like, "I don't know that I can totally believe that." And I want to tell you that's okay. Jesus said you should love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. You don't need to put your brain on hold. You don't need to be an intellectual inferior to believe in the Bible. Let me give you a couple examples.

There's a guy by the name of Josh McDowell. He's still alive. When Josh McDowell was in college years ago, he went to a ministry called Campus Crusade for Christ and he found these Christians over joyously happy to a place that annoyed him.

Couldn't stand it. And he learned that they believed that the Bible was true and that Jesus was God and that He died on the cross for their sins and that three days later, He rose from the dead. And that the only way to salvation was to believe in that Jesus, and he rejected it outright. These people who were loving him in community were saying to him, "Hey, it's okay. You can go study this stuff for yourself. If you can show us that the Bible's not true and that Jesus didn't rise from the dead, we'll come follow you." And he thought to himself, "Huh, what a nice group of people."

I could surely prove one of those two things wrong. So you know what he went out to do during his college years? To prove that the Bible wasn't true or that Jesus didn't rise from the dead. An overwhelming evidence came back to him over and over that everything in the Bible that's written is true and Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the dead and He is the way, the truth, and the life. And he said, "Then I had two problems." He said, "I had a pleasure problem and a pride problem." He said, "I had a pleasure problem because to believe that Jesus is the Christ, that means I had to give up all my own worldly desires, to repent on my sin and to trust Jesus. And I wasn't sure I wanted to do that." He goes, "And then I had a pride problem because by doing that, I was saying that God was right and I was wrong and all those people were right and I was wrong." He goes, "But then I got over that, and I repented and trusted Jesus Christ as my savior."

You know what he spent his life doing? He spent his entire life being an apologist or a defender of Christianity, writing books how Jesus Christ is Lord and that the Bible

is true. If you really, really, really say, "Well, I just got to know it intellectually," go for it. Doesn't scare me. Doesn't scare God. He knows He's true. You'll find the answers.

There's another guy you may know, his name's Lee Strobel. Lee Strobel wrote for the Chicago Tribune, lived in Chicago. His wife started attending a church up in Barrington called Willow Creek. She started giving her heart and life to Christ and he hated it, because he was a heartened atheist and he was an intellectual and he did not like the fact that his wife was now acting different and that their family was being consumed with all these religious ideologies. So he decided to attend church. And as he sat under the preaching of the word, God converted his heart. And he spent his life ever since being a pastor and an author and a writer making *The Case for Christ*, *The Case for Faith*. Now it's out in a movie. It's compelling, because anybody that truly wants to know if Jesus is Lord will come to the knowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen?

Most importantly, I'd tell you this exhibit A. Most of you didn't know me 30 years ago before I came to Christ. If you did, you wouldn't go to our church. God's changed me. I repented on my sins and believing that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God and by His blood alone on Calvary I'm saved, and by His resurrection from the dead I have life in His name. I'm His. I'm banking my entire eternity on it. He's changed my life, and He's still in the process of changing my life. And I can't wait to meet Him. And my story is no different than anybody else who's trusted Jesus Christ. See, history is His story and His story lives through everyone who's trusted in Him. And if you've trusted in Christ, then you have a story about how you went from being dead to being

made alive.

What's the purpose of spending all this time going over manuscripts and history and internal and external evidence? Is so that you would believe that Jesus is the Christ and that you would respond to Him. That you would believe that the book that you hold in your hand is totally reliable and you can trust the words of God in it. And that His word is real and you can bank on it from now for all eternity. The word of God is true. The word testifies it's true, Jesus testifies it's true, history testifies it's true. We still got two more weeks. I'm making a case here for why you need to trust the word of God. Amen?

I just want you to stand and I want to close by praying for us. And perhaps you're here today and you never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior. But as you're here today, you're saying that's what I need to do. If you just bow your heads and close your eyes, let's just pray together.

Lord Jesus, We believe that you are the Christ, the son of the living God. If you're here today and you know that you've never been converted by God's grace, then here's how you can pray. You can pray by saying, Jesus, I believe that you love me, that you came to this earth for me and that you are God. I believe you died on the cross for my sins and I believe that you were raised from the dead. And right now, in this place, I repented on my sin and I confess you as my personal Lord and savior. Lord, for those who have claimed you as Lord, we trust your Holy Spirit that is now coming to reside in them and in dwelling them forever. Lord change their life. Let them know that they are who they are in you.

Lord, for those who are here today that say, "Hey, if I got a chance to go check this out, I really want to know this is true." Lord guide everyone here down the path of truth so they can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you indeed are the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And Lord, for those of us who know you, let us trust your book. Let us know that the words that we have are reliable and trustworthy and we have everything we need that's completely sufficient for life and godliness. And we give you all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise in Jesus name. Amen and amen. Can we praise God for his word as we take [inaudible 00:56:27].