

Revelation: God Speaks

Lecture Transcript

- We started with the doctrine of the Trinity that God is Father, Son, and Spirit. What that means is that God communicates. And He communicated before He created anyone or anything. God is a God who relates and communicates. And so when it comes to the doctrine of revelation, what we're asking is, how does this God who communicates, Father, Son, and Spirit, how does He communicate to us? And so I'll start by telling you, the best physical gift I've been given in my whole life is this Bible. I was raised in a nominal church going home. And I thought, I kind of knew the Bible. I didn't read it. I didn't really know it. I never really had one. Didn't pay much attention. And then in high school, Grace, my now wife, she gave me this as a gift. And it was it was a Bible had my name on it. I actually read this so many times and turned the pages so often that I had to have it restitched rebound. So this is not the original cover that had my name on it. And I started reading it in college as a freshman as I'm taking philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology and history. And the first thing I come to realize is, God seems to think that this is the authority that I should be under. 'Cause as I'm reading it, I'm thinking, okay, this doesn't agree with me. It disagrees with me. And it led me to this sort of conflict with the Word of God. And this was really the ultimate decision for me. And I just decided, okay, this book says it's from God and perfect. And I'll show you where it says that in a moment and I'm going to do one of two things with this. I'm either going to say, "You know what? "There are parts I don't like. "There are parts I disagree with. "There are parts that I think need to be edited." There's a guy who did that. His name is Thomas Jefferson. He sat in the White House, he took a copy of the New Testament, and he cut out the miraculous portions and controversial portions, and he edited it down to what he called the Philosophy of Jesus Christ. And I decided in college that I was going to come under the authority of God's Word. That if I disagreed with the Word of God, the goal would not be to try and change what God said, but to try and change how I think and how I behave. And so for me, I try to live my life by the grace of God under the authority of the Word of God. And I need God to speak to me and speak into my life and speak into my circumstances. And thankfully we have a personal relational God who does that. And that is what is meant by this doctrine of revelation. So I'll deal with revelation in general as a category and then the revelation of God's Word. And so when we're talking about revelation, the first question is, "What is revelation?" Well, it's God's way of communicating to us. And you think about this, how insatiable is the human appetite for communication and information? It's unbelievable. I mean, how many of you, you've got your phone? Think of all the ways that you can communicate and transfer information. You're like, I could text, I could email, I could call. I could post on a social media platform. I could download an app. We could communicate in those ways. It's amazing to me that the vast majority of technological developments are for one purpose: communication. People wanna know, and they wanna be known. And because we're made by a God who knows and graciously allows Himself to be known. And so this insatiable appetite for information, it reveals that we were made by God for the purpose of communication. And so as you start into the Bible in the opening chapters, how does everything come into existence? God speaks it into existence. We'll get into that in creation in the next lecture. But 10 times in the opening chapters of Genesis, God said, God said, God said, God said. 10 times it says, "God said," and then things happen.

The point is that the Word of God brings the authority of God and it brings change into everything that God made and everyone that God made. What that means is there is life-giving power in and through the Word of God, and that is how God gets His work done is through His Word. And so categorically, I'll say that there are two categories of revelation, general revelation, special revelation. Let me deal with general revelation. It's a creation. It's conscience and it's providence. First is creation. Romans 1:19-20. "What can be known about God is plain to them, "because God has shown it to them. "For His invisible attributes, "namely, His eternal power and divine nature, "have been clearly perceived, "ever since the creation of the world, "in the things that have been made. "So that they are without excuse." Just like a painting tells us something about the painter, or a building reflects something of the architect, so creation is an echo of the attributes of God. That's what He's saying. So as we look at creation, we see that God is orderly. We see that God is living. We see that God is beautiful. The Bible used the word "glorious" to explain the beauty of God. One of the things that I love moving to the Valley with the family, is the massive sunsets and the big sky. I love seeing monsoon season when the lightning strikes and everything lights, it's magnificent. It's like, God is powerful. God is creative. God is glorious. God is thunderous. God is majestic through creation. Now, what that means is that general revelation through creation, it is God's way of always revealing Himself around us. But, general revelation is general in that it is less specific though it is widely available to all people. And so general revelation includes creation around us. It also includes the conscience in us. That's the next point. Romans 2:14-15. "When Gentiles," that's non-Jewish people, most of us, "who do not have the law," you didn't grow up with the Old Testament, "by nature do what the law requires..." Have you ever met somebody that doesn't know the Bible but they're a pretty moral person? So how does that work? "They are a law to themselves, "even though they do not have the law. "They show that the work of the law is written," where? "On their hearts and in their conscience to bear witness "and their conflicting thoughts accuse or excuse them." What he's saying is, in addition to creation around us, God put a conscience in us that shows us the moral character and nature of God. And because of the conscience that God made, even though we're sinful and fallen, we'll get into that in the doctrine of the fall, there still is this sense of right and wrong that's just woven into humanity. So any culture you go into, murder is bad. Stealing is not good. And even people who don't believe that there is a God or a moral law, as soon as they feel that they've experienced injustice, they appeal to it. That's wrong. You can't do that. It's like, if you don't believe that there is an authority that is over all of us, then how can you appeal to it if you deny it? Because the conscience in them is so strong. They just know that they know that they know that it's wrong. That's the conscience senior. How many of you lived by your conscience before you met Christ, and then you had a full revelation of what it meant to live in relationship with God? So general revelation is creation around us. It's conscience in us and it's God's Providence over us. And He says this in Acts 14:17, "He did not leave Himself without witness "for He did good "by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, "satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." What he says is this, God is nice to people. God is generous to people. God is gracious to people. God blesses people. God makes them healthy, gives them a job, puts food in their fridge, puts a car in their garage, puts a baby in the bassinet. God is really good to a lot of people. God is good to all people and all people have not been that good to God. And that reveals to us that there is a God who is over our life. And so when it feels like blessings and gifts and provisions have been

given, they have. James says that every perfect gift comes down from above. That God is blessing and good to even His enemies. 'Cause He knows that it's His kindness that leads to repentance. So this is general revelation. It's available to everyone, Christian and non, but it doesn't give us specific information about God, and it doesn't give us sufficient information to be saved. That requires special revelation. This can be God working in a supernatural way. There are people in the Bible who have a dream. This is when you're in a sleep state and God reveals to you the future because God is sovereign over and foreknowing of what is to come. Sometimes this is a vision which is kind of like a dream, but you're awake. I've had dreams and visions. God has spoken to me many times in my life in this way. And when I get a vision, I literally see the future and God is revealing it to me. God is revealing it to me. God does that in supernatural ways. Sometimes God works through an angel and we see angelic visits in the Bible. We'll get into this later but angels appear more than 300 times in the Bible. There is perhaps roughly only one handful of the 66 books of the Bible that don't mention an angel. They're common in God's communication. God also speaks specifically and specially through Jesus. Hebrews 1:1-2, "Long ago, at many times, "and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, "but in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son." So Jesus is the Word of God. And He brings the words of God to the world. So if you wanna know, what's God saying, well, the thing that He's saying is, Jesus. And once you get to Jesus you've got the message 'cause you've met the messenger. And then also, this is where we'll spend a lot of our time, special revelation includes scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is breathed out by God." It's God's way of communicating. Just as God breathed life into our first father, Adam, so God breathes life into His Word and breathes life into us through His Word. It's a life-giving breath of God. So what I wanna do is I wanna talk about the scriptures. What are the scriptures? The Bible is, for those of you that are perhaps new, it's actually a library of 66 books, 39 books in the Old Testament, which is about 2/3 of the content of the Bible. 1/3 of the Bible is what it's called the New Testament. The Old Testament was before the coming of Jesus. The New Testament is the coming of Jesus and the commissioning of the Christian Church. It includes lots of different types of literature. If you're poetic, there are whole books that are songs like the book of Psalms. If you're one who's into more poetry, there is the wisdom literature Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Job, the book of James in the New Testament. There are legal documents. There are historical records. There are personal biographies. There's even love letters, like the Song of Songs is a series of love songs between Solomon and a gal who I think her name is Abishag, but they're writing love songs together and they make it into the Bible. So it's this massive constellation of genres of literature that are organized together. And so when you go to the Bible, you can get confused because it's in chronological order. It is organized like your local library by genre. So laws over here, prophets over here, poetry is over here, wisdom literature is over here, and it's organized. If you do wanna read the entire Bible, there are versions that put it all together in chronological order. So you could see the historical continuum and that might be fun for you. That being said as well, it is written over the course of about 1,500 years by roughly 40 authors in three languages, Old Testament primarily in Hebrew, New Testament in Greek, some portions in Aramaic. The authors live in Europe. They live in Asia. They live in Africa. It's a multicultural and global book. And as you read it, you may realize that there are chapters. Those chapter divisions were not added until the 1200s. You will then see that there are verses. Those verses were not added until the 1500s. For the same reason that your house

has an address, so people can find it. So when you're reading the Bible though, just because there's a chapter, a verse, doesn't mean that there is necessarily in the original text a stop or an adjustment or a pivot in thought. And so sometimes it's fun to read the Bible in versions that don't have any chapters or verses 'cause you tend to see the overarching narrative and the whole story unfold. And that's just another option for you. So then we'll start with this. What does Jesus say about the scriptures? The greatest teacher in the history of the world. I don't wanna light off all my fireworks too early. We're gonna get to Jesus in a few weeks, but we divide history by this man, Jesus, into BC, before Christ, and AD, Anno Domini, the year of our Lord. More books have been written regarding Him or songs sung to Him or paintings painted of Him than anyone who has lived in the history of the world. And our biggest holidays of Christmas and Easter are all about this Man. Time... Can't remember 'twas time or Newsweek, they called Him "Man of the Millennium." There'll be Man of the Year, Man of the Millennium. Well, I'll just tell you this, Jesus is the Man of every millennium. But what does Jesus say? What does the most significant Rabbi Teacher in the history of the world have to say? He talks about the scriptures. He says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets." He's referring there to the Old Testament. "I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." What Jesus is saying is, this book is about me. This book is ultimately about me and I'm here to fulfill it. So the center of scripture history and our church and I pray your life, is Jesus Christ. And once you understand Jesus, then all of God's Word starts to make sense to you. Now, that being said, He goes on to say, "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." We'll use language like, you dot every I and cross every T. That's the equivalent, culturally speaking, of what Jesus is communicating. And what Jesus says is, everything in here is absolutely true. And I come to fulfill everything that it promises and foreshadows. So everything in the Bible is ultimately pointing somehow to Jesus. You see kings, Jesus is our King. You see judges, Jesus is our Judge. You see priests, Jesus is our Great High Priest. You see a temple, Jesus is the presence of God on the earth. You see a sacrifice, Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Everything ultimately is pointing to the person and work of Jesus Christ. And He comes to fulfill everything that the scriptures promise. What's curious too, and I studied this when I was in college, 'cause a lot of my professors said, "Well, you know, Moses didn't write the Bible. Isaiah didn't write the Bible. Jonah didn't really happen. He didn't really go into a belly of a fish." And then I started reading, Jesus names Moses in Mark 7:10, Isaiah in Mark 7:6, David in Mark 12:36, and Daniel in Matthew 24:15, as authors the books of the Bible. He says, you know what? The books that Moses wrote, the books that Isaiah wrote, the book that are, or the book rather that Isaiah wrote, the book the David wrote, the book that Daniel wrote, those are the authors. Jesus tells us who the authors are. He also believed, Jesus did in some of the most debated and rejected parts of the Old Testament. So people will say, "Well, we can't believe in a literal creation account." Jesus says, "It's a literal creation account." And then Adam and Eve actually existed as historical people. Some people say, "Well, certainly you can't believe in something as crazy as the flood." You know that there was a flood and a boat and the guy named Noah, and Jesus says, "Well, as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the second coming of the Son of Man." Oh, Jesus believed in Noah. And that's okay. You certainly can't believe in Jonah that a guy went into a fish. Jesus says, "As Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the earth." So Jesus not only tells us

that the Word of God is true, He tells us that He is the centerpiece of all of human history and divine prophecy that He fulfills all of the scriptures. He tells us who the authors are. He tells us that some of the most debated and controversial events actually occurred. And dozens of times Jesus says this when He's in a debate, dialogue, or discussion, "It is written." And then He quotes a verse. And He quotes the Bible all the time. Satan comes to tempt Him four times, He quotes Deuteronomy. On the cross, Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He's quoting the Bible. And so Jesus is a Bible teacher. Jesus is a Bible defender. Two of my favorite texts on this, John chapter five, Jesus is arguing with the religious leaders in His day. I think it's around verses 38, 39. It's in John five. And they're arguing with Him. What He's saying is, "Here's what the Bible says." They said, "That's not our interpretation." They're arguing. Jesus says, "You diligently study the scriptures, "thinking that in them you'll find eternal life "that you fail to recognize "that these scriptures testify about me." What Jesus says is, "You don't understand the Bible unless you love me." 'Cause the whole point of the Bible is to get you into a loving relationship with Jesus. And then Jesus does this at the end of Luke's gospel in chapter 24 in two occasions after He rises from death, He's walking with some folks on the road, and it says that He opened the totality of the Old Testament, the law, the prophets, and then in one occasion the Psalms, and He explained how all of the scriptures were about Him. And so Bible teaching is Jesus-centered. Bible teaching is Jesus-centered because the Bible is not just instructions to live by, it's a person to live with. God doesn't just tell you what to do, He has a relationship with you to help you to walk in His will. And so that's how God communicates through special revelation. Now, what I wanna say is well, that when it comes to the Bible, it is unique and distinct in that it has one divine author in many human authors. No other book can say this. And when it comes to this, next slide, please. Many human authors, the Bible will tell us David, Joshua, Solomon, Nehemiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Hezekiah, Habakkuk, Paul, Peter, Luke, some of the books just tell us who the authors are. When it comes to the book of the Bible or a book of the Bible, it is either written by the prophet or the person to whom God spoke, or they are speaking orally and someone is writing it down like a court stenographer. And those are the two ways that we get the Bible. And the Bible actually tells us this. So Ezekiel 24, the book of Ezekiel, "In the ninth year, in the tenth month, "on the tenth day of the month..." Notice God is very specific. God says that people, times, and places exist and archeologists keep digging things up and finding it to be true. "The word of the Lord came to me." So he's gonna get a word from God. It's a revelation. "Son of man," what? "Write it down." What do you think Isaiah? Or excuse me, what do you think Ezekiel did? He was like, "Yes, Sir!" Like, Ezekiel, I have something to say, get a pen. Okay. I'm here. He's gonna write it down. That's how we get some of the books of the Bible. Paul says this in Corinthians. He says, "I'm writing this with my own hand." Tells us he's the author. Other times, someone is speaking, God is speaking through them by the power of the Spirit and someone else writes it down. Jeremiah 36:4 says, "Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, "and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah "all the words that the Lord had spoken to him." So where does the revelation comes from? It comes from the Lord. It comes through Jeremiah. And it's a written down by his scribe named Baruch. What I love is the Bible actually tells us how we got these books and how God works. So there are many human authors, but behind every book of the Bible is ultimately one divine author, and that is God. Number one, hundreds of times in the Old Testament, a memory brings to mind, there was an Old Testament scholar. I think his name was

Gerhard von Rad. And he went through and calculated. I think it was 221 times, if my memory is correct, where in the Old Testament, someone said, "Thus sayeth the Lord. Thus sayeth the Lord." "Thus sayeth the Lord." Hundreds of times. Well, that's saying that what I'm gonna say is God's message. That means that I am the mail deliverer. I am not the mail writer. God is writing the mail and the prophet is delivering the mail. Thus sayeth the Lord. In addition, number two, other statements like "thus sayeth the Lord," appear 3,800 times from Genesis to Revelation. 3,800 times in some form or fashion, somebody says, "Okay, here's what God said." Or God says, "Here's what I have to say." A couple of scriptures on the divine authorship. The divine authorship. 'Cause there's just an infinite number of books. Ecclesiastes said, "As of the making of books, "there is no end." But this is the only book that God wrote. And therefore it's a perfect book. And it's a divine book and it comes with God's power to change lives and alter destinies. 1 Peter 1:10-12, "The prophets," Old Testament, "who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours "searched and inquired carefully, "inquiring what person "or time the Spirit of Christ in them..." Who is that? Who's working in the authors of the Old Testament? The Spirit of Christ, who is that? That's the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ is working in them. The same Spirit who empowered the life of Jesus Christ is empowering the servants of the God of the Bible to write down the words of the Bible. "Was indicating when He predicted the sufferings "of Christ and subsequent glories. "It was revealed to them "that they were not serving themselves but you, "in the things that have now been announced to you "through those who preach the good news to you "by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, "things in which angels long to look." He said, boy, the angels were in heaven like, God, how's this all gonna work? Salvation and human history and redemption. And they were all sort of waiting on the edge of their seat, and then the prophets came filled with the Holy Spirit on behalf of God, telling the people in advance that Jesus was coming to save them. And so the prophets are speaking. He is saying, by the power of God, the Holy Spirit. He says this as well in 2 Timothy 3:16. And this is one of those very important verses that if as a Christian you have not committed it to memory, this would be a good one to do so. How much scripture? All! A lot of people will be like, scripture is God-breathed except for the parts that are wrong. No, all scripture is God-breathed. Like, well, I like the part about heaven. I'm not sure I like the part about anger and fornication and drunkenness. Well, I like the part about heaven. What portion of scripture is God-breathed? All of it. All of it. "All scripture is breathed out by God and it's profitable." It's helpful. It's for you. It's good for you. "For teaching, for reproof, for correction, "and for training in righteousness, that the man..." And that would include the man and or woman of God "may be competent, equipped for every good work." God has good works for you to do. He's gonna do a good work for you at the cross of Jesus, in you by the power of the Holy Spirit, and through you to bless and benefit others. And anything of God's work for you or in you or through you, it ultimately is dependent upon you understanding the Word of God and submitting and surrendering to the Word of God so that you can continually grow to be in the character of Christ. What I'm saying is, there is no Christian life without the Bible. There is no Christian maturity without the Bible. There is no Christian growth without the Bible. There's no revelation of God without the Bible. There's no full understanding of who God is, apart from the Bible. There's no real understanding of who we are, apart from the Bible. And one of the things that convinced me as an unbeliever to cross that line of faith and become a Christian in college, was prophecy. A dear pastor who I have high affection for, he took a whole semester and

walked me and a couple of other guys in a small group Bible study through the Old Testament. And I'm gonna share with you what he shared with me. And it is prophecy. So 700 years before Jesus is born, Isaiah, in Isaiah 17 says, "Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: "The Virgin will be with child and give birth to a son, "and will call him Immanuel." Which means what? God with us. This is on all of our Christmas cards. 700 years before Jesus is born, God speaks through Isaiah says, "Jesus is coming." How will we know it's Him? Well, His mom will be a Virgin. Oh, well that narrows it down quite a bit. Thank you very much. And He will be Immanuel, God with us. That's specific prophecy. 700 Years before Jesus was born, actually that might be a type of, if my memory is correct, it's 400 years mire. Micah 5:2, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, "though you are small among the clans of Judah, "out of you will come for me "one who will be ruler over Israel, "whose origins are from old, from ancient times." God says, "Okay, I'm sending Jesus. He's gonna be born of a Virgin. He'll be Immanuel, God with you. He is coming from ancient times. The language here in the original is eternity. He's eternal without beginning or end. So the creator God is entering into creation. The eternal God is entering into time-space continuum. And not only that, He's coming to a specific place. Where is that? Bethlehem. Bethlehem is a small little town. It's not a big deal. Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph was a descendant of a king named David. And what happened was, the Roman government wanted to have a census for tax purposes. So God's so good. He could work through governments and their taxes. That's how good God is. And so what happens is, they call a decree that everyone is supposed to go to their hometown or their family of origins and register for tax purposes. Well, being a descendant of King David, the hometown for Joseph was Bethlehem. Mary "just so happens," "just so happens" to be pregnant. Where does she live? Nazareth! Where does she need to go with her husband? I'll do it like this 'cause this is pregnant one. She goes to Bethlehem because the government makes her. I'll just tell you that women tend not to take long journeys on foot or camelback when in the third trimester. And she happens to arrive in Bethlehem just in time to give birth to Jesus so the prophecy would be fulfilled that He'd be born in Bethlehem, not in His hometown of Nazareth. See, to me, as I started to learn this, my thought was, well, if God didn't write this, who did? 'Cause I wanna know who they were. That's amazing. How many of us would love to know the future? How many of you fantasy football guys? You're like, yeah, every year I lose a lot of money 'cause I'm no good at predicting the future. God knows the future. God reveals the future. How about this next prophecy? Malachi 3:1, 400 years before Jesus was born, "I will send my messenger, "that's John the baptizer, "who will prepare the way before me." "Then suddenly..." Who's coming? The Lord. That's the Lord Jesus. "You are seeking will come to His temple, "the messenger of the covenant, "whom you desire, will come, says the Lord Almighty." So not only is He coming through a Virgin, He's going to ultimately show up in Bethlehem. At some point, He's gonna appear at a place called the temple. Question. Does the temple exist today? Answer, no. It was destroyed in 70 AD. AD Israel. It's gone. It was destroyed. So from 70 AD onward, this prophecy cannot be fulfilled because there is no temple for the Messiah to go to. I share this with my Jewish friends, whom I love. That ultimately whomever the Messiah, the Savior, the Emmanuel God with us is or was, He had to arrive historically before the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. That's specific. Amen. And then 1,000 years before Jesus even walked the earth, here's what it says in Psalm 22:16, "Dogs have surrounded me; "a band of evil men has encircled me, "they have pierced my hands and feet." Where was Jesus crucified? Hands

and feet. Now, crucifixion was invented by the Persians, but not yet. The Persians invented crucifixion, hundreds of years later, it was perfected by the Romans who persecuted Jesus. But here Psalm 22:16 is not just prophesying the crucifixion of Jesus, but is prophesying the invention in history that was still to occur of crucifixion itself. Specific! This is the book that God wrote and there is no way to account for its content apart from a divine author. Last two. 500 years before Jesus walks the earth, Zachariah 11:12-13 makes this prophecy, "They paid me 30 pieces of silver. "And the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the Potter.'" That was a portion of the temple, "of the handsome price," that is avenged, "at the very price which they priced me. "So he took 30 pieces of silver "and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter." Jesus is coming through a Virgin to the town of Bethlehem, will show up at the temple, and we're gonna crucify Him. And somebody is gonna put a bounty on His head for 30 pieces of silver. Who did that? Judas Iscariot. He betrayed Jesus. And then he took the money and he threw it into the temple. And it wasn't 29 or 31. It was 30 pieces of silver. This is unbelievable. This is God. It's supernatural. The last one, Psalm 16:10, 100 years before Jesus walked the earth. "You will not abandon me to the grave, "nor will you let your Holy One see decay." Jesus is gonna die and He's gonna go into the grave but He's not gonna stay there. He's going to resurrect triumphant and victorious over death in the grave. How many of you, your minds just exploded? How many of you are like, I can't believe that's all in there? And there's much, much, much, much, much, much, much more. So part of what I wanna do is I wanna create an appetite, an interest, a curiosity, an excitement so that you'll have this self-driven motivation, Holy Spirit-inspired, joyful pursuit of understanding of the Word of God. So then it leads to some questions. Okay. That's how we got the Bible. How do we get our version of the Bible? So, okay. So it was written in Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic. Now we have it in English or German or Swahili or whatever the case might be. The Bible is the most translated book in the history of the world. And Christians have gone into cultures that don't have written language, created written language, just so then we could translate the Bible into their language so they can read it for themselves. But it's, there's a process, think of it like stairsteps where God reveals Himself to you to speak to you about matters in your life and family. So there is God. And what He does is He reveals, He says, He communicates, He articulates. And then inspiration, the Holy Spirit inspires the servant of God to faithfully write that down. And what we get there is something called the autography. That's what the academics will call it. How many of you, you collect memorabilia? Rock and roll or sports memorabilia. It's more valuable if it has an autograph that's authenticated. What that means, it's a handwritten copy. So the autography is the original handwritten from the hand of the prophet or the servant of God that first book of the Bible, first copy, here it is 1.0. What happens then is, people hear God wrote a book. Well, I wanna read it. So now transmission is how we make copies. The printing press was not invented until Johann Gutenberg in the 16th century. And he was a Christian. And part of the creation of the printing press was to help get Bible teaching and God's Word out to people to read for themselves. But ultimately, before we had the printing press, the way that copies would be transmitted, let's just think of it in this way. I would function like a chief scribe and you would be scribes. So you would sit there with parchments or skins or whatever you were writing on, and I would read, I would read the original, and then you would write down copies. How many of you have testified in court, and there's a stenographer there who is catching everything? That would be your job. You would go to school for this. You would be trained for

this. And what we would do then, we would take your copy of the book and then editors would come along and they would count from back to front. They would look at all the punctuation. And if there was any problem of any sort or kind, what would we do with your copy? We would destroy it while you wept bitterly. Because that was a lot of work. Because it's God's Word, we're trying to get it perfect. What happens then is, the Word of God starts to go out and there's more copies available. And then other people are like, well, we wanna read it but we don't know that language. So we need to translate it into our language. This is where Christianity is different. Some religions like Islam, you need to learn the language of Arabic to understand the Quran. The Bible says in Revelation 5, that around the throne of Jesus will be all the cultures and all the nations and all the tribes and all the languages 'cause our God is a global multicultural bilingual God. And so the Bible gets translated. The Bible is now the most translated book in the history of the world. As I said, previously, many cultures now have a written form of their language solely because the Christians wanted them to be able to read God's Word in their native tongue so that God could speak to them. We'll talk about translations in a moment. And then it comes to interpretation. You're opening it up. And what you will need is to have the Holy Spirit help you to learn the book that He inspired to be written. Studying the Bible is a supernatural encounter. It's a sacred spiritual endeavor where the same Spirit of God who inspired the writing of scripture, illuminates your understanding. And sometimes God will do this through good Bible teachers. And the Holy Spirit will work through them. And I would say, through memorizing, studying God's Word for yourself, the Holy Spirit is happy to meet with you, and He's happy to help you understand what He intended to say. And one of the reasons I love teaching through books of the Bible and stuff, I want people to get some confidence that I can read the Bible for myself. I can learn it for myself. I can study it for myself and I can grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with men and God like Jesus. And what happens then is application. There's lots of applications. So the Bible says, "Husbands love your wives." What does that mean? You better ask her. 'Cause every woman is different. Amen. And what one woman thinks is loving may not be what the next woman thinks is loving. I brought you flowers. I don't care. Take the garbage out. That's not my thing. Those are applications of the principle in Ephesians 5, "Husbands love your wives like Christ loved the church "and gave Himself up for her." Love her and serve her. There are many applications. And so this is how God ultimately reveals His will through His Word to transform your life. And this has taken thousands of years of history and it is amazing supernatural process. And so you and I are blessed to be able to sit down and not only read the Word of God in our language, but with multiple, various kinds of translations. So that leads to the next question. Why are there different Bible translations? How many of you have wondered this? And you're like, I don't know which one's good. Well, it's kinda like ice cream. Everybody's got their favorite flavor but they're all pretty good. And I like to say that there are four translation philosophies that drive taking God's Word from the original language to a different language. One is word for word. And this is because words matter. And when you're dealing with specific attributes of God or legal documents or historical details, how many of you work in industries? You're lawyers, you deal with contracts, you're negotiators, and you know that specifics really matter? Somebody can't come in and say, "Well, you know, I know I signed it "but that's not really what I meant to agree to." Like, it doesn't matter. That's what it says. So there are things that have to be word for word. Literal translation. This would be the English Standard Version, the older King James

Version of the Bible, which doesn't have the more modern manuscripts that were found in the dead sea scrolls. And so it's not the best. It's a good old copy. The New King James Version and something called the New American Standard Version or the New American Standard Bible. Those would be your more literal word for word translations. Now, others will come along and say, "We also need to consider thought for thought." How many of you have taken something and put it into Google translator? There was an article written on me some years ago in Germany, around the reformation. And it was this German article and I was trying to figure, okay, what does it mean? I don't know German, so I plugged it into a Google translator and it just read really clunky and crazy. Sometimes when you're doing a literal translation, you kinda miss the nuance. Parts of the Bible are poetry. You, Spock can't do a great job with poetry. Amen. You're like, he got all the facts but he sorta missed the whole waka waka of the whole thing. He missed the whole heart, the whole art of the whole thing. So they'd say, "Well, thought for thought is, "we wanna go word for word "but there are times that we'll add a word "or well, make an adjustment to give the nuance "and the meaning and the flow of the original." And that would include the New International Version, the New Living Translation, and the Contemporary English Version. Others would be paraphrases. And those are more like commentaries. They're not pretending to be absolutely faithful word by word, but they are more just trying to give the big concepts with creative language, more like you would read a Bible commentary. This would be for example, The Message, which doesn't even have chapters or verses 'cause it's not pretending to be a clean translation. This would include the Living Bible, the Amplified Bible, something called the Voice. Those are paraphrases. My recommendation, I like to study in a word for word, I like to read in a thought for thought, and I like to use paraphrases like commentaries. I use all of them. But I tend to preach out of a word for word. And then I'll bring in some of the others to help explain. But that's just my preference. There is category four also, something that is not a translation but purports and pretends to be, and that's a corruption. The New World translation of the Bible is the translation that is used by the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, which is a cult. And there is some debate historically but it seems evident that those who did the alterations and the translation, did not know the original languages. And they began with a bias, meaning they didn't believe that Jesus is Yahweh God. So they systematically go through particularly the New Testament, and anything that shows that Jesus is God, they alter, rewrite, edit, or omit that. There's two places that they missed in Revelation. So that's where we start on my porch. But what I would say is, there are some versions that are corruptions. There are some more modern translations that have a problem with the Fatherhood of God. And so, our mother who art in heaven and Jesus isn't the Son of God, and so they're changing the very words of the Bible. Jesus said, "When you pray, pray like this, "our Father..." Not our mother, if you're offended by that, and Jesus is the Son of God, oh, or daughter of God if that feels better to you because of your women's studies degree. God doesn't, God doesn't, God doesn't adjust His language. He expects us to adjust our understanding to His revelation. So there are some corruptions that will take what God said and actually say something else. So that being said, let me hit a few common questions and then we'll go to Q and A. And what I wanna hit here is, I told you about the Word of God and the revelation of God, and then there are some objections that arise. And these are actually misconceptions. So I want you, number one, to have wholehearted full confidence in the Word of God. And some of you would say, "But I don't have the original copy." I'll tell you when Jesus

taught, He didn't teach from an original copy. He taught from a transmitted copy that had been passed down over time. And He had full confidence in it. And so can you. And that being said, what happens with some misconceptions about the Bible, these are actually objections. And these are quotes from a research project we did with this Christians might be crazy, but this is actually a quote from the focus groups. But this one is, "The Bible has been edited by too many people." Just it's almost like that telephone game. You say something and then they say it, and then they say it, and then they say it, and by the end, they're saying something totally different. Well, those who have gone back to the best ancient original manuscripts, would say that between 97 and 99% of the great New Testament can be fully reconstructed without any debate. The one to 3% that is potentially modified is simply a typo or a misspelling. And that zero Christian doctrines of any significance or note hinge on any text that is debated, should have had a comma or not, should have had a period or not, should have been in the perfect tense, the present tense, minor, minor, minor matters. And the more manuscripts that you have, you're able to then compare manuscripts. And if the vast majority have it spelled this way, and one has it spelled this way, we know that that person, though serving with good intent, they made an error because sometimes that's what we do. And this was greatly improved in 1947 with the discovery of something called The Dead Sea Scrolls. The story is told that a shepherd boy is out and he sort of enters into a cave and he finds all these earthenware vessels. And in them are 40,000 ancient documents and inscriptions that have been preserved in desert climate. This include parts of the Old Testament and a full copy of Isaiah. Well, now we have all of this manuscript evidence. And what I would say is, let's treat the Bible like we treat other documents. Let's treat the Bible like we treat those departments in the State University. And so if you look at Homer's work, the "Iliad," the date of its writing versus its earliest manuscript, is a 400 year time gap. In addition, what we're looking at in terms of total manuscripts is about 1700. How about this one? Plato, there is a 1300 year gap between Plato and the original and the earliest copy we have. A lot can change in 1300 years. And we only have 210 copies. When it comes to Caesar in the Gallic Wars, there is a time gap of 950 years, when it comes... And it's a time gap of more, and there's only 251 copies. When it comes to the New Testament, at most, there's a 40 year gap between the writing of the original and the earliest manuscript. It's remarkable. Some would say that there are fragments that are even earlier than a 40-year time gap. Carsten Peter Thiede in a book "Eyewitnesses to Jesus" and others, would denote that. But here's what we have. We have over 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament. So what I would say is, if you're gonna reject the Bible, then we gotta get rid of the histories department at the State University, the philosophy department at the State University, and anything that's dealing with antiquity. That we need to take the entire canon of Western literature and just simply dismiss it because it doesn't rise to the same level of credibility as the New Testament. And so if you're going to read Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, up amenities, Alexander the Great, any of the great philosophers, you have to also look and say, "The Bible has more credible evidence "that it is faithful to what the original said "than any other document that we have." Last couple, all here. The Bible has a lot of contradictions. My first question is always, "Where?" And if they have one, I'm gonna go do homework and answer it. And there's books by Norman Geisler and Gleason Archer and other scholars that actually go through and just answer some of the more controversial parts of the Bible. The Bible doesn't contradict itself because God doesn't contradict Himself. And some of the things that I've had

people debate with me over the years in contradictions, they're like, "Well, here it says there were two angels "and here there says there was three." "There is a contradiction." I'm like, "Well, if there's three, there's two. "It's not that big of a deal. There is a way to resolve this. Amen. Like, we've got five kids and if I said the three kids, and now, you got five kids. Yeah, which includes three. So, either way, this number of three is functional. So sometimes what can happen, is people will say it's got a lot of contradictions. Okay. Where? And if it's an actual objection, then it's good to go do the homework and say, "You know, that's a good question. "Let me go do my homework and bring an answer "and see if I can get you some clarity." Number three misconception, The New Testament is largely written by people who didn't even know Jesus. Is written hundreds of years later. Oh, it wasn't. James is an author of the New Testament. He's Jesus' brother. Wow! Jude is an author of the book of the New Testament. He was Jesus' brother. Some of the disciples who write like Peter, he was an eyewitness. And a guy like Luke, he goes out early in Luke, and he literally says, "I interviewed the eyewitnesses." And here's what 1 John said, "That which was from the beginning..." John is writing this. He was the youngest and the beloved of Jesus' disciples. "That which is from the beginning, which we have heard, "which we have seen with our eyes, "which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, "concerning the word of life, "the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, "and testify to it and proclaim it to you." What he's saying is, Jesus, I saw Him. Jesus, I heard Him. Jesus, I touched Him. So what I'm telling you is because I was there. You know what happened today out in front of the church, a bunch of cars slammed into each other and they all pulled over, and immediately they started gathering eyewitness testimony. There were eye witnesses to the life, death, burial, resurrection, ministry and instruction of Jesus. And John is saying, "I was there. "I was an eye witness. "I saw everything that I am telling you." And what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, he says that upwards of 500 people at one time saw Jesus alive, but in the time that He is writing that to the Corinthians, he says, "Though most are still alive, "though some have fallen asleep." What he's saying is, the massive crowds upwards of 500 that saw Jesus alive, it's been just a few years, and most of those people are still alive and you can find them 'cause they're going around on tour giving testimony. This is all very public. This is not very private. How about this one? There are some stories that are kept in and some stories that are kicked out. And this comes from a movie called "The Da Vinci Code." And let me just tell you, just 'cause Tom Hanks is in it doesn't mean it's credible. No. I mean, I like big. I appreciate that he landed the plane in the river. He did some good things. But just because Tom Hanks is in the movie doesn't mean it's credible. And what "The Da Vinci Code" does, it brings up this sort of superstitious myth that the the Bible was edited and lots of books were kept out and it was a big conspiracy. And what we're talking about here is something called canon which means measuring rods. So the question is, was it a prophet of God? Was there a miracle of God? Is it in harmony with the rest of God's revelation? Does it demonstrate the power of God? And is it accepted by the people of God? And so in the Old Testament, there was really no dispute. And when Jesus comes, the Old Testament is established. There's 400 years of silence between the last book of the Old Testament and then the coming of Jesus Christ that is called the intertestamental period or the 400 silent years. And in that time, some books are written that are called the Apocrypha. They are, that means "hidden or secret." These were not accepted as books of the Bible but they were popular among God's people. Today, in the Christian world, whether it's the rapture or angels, there are certain books that everybody buys. The Apocrypha

were like the hot best-sellers during the 400 years in the intertestamental period. They were not accepted as scripture, but some of them are like you would read a Christian book. It's not bad, but it's not Bible. Then comes Jesus and the writing of the New Testament. I believe that the New Testament is concluded around the 100 AD with the last living eyewitness, John the beloved, writing Revelation, John first and second, third John, and then the New Testament is concluded. Then there are hundreds of years and then some things called Gnostic Gospels are written. Some scholars will refer to them as something called the pseudepigrapha, which means pen name. What that is, it's a fake. So the gospel of Thomas, the gospel of Peter, they're not gospels. And they weren't written by Thomas and Peter. They were written hundreds of years later by people pretending to be Thomas or Peter. Let me tell you this. I'm not a rapper, but if I did release an album and I wanted to sell it, I would put Tupac's name on the front. Because then it would give an opportunity for some of the fan base to think that this is sort of a lost album that's been recovered. Well, what the pseudepigrapha was, it was counterfeits, it was forgers, it was fakers who were pretending to be the disciples, writing books, hoping to make them popular by stealing the authorial identity of the writers of the New Testament. And this would include certain statements and books like the gospel of Thomas, gospel of Barnabas, gospel of Philip, gospel of Judas, and the gospel of Peter. And I use that word in quotes, Peter, it says this, Jesus says, "Women are not worthy of life." So they're having this debate. Women can't go to heaven. So in the gospel of Thomas, Jesus says, "Well, then I'll make all the women into men "'cause men can go to heaven." If you just read these, they're almost like watching those alien abduction shows on the History Channel. You're like, they're interesting but they're crazy. And that's kind of how a lot of the pseudepigrapha work. And that is what leads to this misperception. And then what happens is, I'll just read it to you from my notes, the Bishop of Alexandria in 365 in an Easter letter, and then councils of Laodicea, Hippo, Carthage and Trent, all agreed on the canon of scripture. And some people will say, "Well, they didn't even decide "what books were in the Bible until this time." I would tell you, they already knew what books were in the Bible and there wasn't a debate until false teachers arose, and then they restated the decision they had already held. In the same way, there was not a debate in old day, or excuse me, in the history of the church on what marriage is. It was a man and a woman. Now it's a debate. And it's not like we're inventing the Bible's position on marriage, that has been established for a very long time. And we are just reaffirming what we have always believed. So it was with the canon of scripture. God's people knew what the Bible was and when the false teachers and heretics came and said, "We disagree," they went back to the conclusion that the church had already and previously held. So sure from Peter, but let me give you a quote from J. I. Packer. He says, "The church no more gave us "the New Testament canon "than sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. "God gave us gravity by His work of creation. "And similarly, He gave us the New Testament canon "by inspiring the individual books that make it up." What he's saying is, God made gravity, Newton discovered it. God wrote the Word of God and His servants confirm it. But we don't create the canon of scripture. We discover what God created. I'll close with this, 2 Peter 3:15-16. Peter is here. The highest human authority on earth. Spiritually speaking, he's always listed in the list of disciples first 'cause he's the leader of Jesus' disciples. And he's gonna write something. He says, "And count the patients of our Lord as salvation, "just as our beloved brother Paul." Paul, who's he? He writes 13, maybe 14 books of the New Testament. There's a debate as to the author of Hebrews. From Acts 13 to Acts 28,

he is the primary driving human force in the early church. Working with him as his traveling companion and doctor is a man named Luke, the beloved physician who writes Luke and Acts, so by sheer volume and content, the number one contributor to the New Testament is Luke, and the contributor of the largest number of books is Paul. So what we're saying here is, you get Paul, you get most of the New Testament. It all hangs together. "As Paul also wrote," in what? He says, Paul writes letters and everybody's like, okay, what is this? And Peter says, "Well, these letters are written by Paul, "and it's according to the wisdom given him. "He's telling you things that God has revealed to him. "He does this in all his..." What letters are those? First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, First, Second Thessalonians, Romans, Galatians. These are the books of the New Testament. "His letters when he speaks of them in these matters. "There are some things in them that are hard to understand." Peter says, "You know, I studied with Jesus for three years "and I read Paul and sometimes I just get a headache "and I can't figure it out." How many of you have ever read the Bible and be like, I believe it, I just don't understand? Don't feel bad. A guy who wrote the Bible said, "Man, when I read Paul, "I kind of get a little bit of a headache sometimes. "I'm not sure where he's going." And we still tend to fight in debate about the things that Paul wrote, predestination, head coverings, speaking in tongues, women in ministry. Those are all the cat meets hose section of the New Testament. There's a big debate there. "There are some things in them "that are hard to understand, "which the ignorant and unstable twist "to their own destruction, as they do the other..." Our beloved brother Paul has wisdom from God that he's writing down in letters and just like used to happen in the Old Testament, some false teachers will twist, malign, and misinterpret but this is what people always do with the brave minds to the scriptures. What is Paul writing? Scripture. Peter is declaring that scripture. So the issue of what books are in and out of the Bible didn't happen hundreds of years later, they knew right away, they knew right away. And so what I want you to know in closing is this, that this is the Word of God. It's the only perfect thing on the earth. The copy that you have, it's a faithful English translation. And there are now tools available if you wanna dig even deeper into the original languages. This is the book that God wrote because God loves you and God is relational and God communicates. And God wants to hear from you through prayer and He wants to speak to you through scripture. And lastly, let me tell you this, you have a soul. You're not just a physical material being, you're also a spiritual immaterial being. You have a soul. Your body needs food. Your body needs water. Your body needs air. Your soul needs the Word of God. The only way for the deepest, truest, most genuine and eternal part of you to be nourished, fed, and healthy is by the Word of God. So Jesus says that man does not live by bread alone but every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And so I want you to have healthy souls and nourished souls and hydrated souls and healthy souls and Spirit-filled souls. And for that to happen, you'll need to be in the Word of God so that the Spirit of God can get the Word of God into you. Amen. And I love you and that's what I want for you. And that's the best thing that God has for you.