

The Bible

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[0:00] It will be up in case someone misses one. But still, I think it's better to be a part of it. So these are things, these are matters over the last few years.

! Things that I have been asked about quite a bit. And things that I think every believer ought to be confident in. The elders and I sat down and kind of talked with one another.

We included our wives in that discussion to get a better viewpoint as well. So I will teach the first four. The next three will be taught by each one of the elders. And then I will come back and we'll teach the last one on the nation of Israel.

Just so you understand, this isn't all-inclusive. I said it Wednesday night. This would be more like a survey course. So I'm going to throw a lot of information at you really quick. Because to take time to dive into any one of these in particular would really take weeks on end.

So sure, I'm going to leave a lot of meat on the bone, so to say. We'll leave a lot still sitting there. If we can make it through these eight weeks and not interrupt Sunday school. Our normal Sunday school class is too much. And then hopefully by the end of the year, maybe in the fall, we will do another series.

[1:09] And we'll go deeper into those series. We'll start laying out some doctrines. Some of you know, I've told you this. It is my ambition and my desire that by the time of the end of the year, 2026, that every one of the church members will be able to write out a personal doctrinal statement.

Simply saying, this is what I believe. And you'll be able to put it on pen and paper and you'll be able to write it out. And you'll be able to defend what you believe, not because someone told you so. Not because that's what the church says and that's what Billy Joe says.

But because you see it in scripture and you can defend it for your own ability. So as we teach through these things, sure, there's some things that are matter of interpretation. But we're not going to, I want you to work it out with fear and trembling at times.

So these are matters I've worked out to some of them over courses of weeks and months and some of them over courses of years. So we're going to start where we have to start. And that is with the Bible, because the Bible is absolutely foundational to everything we believe.

We're going to base our doctrine upon what the word of God says. Not what people tell us, not what any other book says, not what any other book of theology or doctrine, even though I think there are great books on systematic theology.

[2:19] There are great books that can tell you doctrines and things you ought to adhere to. But those things are not to replace scripture, they are to aid in scripture. The further along we go in our walk with Christ, ideally the less we rely on any other source other than the word of God.

The best commentary on the word of God is scripture itself. So the best commentator on scripture is scripture. If you want study helps and aids and things like that, there are things I can point you to. There are some people that I can say, hey, these are trustworthy, these are not. But that is not our ambition here. Our ambition here is to say, can we believe the Bible and is the Bible true? What we understand is the Bible is unique in its origin and it's unparalleled in its impact.

I did not print off anything for you today. I am doing this, okay, so I had to choose between doing printouts or PowerPoints and I chose to do this. But you can understand, no other book has faced such opposition and persecution.

No other writing has experienced such widespread circulation. It is yearly. One of the top selling books, if not the top selling books in all of the world. There are millions and millions and millions of copies printed each and every year.

[3:26] It is in the household of 82% of Americans today. It is widespread in more languages than any other book that has ever been in publication.

And it remains to be so each and every year. No other source has changed so many lives. One of the great testimonies of scripture is the impact it has on the lives of people who read it and adhere to it.

Testimony resounds throughout history of Christianity of not only people but nations being transformed because of the word. The nation that you live in today has its foundation built upon biblical concepts.

I would not say it's a biblical foundation because not every one of our founding fathers were believers. Don't be fooled by that. Some of them were theists. Some of them were believers. Some of them were not.

But the foundation, the foundation of the fact that there was a moral standard referred to the law and the law was God. There was a such thing as good and evil. We could call these things.

[4:29] Came exclusively from scripture. And the foundation of that nation has completely changed. You can look at western civilization and eastern civilization throughout history.

And you know with the development of technologies, I'm giving you a lot of information, right? The will was developed in eastern countries much earlier than in western countries. The Hindu people developed the will and even the gear system.

But the gears were used exclusively for the turning of their libraries in their monasteries because they felt that the hum of the sound would create a nirvana or an attitude of peace for meditation.

Western civilization saw the importance of people and they used the gears to develop things that would harvest agriculture, things that would free people from slavery, things that would free.

And that foundation based solely upon the fact that in one portion of the world you had a manuscript called the Bible that said people are important. In other parts of the world it said you're born into a certain caste and you're going to live there the rest of your life and hopefully in the next life you'll be something different.

[5:36] No other scripture, no other source has changed so many lives and really declared and dictated the outcome of societies than the Bible. And no writing can boast of such reliability and trustworthiness.

We'll get to that in just a moment. There are 66 books of the Bible. You know them. There are 39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament. Of those Old Testament books there are somewhere between 32 to 35 different authors.

And it spans in its years of writing from 1446 B.C. to 400 B.C. These dates matter later so hold on to them, okay? So we span a pretty broad time.

In the New Testament there are 8 to 9 different authors. There are books in either one of them. We say we're not 100% confident who that author is. It could be this or it could be that. But there are 8 to 9 different authors in the New Testament.

And it is written or was written between A.D. 45 and 95 according to most biblical scholars. Pay attention to that. So you have from years 1446 to the year 400.

[6:36] What happened after the year 400? Come on, that's intertestament time. It's the year of silence. God went silent, okay? You got to know that. That's when God went silent. Nothing happens. Nothing takes place.

We'll get to that in just a moment. But then A.D. 45 is important. We believe, or at least I believe, there are conflicts between this or discussions. It's not a big rock issue.

I believe Mark was one of the first written. We also can think that Paul probably wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians pretty early on. So either Mark or the writings of Paul, 1 and 2 Thessalonians and A.D. 45.

If that is the case, then that is just about 12 years after the resurrection of Christ. So it's written very shortly after the resurrection and the ascension of Christ.

And it comes to a close with John writing the book of Revelation on the island of Patmos around A.D. 95. It is written in three languages. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew.

[7:31] There's 1% of Scripture written in Aramaic. That would get into the New Testament. And then Greek. Quirin' Greek. That's important because Greek was the common everyday language of the New Testament time.

So it was written in everyday what we call marketplace language. It was written to be understood. It was written to be known. It was written to be read. So that is important. Josh McDowell in his book, Evidence That Demands a Verdict.

It's a great quote. And it's something that we need to understand when we start talking about, well, how can we trust these 66 books? The church did not create the canon. It did not determine which books would be called Scripture, the inspired Word of God.

Instead, the church recognized or discovered which books had been inspired from their inception. Because here's an argument you're going to hear. A lot of people say, oh, well, there are people, the early church just picked and chose which books they wanted to put in there.

And they intentionally left out some others. And we're going to look at that in just a moment. And so you would say, well, it was depending on who was in power at that time, who had the ability, who had the opportunity, who was in a prominent position.

[8:37] The reality is, is the church didn't pick which ones. They were recognizing which ones were indeed inspired. And they had five standards, five principles for recognition.

And here they are. How do we know that the Word of God is indeed the Word of God? We're looking at the canon of Scripture. What's going to be included in those 66 books? For the Old Testament and the New Testament, was the book written by a prophet of God?

Was the writer confirmed by the acts of God? That is, were there miraculous events in his or her life, or his life? So was the writer confirmed by acts of God? Did the message tell the truth about God?

Scripture will never contradict itself. And God cannot lie. So there will be no contradiction in Scripture. Does it come with the power of God? It is. Does it have the ability to change lives if people put it into practice?

And was it accepted by the people of God from the very beginning? And we'll see that in just a moment. When we think about this, there is but one grand narrative in Scripture.

[9:38] Okay, it is a book that contains 66 books, but it has one grand theme. Genesis tells us that paradise is lost, and Revelation tells us how paradise is gained.

The first 11 chapters of Genesis tell us every problem that man has. And starting in Genesis 12, when God called Abram from the land of the era of the Chaldeans, we see God's response to man's problem, and we see it worked out historically.

The consistency of Scripture, when you consider how many different authors of different backgrounds and in different genres of writing.

You have historical writing. You have poetic writing. You have narrative writing. You have letters written to individuals, letters written to churches. You have prophetic writing. You have all of those different genres, but yet there is no inconsistency in Scripture.

Every inconsistency that we bring before ourselves. We'll see one this morning in our text this morning in the Gospel of Mark, one supposed inconsistency, and we will address it as we reconcile it with the other two synoptic Gospels.

[10:46] So there's a little bit of conflict, if you will, between Matthew and Mark, but we'll answer that, and even in Luke. And we'll be able to answer that. There are really no true inconsistencies in Scripture, though they are written at different times by different people from different backgrounds in various places, and authored to different people.

So it's one of the wonderful testimonies we see in Scripture. So the Old Testament. How do we know that the Old Testament canon is accurate? How do we know that it's true, and how can we trust it? Genesis to the book of Malachi.

Why don't we call it canon? Canon used to just be a standard of measure or volume. Origen, the early church father, used to refer to it as the rule of faith.

He was the first one to refer to it as the canon of Scripture. This is the rule of faith. This is how we measure what we believe. You need to understand that in the Old Testament, there is much historical evidence that clearly supports the theory that the Hebrew people were already recognizing the completion of the Old Testament Scripture during the time of Christ. More than likely, the Hebrew canon was completed around B.C. 400, and if not, it is highly likely that it was completed before B.C. 150.

[12:05] Now, why is that important? For those of you that are with me on Wednesday nights and Sunday nights, what happened around 400, a little bit before that, actually around 450, 452, what happened?

I mean, come on, this is a Sunday school class. Someone shows up on the scene, and I've been telling you over and over again, pay attention to this guy. Pay attention to this guy. He matters. He is both a priest and a scribe, and his name is what?

Ezra. There he is. Ezra shows up, and what Ezra does is Ezra begins copying Scripture. He is a scribe. Remember, he was there in the capital city of Susa.

He was where all the historical documents were secured, the historical documents that were brought along with Daniel and all the people of the upper class of Jerusalem, and they brought them into there because this is how the wise men showed up.

They began to search the archives when they were in the east, and they began to look at some of the chief magi of their day, and one of the chief magi of the Babylonian captivity was Daniel, and each one of those chief Daniel, because Daniel told all these dreams and all these visions, and he interpreted them.

[13:13] So as the chief magi of that day, he could deposit what he considered important books in their library. Undoubtedly, some of those important books were what we refer to as the Pentateuch, the first five books of Scripture.

And then we move forward just a little bit further, and Ezra sets his heart to know the Word of God that he may learn it, that he may live it, and that he may teach it.

We find that in Ezra chapter 7. Ezra starts what we refer to as the scribe school, the scribal school, that their whole job is to hand copy Scripture, and their whole job is to put the Scripture in the modern-day language of the people.

We refer to that as the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew, because many people living in Babylonian captivity grew up in a Greek society or Greek-influenced society, and they no longer spoke their native tongue Hebrew.

And so they needed a new translation. That was Ezra. So this is why we can almost completely agree with the fact that by B.C. 400, the canon of Scripture was done, because the scribal schools were there, the last prophet shows up, that is Malachi.

[14:21] One of the last books written, or the last two is 1 and 2 Chronicles to us, and we can say that this is recognized historically by the Jewish people. The other affirmation we can get is that Jesus and the writers of the New Testament extensively and exclusively quote from the Old Testament we have.

That is, they don't quote from any other writings. They don't quote from any other of the Apocrypha or anything else like that. We'll get to that in just a moment. They only quote from the Old Testament we have.

Jesus makes a really telling quote in Luke 11, 51, where Jesus says, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah. Now that's important in Hebrew Scripture, because Abel is the first murder in Scripture.

We find him in the book of Genesis. Anyone know where Zechariah is a martyr for the faith? What book he's in? It'd be 2 Chronicles. And in Hebrew Scripture, in the Hebrew Old Testament, the last book of a Jewish Bible today, and even Hebrew Scripture, is 2 Chronicles.

So what Jesus is saying is from Genesis to 2 Chronicles. You people have walked this way. So he's quoting exclusively from what we refer to as the Old Testament.

[15:36] And he is all-inclusive in that. They are the first and the last martyrs of all of Scripture in the Old Testament. There's really no argument about the canon of the Old Testament.

That it is something that was accepted during the time of Christ and something that has been accepted moving forward. The New Testament is a little bit different. We have a little bit of argument.

Can we include these 27 books from Matthew to Revelation? Is this it? Is this all we have? Is this trustworthy? Can we lean upon that? But yet, church history, people tell us from the very beginning. When did I say the Bible, the New Testament, came to a close? When was the last book written? Remember? 95. 80-95. So in 80-95, we have the last book written.

The testimony of the early church fathers, starting during the time. Ignatius is one of the elders and one of the pastors. During the time of the apostles.

[16:36] So John, the writer of the book of Revelations is still alive. Ignatius dies around 110. Polycarp sat at the feet of John and some of the others. And he made a statement around AD 115.

And we keep going on down through here. Now, I'm going to go ahead and tell you, not all of these. If you do your history and you do your research, you're going to say, well, some of their doctrines were a little wonky. And yeah, they were. The early church was really kind of working out. But what I want you to understand is these people very early on began to declare these writings are Scripture. And they were beginning to declare that these 27, remember one of the five points, was it recognized by the people of God?

And what we find is church leaders very early on are recognizing what we refer to as the New Testament as sacred writings. They're reading them in their public gathering.

They're studying together. Josephus makes mention of this. He's the Jewish historian for the Roman Empire. And Josephus makes mention of the fact that the people of God gather together who are referred to as Christians, the followers of the way.

[17:40] And they read from their sacred books. And Josephus even declares these sacred books to be the same ones in agreement with all of these. And that is the books we possess today as the New Testament.

And we see that there is this testimony that is consistent and early. But possibly due to the rise of Gnosticism. Gnosticism is seen in the New Testament.

We see it kind of not referred to by name. But we see it already kind of appearing. But Gnosticism simply means this. It is kind of this secret knowledge, this kind of spiritual understanding.

Gnosticism believed that the flesh is innately wicked and will perish. But the spirit is innately pure and clean. And so while on the outside you may do wicked things, on the inside you're good.

And so the Gnostic were all about trying to gather secret information and these secret teachings of Christ. And these things were very early in the church. And they started showing up really, really, really soon.

[18:42] And so they started writing writings too. And the Gnostics were talking about all this secret faith. And then there were decrees by the Roman emperors to burn the sacred books. Diocletian, the Roman emperors, said, I'm going to burn all of the Bibles.

I'm going to burn all the sacred books. Well, you can only burn what the people consider sacred. There are some things that the church said, well, you can burn it. We don't care. But so the church needed to declare, what things are we going to preserve? What things are we going to hold on to? What things really mattered to us? Diocletian thought that he had done such a good job at it that he actually erected a pillar over the last Bible he burned. He said, I've burned all of the Bibles in the Roman Empire.

Some 30 years later, a Roman emperor issued the publication of 50 Bibles to be circulated throughout the Roman Empire. You know him as Constantine. So he did not burn all the Bibles. Why? Because the church said, wait a minute, we're going to hold on to these. And they had to be clear. They had to know, which books are we going to protect at the risk of our lives? Which books are we okay if they go away?

[19:42] And which ones can we read in church? So they needed to establish. The Old Testament, everybody knew what it was. But they needed to establish what we refer to as the New Testament canon. What are we going to count as important?

Athanasius, by the way, I don't really agree with this theology, but I agree with this. Athanasius was the first one. He is the earliest formal recognition of the 27 books of the New Testament that you have.

And it was written in a letter. And he recorded these as we have them in AD 367. It's the first time it was ever written. Shortly after that, Jerome and Augustine recognized it as well.

And then we have three different councils, the Synod of Hippo in AD 393, the Third Council of Carthage in AD 397, and the Fourth Council of Carthage in AD 419. Each of these three affirming. Why does it matter? Because was it recognized by the people of God? Since that time, there has been no argument, no consistent argument.

[20:39] Is the canon of New Testament these 27 books? Very early on, it was recognized by early church fathers, and then it was recognized formally as they had to defend it.

Because we say, why does it matter? Well, because opposition was coming really quick. What about the extra-biblical writings? Because I know you've heard about it. What about the Apocrypha that's included in the Roman Catholic Bibles?

If you were to have a Roman Catholic Bible, you'll have an Apocrypha in it. Or what about the, quote-unquote, Lost Gospels? The Jesus Seminar came out in the 60s and later into the 70s. I started referring to these Lost Gospels.

Don't let the title mislead you, because what they were doing is essentially what Gnosticism was doing. They were saying, well, there's a secret knowledge you don't know anything about. And they would go around the country and tell you, we're going to tell you the secret knowledge.

It's the thing that's been hidden from you by the man. You know, all the strong church leaders and everybody else, and they shouldn't surprise you because of the time it came out. Everything was by the man back then. By the way, also in the 60s, there was a big push that LSD ought to be putting the drinking water of everybody in society so that they could introduce them into a free state of mind.

[21:48] And I'm not joking about that. That was actually something that was being put out there. We could liberate the people if we could just contaminate their water with LSD, and the world would be a much better place. So be careful, by the way.

I'm not dogging on the 60s, but be careful on basing your theology on that time. Okay? But the Jesus Seminars came out and said, well, let's talk about all these Lost Gospels.

They're the ones that really began to introduce the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, and all these others, and say, well, they were just not in there because the people didn't want them in there. And then there's this writing called the Da Vinci Code. You probably know about the Da Vinci Code.

The Da Vinci Code came out and really just started really pushing everything that Jesus Seminar was teaching. And a lot of people started falling for it and said, yeah, well, that's right. It's wrong. Our Bibles are not complete. And man, in their thought process, thought they were figuring everything out.

So what about those? Are they really true? Well, the Apocrypha, Jerome, remember Jerome? In the 300s A.D., he was the first to include the Apocrypha in his writing.

[22:47] But when he did, because he put a writing, we'll get to it in just a moment, we get in Bible translations, he translated the Greek into Latin. And when he did it, he included the Apocrypha in the Old Testament.

But his reference to them were that these are books for the church, but not to be treated equal to Scripture. So the very first to include them with the Old Testament, and we're talking about early church in the 300s.

He included them in his writing and his publication, but he said, they're just books for the church. But they're not to be treated as equal to the rest of Scripture. Well, if you study your church history, you'll understand that the church became accepted in the Roman Empire about that time, and the church began to flourish.

And so the Roman Catholic Church continued to lean upon these writings, the Apocrypha writings, and they continued to trust in them a little bit more than they should over the years. They just increasingly relied upon them, and we can get to the whys, hears, and nows later on.

And they began to see them as beneficial to their cause. And then the Council of Trent in 1546, okay, so some time has passed. The Council of Trent in 1546 was the first council to officially recognize by the Roman Catholic Church that the Apocrypha should be included in the canon of the Old Testament.

[24:08] In 300s, Jerome said, ah, it's not equal to Scripture, but we go 1,200 years later, and they said, we want to make it equal to and have as much authority.

Well, if you know anything, again, about church history in the 1500s, something amazing was happening. We call that the Reformation, and we also have Bible translations beginning to come up in the English language, and we have all these persecutions.

And so they make it official. We're going to include the Apocrypha. The Reformers and the Protestants continue to deny their reality this day. It's not said that, hey, you can't read them and gather some historical information, but they are not, they are not to be told it with a way of Scripture. Why? What fallacies do they have? What shows us? Well, the first thing that we notice is they contain historical and geographical errors. They're just simply not accurate. When you read the Apocrypha writing, it is just simply not accurate.

They teach doctrines that are false, and foster practices contrary to the rest of Scripture, so it does not tell the same story. It is inconsistent. Their literary style and structure vary from the rest of Scripture.

[25:15] While there is varying literary styles in the 66 books of the Bible, these are completely different, and they lack prophetic power and poetic and religious feeling. You say, well, I didn't think it was about feeling.

Yeah, but does it have an impact? Does it change people? And what we find in those writings is they don't. Okay, while it was accepted as a church book and something maybe for the good of the people, but it was not to be treated as Scripture over the years, just like everything else, they became accepted and they became relied on a little bit more, and they leaned on them.

So what about the lost Gospels of the New Testament, the supposed lost Gospels, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Peter? And there's a lot, and I'll give you this thing in just a minute to kind of put all this.

I'll give you a visual, okay? So stay with me. None of these originated earlier than the 2nd century A.D. So in the mid-100s, they began to show up on the scene.

Ironically, that is also about the time the canon of the New Testament was beginning to be recognized by the early church. Their appearance, these lost Gospels and these other writings, is probably one of the things that helped force the recognition of the true Scripture.

[26:30] Because these writings started showing up on the scene and people had questions about them, and there were different writings, even some of the early church fathers, I believe it was Ignatius, he wrote a book, he said, don't treat my letter like the rest of Scripture, don't treat it like that.

He wrote it to the church, but yet it was included in these quote-unquote lost Gospels, but his own quote was, I am not writing Scripture, I'm just writing to encourage. So he's writing to encourage the church and their letters were often circulated among early believers because, you know, they didn't have copy machines and printing presses and things like that, and he would say, he gave caution, I'm not writing Scripture, I'm not writing as John or Peter or Paul, he said, I'm just writing to help you.

But yet what happened is over time people began to recognize them, and they're probably one of the things that led to the necessity of defining what indeed is. So what's different about them?

They do not fit in with the other Gospel records, that is, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Peter and all the other Gospels, lost Gospels, they have behind them this implication that you will already know the story.

So they imply that you know what's going on. It's not like when you read the Gospel of Mark, it says the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or when you open up Matthew, it starts with this genealogy, or when you go to John, it says, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

[27:50] They're not like that. When you read these lost Gospels, they have behind them this understanding that you will already know about Christianity. And all they're trying to do is impart to you some secret truth that you might not have heard about.

Sounds a lot like Gnosticism, right? Yes? You were talking about the 60s? Yeah. They're just John Smith and the extra Mormon.

Oh, the golden tablets? Yeah. Don't let me get into that right now. I'll get into that later. I'll get into that with denominations and all probably, okay? So, we'll do that. That's a good one.

That's a really good one. And I love teaching on that one, but we'll do that one. So, these lost Gospels, they give no new revelation, no new teaching.

I about lost my computer. And they assume a knowledge of the writings of the New Testament as we have it. They're just wanting to give you secret knowledge. Look at this quote. Bart Ehrman says, this, and this is pretty telling because this is an agnostic Bible scholar.

[28:56] He's not a believer. He's not a believer. He says, the oldest and best sources we have for the life of Jesus are the four Gospels of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

This is not only, this is not simply the view of Christian historians who have a high opinion of the New Testament and its historical worth. It is the view of all serious historians of antiquity of every kind from committed evangelical Christians to hardcore atheists.

We may wish there were older, more reliable sources, but ultimately it is the sources found within the canon that provide us the most and best information.

It's pretty telling from an agnostic that while we want, and this is someone who did his research trying to find other sources, trying to find are there indeed lost Gospels?

And at the end of his research he said, I wish there were, but there are no more that I can find that are trustworthy. So let me give you a couple visual aids. Look at this one. If you want to ever figure out, the ones on the top are the 27 books of the New Testament.

[30:04] Everything on the bottom are the quote unquote lost Gospels and lost writings. And so just to put it in concept, this is the early church fathers where there ever really any serious concerns.

Just focus on the bottom for a moment. The Revelation of Peter had a little height there and the Paul to the Alexandrians had a little bit, no, the Wisdom of Solomon had just a little bit of recognition among early churches.

But other than that, none of the other quote lost Gospels were ever accepted, ever historically accepted. Not until years and years and years later we say, okay, yeah, that's it.

Well, if you go to the top and you say, what about those that were in doubt or spurious? Well, sure, the book of Hebrews was James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, those writings. I mean, Hebrews was spurious all the way up until the time of the Reformation.

Martin Luther said he didn't really want to accept Hebrews but he had to because he felt compelled to because he just couldn't argue with the reality. Hebrews is the most disputed book of the New Testament.

[31:06] And why? Because it speaks more of, to the Jewish people and kind of their tradition and things like that. Also, Martin Luther didn't like the book of James because James says that faith without works is dead.

Martin Luther was going through this great movement of faith apart from works but he couldn't deny it. I mean, they are different, again, man errs in our understanding but if we're just looking at historical reliability, by the time we get to Athanasius canon, there's no doubt on any one of them.

Okay? So what about manuscripts? What about text? And so if we start talking about can we trust scripture? And I'm about to get to a good time of questioning.

I'm going to be really quick here. Can we trust it? There is more manuscript evidence. We call them extant manuscripts for the scripture than anything else. If you look at every other writing historically, average writings have about four feet in height.

If you were to take their manuscripts and stack them up, they have about four feet in height of existing manuscripts. If you were to take the New Testament alone and stack the manuscripts we possess for the New Testament, they would measure over one mile.

[32:17] If you would take the manuscripts we have for the New Testament, it's one and a half miles. And that is, if you were to take all the manuscripts that we have for the Old and New Testament together, it is over two and a half miles tall compared to the four feet of every other historical writing.

I mean, do you doubt that Shakespeare wrote *Tempest Tossed*? Probably not. But the amount of manuscripts that he has when stacked on top of one another, historical manuscripts, fails in comparison.

What about Homer? Do you doubt that he wrote the *Iliad*? Probably not. Why? Because you were told in school that's who wrote it. But when you stack the manuscripts up, it's about four feet tall, but when you stack the Bible up, it's two and a half miles tall.

To put it another way, if you look at this one, these dots represent how many manuscripts you have. That's Homer's *Iliad* right there. You can't really tell it, but you see the length of the line. So the length of the line beside it would tell you how long it transpires before the first manuscript shows up on the scene.

The New Testament's line is very close, so I wish I could make this a little bit better for you, but each of these dots represent an existing manuscript we have for that writing. And when you look at the dots this way, the best attested one historically of any other world writing is the *Iliad* by Homer.

[33:38] And you see how many dots he has, but look at the New Testament alone, almost 24,000 discovered manuscripts for the New Testament as we have it.

So when we look at it that way, the bottom line is the Bible that we have from Genesis to Revelation is the most accurate and reliable historical text man has ever known. Whether or not you believe it or not, it's the most accurate and historical text that man has ever known.

When judged by the same criterion every other writing is judged by. There's no doubt. It is. We can confidently say and affirm that it is both complete and trustworthy.

We look at the testimony of history, we look at the testimony within the text, and so the only question that we need to ask to this earth is what then should be our response to the Bible? If it is the most accurate text that we have, the only question we really ask is then how do we respond to it?

So we get into that. That gets us into modern translations, and I'm going to make this one really quick. I could spend a lot of time on this one. So what about modern translations? Understand this. I believe in inerrancy of Scripture.

[34:51] That is, it is without doubt absolutely accurate. But Scripture is inerrant in its original language. Okay? What were those languages?

Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. I could go to the back right now in my office, and I can get you a Hebrew and Greek Bible, and I can hand it to you. If you could read it, you will be reading inerrant Scripture.

I can't read it. It's still Greek to me, and I just can't do it. But I have them. But it is inerrant in its original language.

That's important. Because anything other than Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek is a translation. It is. Jerome was the first to translate the Bible, and he translated the originals into Latin.

We know it as the Vulgate around A.D. 400. That became the official book of the church for about a thousand years. The first English translation did not show up until 1380 when John Wycliffe translated the Latin into English.

[35:58] So he used the Vulgate, and he translated it into English, and then he was killed for it because the Roman Catholic Church used the Latin Vulgate. Now that's important because by the time that Wycliffe shows up on the scene, the common man can't read and can't interpret it and can't understand Latin.

So the congregation was dependent upon the priest who would read the Vulgate and interpret it for them and tell them this is what it means. They didn't have a copy of it in their own language.

They didn't have anything, so they were just completely for a thousand years, the church was dependent upon someone reading the Vulgate, Jerome's translation from A.D. 400. In the 1400s, because of the spread of Islam militants in certain parts of the region, there were some Greek

manuscripts that were found.

The Greek manuscripts started showing up on the scene, and the Greek manuscripts started being compared. There were also scholars in England and London about that time that started studying, and so they knew Greek.

They understood Greek, and they could read Latin, and so they began to compare the Greek manuscripts that were discovered and the Latin Vulgate as they had it, and they found numerous inconsistencies in the original Greek and Jerome's translation into Latin.

[37:14] Why? Because it had been translated, it had been rewritten, rewritten, rewritten, rewritten, rewritten. The printing press wasn't invented by them. It was in the 1400s, so it was just hand-copied, hand-copied, hand-copied for a thousand years, and so by the time the Greek manuscripts show up on the scene, even the Vulgate is like, wow, there's a lot of inconsistencies here.

People started getting word of that, so then we see that William Tyndale begins to translate from the Greek. He's a scholar who took the Greek. He's the first one to translate the English New Testament. He was martyred before he got the Old Testament done, and he did that in 1526. He translated the original Greek. He bypassed the Vulgate because they figured there were a lot of inconsistencies in it, and so he was using the newly found, though there were few, Greek manuscripts to bring about an English translation.

That continued. Let's go on, go to the next one. There we go. That continued the translation after Tyndale's martyrdom.

His friends continued doing it until they finally got a copy of the Bible for all to read and understand. In 1611, actually it was about 1607, King James of England said, well, there's this great shift historically that starts happening.

[38:29] You have the English church, you have all these different things that are showing up, the Church of England versus the Roman Catholic Church, and so the Church of England needed a translation, or they wanted an English translation, so he authorized a committee of about 47, 48 people to translate the Bible into English, and they were leading scholars.

We don't want to do that, so they were given this thing to bring about the King James version of Scripture. We refer to it as King James. There were originally two printing presses at that time that were printing the copies of Scripture, and most of us don't know this, but the two printing presses were printing two different locations, and when they reconciled the two, they were called the he and she translations.

Some of them would put he where others put she. There were 200 variations between the two when they first came out, and so they said, well, we've got to reconcile this, we've got to figure that out, the church was really striving.

Over the next few years, there were numerous revisions because of the changing English language. There were literally words invented in the English language in its first English translation. That's why it was used as a textbook, not only around the world, but also in our own land, because first it was the only book that was being published, and it was being printed, and it was the only book that you could say that everybody had a copy of, and it was the one that really some words were invented in the English language to define what was going on in the Greek.

[39:53] The words like redemption and things like that are defined simply because of the English language. That's not unique to the King James. William Carey went to India as a missionary. He put the Sanskrit language, he created an alphabet for it, for the whole purpose of making a Sanskrit Bible for the Indian people, and William Carey is attributed to developing and originating the Sanskrit language for the people of India even today simply because he put the Bible in their own language.

Everywhere the Bible went, it not only instructs people how to live, but it encourages them as a community and it helps them develop a language. So today the most widely used King James, if you have a King James version with you today, it is beautiful and it is poetic and it is the 1679 edition more than likely, but that edition differs in thousands of places from the original.

And the reason it does is because from 1611 to 1769, the English language had changed. And the change in the English language dictated that they changed some of the wording.

If you were to look at the intent of the early translators and read the preface of the 1611 King James Bible, which I did, I've done it years ago, I'm the guy who reads the preface in all the Bibles I get, the intention of the translators was that it would be in the most up-to-date modern English language so that the boy behind the plow could have as much, if not greater knowledge of Scripture than the churchmen of his day.

They wanted it in marketplace language. And the translators themselves in the preface of the 1611 edition said, this manuscript needs to continue revisions and translations as the English language changes.

[41:36] So with this in mind, the preface of these Bibles continue to ongoing translations. They were using, they went from the Greek and Hebrew, but they were using the scrolls that were found in the 1400s.

In 1946, a shepherd boy is walking through the wilderness, he throws a rock into a cave and he discovers what we refer to as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls are the most extensive discovery of ancient biblical manuscripts that has ever been discovered.

The book of Isaiah exists in almost its completion. It is the oldest manuscript of the book of Isaiah, which by the way, when reconciled with Isaiah that you have in your scripture, is 98% accurate.

So we can trust the hand scribing. And so they find these scrolls, so now they have at their hand older manuscripts, older and more manuscripts, more Greek manuscripts than anyone in history has ever had, and that was in 1946.

So today's translation used these later discoveries along with a thing called textual criticism. Textual criticism is not a bad thing, that just means they're reconciling the Greek manuscripts that are found with the Greek manuscripts they already have, and with the archaeology manuscripts that are found elsewhere, and they continue to reconcile and make sure they get the best understanding of the Greek, and they are adapting them to the changing English language.

[42:54] Because as the English language changes, so do the translations. Last slide. So how do you choose a translation? Our English translations today can vary from one to another.

If we were to go across the room, we just want to have them. And I want you to know that I'm not putting any one of them down, but I'll tell you why I do mine. I use the New American Standard Bible, that's mine, or the Legacy Standard. They're essentially the same thing.

The Legacy Standard is actually an updated version of the New American Standard. You need to understand what type of translation you have. Some translations, King James, New King James, New American Standard, Legacy Standard, they are word-for-word translations.

So the Greek word is literally translated into an English word. They are word-for-word translations. Then there are the thought-for-thought. NIV is a classic example of the thought-for-thought. So whatever this verse was implying, we want to put it in thought form in English word.

So there's a thought-for-thought translation. Then you have the paraphrase or simplified. That is the message translations. And may my challenge be to you to stay away from that third one. Really go more towards the first one.

[44:00] That's my, but I'm not dogging the NIV, but it's a thought-for-thought. But if you're going to study it, you want to study it as close as you can, it's an original language. So the closest you can do that in English is the word for word.

So look for translators by committees, not by individuals. I have some Bibles in the back that one individual translated, and I read them just because I am kind of curious to see what he thought about it.

But look for translation by committee. Read the preface of your Bible. Find out if it was a committee who did it. Find one that is accurate to the original languages, and one that you can read and understand.

And the best translation, really, of Scripture is the one that you will read, the one that you will study, and the one that you will learn. Okay, that's the best one. And it's pretty straightforward.

That is a grand overview of Scripture. We didn't even get into all the historical, archeological, some of the greatest archeologists throughout the years have said the Bible was inaccurate, and then they go put a spade in the ground and came back later and said it was Sir William Ramsey, the

greatest archeology who's ever, most people believe has ever existed, said that Luke is the historian of utmost sense, probably the greatest historian to ever write.

[45:11] And he was an agnostic who believed in Darwinian theology prior to all of his discoveries, and he said, man, everything Luke said was right. And he ended up coming to faith in Christ simply because when he started digging in the ground, he could not deny with everything Luke had named in his gospel.

Any questions? That's a lot of information. Any questions? Ha ha, 1050. That's a lot of information, right? It is the Bible, and it is trustworthy, and it is complete as we have.

Yes? People ask me all the time, well, what about the gospel of Judas? Could you give a quick, brief reputation to anyone who wants to speak about that? Ah, well, so it's one of the lost gospels. Yeah, again, it wasn't acknowledged or accepted by any of the early church. And people point to it and say, oh, well, it has all these great truths, and it kind of leans on the side of Gnosticism. It leans in that theory of secret knowledge. These are some of the things that you didn't understand and everybody was trying to keep from you, and it came up during the Gnostic time, the rise of that. So really, you have to go back to the historical writings.

[46:26] You have to go back to the early church fathers and the consistency. Even though they weren't consistent in their theology, so to say, they were at least consistent in their acceptance of certain gospels and their refutation of others.

And so we can't deny all that. Now, if we have one group of people, say, War Trace Baptist all got together and say, oh, well, we're going to deny this, then that would be one thing. But when you have people from various backgrounds and in various places and various churches, all of them saying, ah, it's not right, it's not there, then really we have to kind of just agree with that and say, well, it may be a good read, but we don't want to give it the prominence of scripture and we don't want to give it that place.

There are writings, as Jerome said, for the church. I mean, today you have, I mean, I have thankfully because someone has highly blessed me. If you walk in my office, there are hundreds of books in my office and I can read all of them and learn something from some of them, but that doesn't mean that they're all scripture.

I mean, they all have their fallacies, they all have their weaknesses and they all have their shortcomings. Yes. So you're saying that in the original language that there is scripture as no error. Can you give an example of, I guess, English in the English language where we might see or we might bring up what they see as there?

Hmm. Good. Good question. It's a great question. You suck guys ask great questions, by the way. Give an example. So one of the classic is, what about the word love? When you have it in your English language, we read love, love, love, love, love.

[47:59] The classic example is that when Jesus restores Peter and he asked him three times, Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you love me? When we read that, we're like, man, Jesus is being so redundant. He's just asking the same question over and over.

In the original Greek, there are five different words for the word we translate love. And Jesus asked him two of them. He asked him the first time, Peter, do you agape me?

Which means, do you love me with a sacrificial type of love that you will lay your life down for me? And Peter says, Lord, you know all things you know that I phileo you. I love you like a brother. It should be easy for us to remember that one.

That's Philadelphia. And so then Peter, Jesus asked him again, Peter, do you agape me? Lord, you know I phileo you. And then the third time, Jesus says, Peter, do you phileo me? Do you love me like a brother?

And then Peter says, yes, I love you like a brother. So what he was trying to do, Christ is asking him, Peter, do you love me enough that you would give your life for me and die for me? Peter wouldn't acknowledge that. He said, I love you like a brother.

[48:54] And it's not a shortcoming of Peter. Peter was just realizing, by the way, agape love in scripture is always attributed to God. For God so loved the world, he's so agape that he loved intentionally and did something about his love, gave his son so that whosoever believes in him

will not perish but have everlasting life.

And so that's, you get into that, it's not necessarily inaccurate but it can be misunderstood when we read it in English because it just seems to be a little off.

We don't get the full weight of it. And that's why it's good to have, you know, there are great aids with studying Greek, by the way, and Hebrew. There are great aids. You don't have to know it. There's some great things that you can go back and read those words and read the definitions of them.

Anything else before we? Can I talk about the New American Standard? Yes? I use the 95 edition. Okay? Let me get to you in just a minute here. Because, it's a good one by the way, too. I use the 1995 New American Standard because it's a little bit wordy, a little bit lengthy, which it didn't condense anything down.

[50:13] I don't think New American Standard ever went gender neutral. NIV did go gender neutral in the 2011 translation where they took the masculine affirmation of God and made it feminine and just kind of made it gender neutral because, you know, God is neither male nor female.

So, I understand why they did it, but still, how do you refer to a Heavenly Father in a gender neutral manner? But, the best updated version of the New American Standard Bible would be the Legacy Standard Bible.

So, the Legacy Standard Bible, the LSDB, is put out by 316 publishers, which would be John MacArthur and their publishers. They took the New American Standard and made it even more literal, which means they translated the word Lord to Yahweh.

When the New American Standard referred to, Paul referred to himself as the bond servant, they literally put the word slave in there because the word is actually doulos in the Greek, which means slave. By the way, that was kind of in the King James version.

That's how they kind of softened that up a lot. Are you going to tell the king he's the slave of Christ or do you want to tell him he's the servant of Christ? So, they translated it servant, not slave. They kind of softened the Greek just a little bit based upon the audience that was coming before them.

[51:23] So, yeah, I like the 95 edition and the Legacy Standard Bible is the two that I like. And I don't go any later in my New American Standards than the 95. That's mine.

Any other? Yes? I know that the King James Version does not have to be popular. Right. So, the King James Version, can you cut the lights on for me, Colt?

And so, one of the arguments that you will find for the King James Version is that, well, the King James Version has no royalty, attached to it. And so, the Bible should never have to be paid to be published. And I don't mean this in any disrespect, in any disregard.

But the reason they don't have to pay royalties on the King James Bible is simply because the King James Version came out before copyright laws came into existence. It's the same reason anybody can print a writing of William Shakespeare.

It's the same reason anybody can print a copy of Homer's Iliad. They are not copyrighted because copyright laws were not in existence. And since they originally printed before copyright laws, you cannot post-date or back-date and copyright something that was never originally copyrighted.

[52:28] Now, with that being said, it was also funded by the King. And so, the King funded it so the interpreters, while they were scholars, were dictated by the King's funding.

That does not mean they were wrong. It just means they were backed. So, today's, no longer do Kings or governments fund interpretation. New American Standard, which I like real well, is the Lachman Foundation.

The Lachman Foundation does have royalty. You have to pay to copyright a New American Standard Bible. But it's because the Lachman Foundation has to be funded by something. And so, it was funded by every book published today's copyright laws.

And again, I don't mean this disrespectful. And I'll say this as cordial as I can. I have noticed as well that everyone that says King James only, because it's not bound by laws, when they write a book, they copyright that book.

And they don't want anybody reprinting their book without paying them royalties. Just a thought.

Well, two, they say that if it's not copyrighted, that it has to be changed like 10% of the words in it.

[53:32] Right. Right. So, if I was to reprint and republish the New American Standard, I can print up to X amount of verses without paying a royalty fee. But if I wanted to print the whole Bible, then I'd have to change it by 10% or I'd have to pay the royalty to Lachman Foundation because that is their translation.

So, I cannot reprint their Bible without paying them a royalty because they paid and they funded for that translation. So, yes. But I can print, I mean, I could publish, I could put in a flyer like this up to a certain number of verses of the New American Standard without paying any royalty fee.

But to do the whole Bible, I would have to have, quote, unquote, my own interpretation or my own translation. Yeah. And so, that's where the copyright laws come in. Yeah. Yes. Yes. I think for taking this time to share so much about the Bible.

My biggest takeaway is something I've covered with is this question of whether the Bible is infallible. And so, I'm hearing this distinction between infallibility and trustworthiness.

And that's really essential to really thinking about the Bible. I have a question of having, it would be interesting to explore as what makes it trustworthy and, you know, comparing different generations and what things are not trustworthy.

[54:50] Right. Yeah. And that would take a little bit more discussion. You're exactly right. And there are reasons we can trust infallibility and trustworthiness of Scripture. I couldn't include them all today.

But, yeah. It's, again, if we go back, we don't doubt when we read any other historical writing that this is what that author wrote. And we don't doubt this is how they wrote it.

Yet, we don't have as much manuscript evidence for any other writing in history other than Scripture. So, one of the greatest things that happened is when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found and the whole scroll of Isaiah was intact and they unscrolled Isaiah, the Isaiah that had been printed for all that time matched up exactly with the Isaiah that was found and buried in that scroll.

But that scroll dated to the late B.C.s, early A.D.s. So, it was not a recent scroll. It was an old scroll. It was the oldest manuscript of Scripture ever found.

But yet, what we have found is that, you know, the translations were exactly the same. So, they kind of affirmed the trustworthiness of what we have, that this is what the original author wrote. This is what they put down.

[55:59] I got to have one more and then we're going to be done. Yes? Now, why wouldn't it fall into public domain after a certain period of time? Because, what, in translations?

Just because of copyright laws. I mean, I guess over a certain amount of time that it would, but they continue to update those copyright laws over and over again. Yeah. And it all goes back to, and I get it.

I know the King James Version, you can publish and you can print as many copies if you want to and never pay royalty. And that's awesome. And that's why it's utilized so much and I praise God for that. But the reason you can is because it has no copyright laws attached to it.

It was funded by the King of England and so therefore, nobody needed any royalty. Let me pray with you. It's 11 o'clock. We're going to have to take just a few minutes and get back together.

Father, thank you so much for the day. Thank you for the opportunity to be together and Lord, we just praise you and we glorify and honor you in all that we do.

And that's in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.