

The Character of God's Word

Selected Scriptures

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We, as I said earlier, are going to embark this morning on a study of how to study the Bible, how to get the most out of your Bible. And to begin with, I want to ask you to turn to an Old Testament passage which will be a launch point for us, Jeremiah chapter 8, Jeremiah chapter 8 and verse 9. In the ministry of Jeremiah, one of the unhappiest assignments that he had as a prophet was to speak against the leaders of his nation who had misled the people. The prophets had failed. The priests had failed. The scribes had failed. The wise men of the nation had failed in leading them to the truth of God and to righteousness. And I suppose in a sense in Jeremiah 8:9 there's a summation of the tragedy of inept leadership.

Verse 9 says, "The wise men are put to shame. They are dismayed and caught. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord and what kind of wisdom do they have?" What Jeremiah is saying here is you can take all of your leaders, all of the educators, all of the experts on law and ethics and morality, all of those responsible to teach you divine truth and put them into one category and the category is the category of folly because if they had rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have? The implication is they don't have any. Wisdom comes from God and it comes through His Word and apart from His Word there is no real spiritual wisdom. When the leaders of a nation, even the nation Israel, reject the word of the Lord, there is no wisdom.

Last summer when I was invited over to New Zealand, I had the opportunity to speak to the New Zealand Parliament in the Parliament House. It was a very interesting and wonderful opportunity and they asked me to address this subject. This was the requested subject by the New Zealand Parliament: what happens to a nation that abandons the Bible as an authority or as its authority? They had watched because they know the history of the United States. They had watched the decline of the Scriptures and the Bible in the public realm in our nation and they could see it coming in their own nation, a nation basically established by immigrant people who came from the United Kingdom bringing Christian principles and biblical truth. And they're following the same basic path we're following, and they wanted to know what's it like when we give up the Bible as our authority? And the answer is right here in Jeremiah 8:9. "What wisdom do they have?" What they are left to is voting on morality, polls, opinion polls, call up 800 lines, 900 lines and give your opinion of this and your opinion of that so we can form our morality.

Wisdom with regard to spiritual life, time and eternity is all found in the Word of God. The Bible is the source and the only source of divine wisdom, and it is a tragic thing to realize that the Bible is under assault from so many, many angles. There are the rationalists with their anti-miracle humanistic atheism who want to deny the existence of God. And if they tolerate God, God is nothing more than Einstein's God who is some kind of impersonal, non-personal force. There are the existentialists who have an anti-reality mentality who say that you basic can create your own reality, you can concoct your own reality, you can form your own reality, and I'm glad for you, whatever your reality is. And

then you have the onslaught of not only rationalism and existentialism but egoism which is an anti-authority mentality that says nobody is going to tell me what to believe, nobody is going to tell me what's right and wrong, nobody is going to tell me how to behave. I'm going to determine that for myself. Then you have the relationalistic mindset that basically says what is most important is ego fulfillment, personal fulfillment, solving my personal problems, self-esteem, feeling good about myself. That too is anti-truth. That too is anti-standard, anti-absolute.

Then you have the ritualistic approach which is an anti-knowledge form of religion where religion is not a matter of truth or theology or doctrine, but simply a matter of ritual and routine. Then you have theological liberalism which is anti-Bible, anti-inspiration. Then you have mysticism which is anti-intellectual, which just says you sort of feel God and you sort of know He's there and feel somehow the movements of God and you feel the truth.

All of those things contribute in our culture to an anti-authority mentality which contributes to an anti-Bible mentality. The Scripture is depreciated by rationalism, existentialism, egoism, relationalism, ritualism, liberalism, mysticism, probably a few other -isms as well. These are the things that are being elevated today. The human glory is on the main forefront, letting man be everything he thinks he wants to be to fulfill himself. That is dominating. There is no authority outside man. Government itself is having a hard time exercising authority because it has given to people so much personal freedom. This approach to religion, the approach to religion that comes in this environment is an existential kind of mystical approach where you're allowed to believe whatever feels good for you, whatever you think God is doing is, no doubt, what He is really doing. Whatever you think He's saying is surely what He's really saying. All of these things attack the singular, clear authority of the Word of God.

Now you say, why are you bringing this up on a series about studying the Bible? Because I've learned one thing through the years, and it's been reiterated to me again and again and again. The diligence with which you approach the study of Scripture, which is so critical to the blessing of your life, so critical to your joy, so critical to your usefulness, so critical to the glory of God; the diligence with which you approach this critical study of Scripture is directly correlated to your view of Scripture, directly. If you have a weak view of Scripture, I promise you you will have a weak interest in it. It is the seriousness with which you hold this document that is the initial compelling matter to motivate you in its study.

People ask me often how it is that I can structure my life to spend so much time in the Scripture? How is it that I can discipline myself, they often say, to give so much time to the study of the Word of God, including all the preaching and teaching that I do, all the writing of books, writing of a study Bible? And that really is a fair question and I understand why they ask the question, but may I perhaps surprise you by saying this, the difficult thing for me is not to get the discipline up to study the Bible. The trouble for me is to have the discipline to stop and to attend to other things that need to be attended to.

You say, "Why is that?" Because I understand what this document is, because of the value I place upon it, the weight I place upon it in my life and in your life I am compelled to it. In fact I wrote a little set of notes, just explanatory notes in the front of the study Bible and you can read them when you get one, but it says something. I can't remember exactly what I said, but something along the line of the fact that the difficulty for me was not getting up every day and spending the necessary time to write all these notes and to dig into the Word of God, the difficulty for me was not getting to it, the

difficulty for me was leaving it. The challenge for me is to leave it because I hold it in such great esteem, because I understand its riches and its treasures. And as the psalmist said, "It is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey from the honeycomb."

It is your view of Scripture that is the foundation of everything in terms of addressing Scripture with great diligence and care. And so, as we begin to talk about how to get the most out of your Bible and how to study the Bible effectively, we have to start with making sure you understand what this is, the treasure that you hold in your hand.

Now, obviously, no society can survive without the application of the truth of Scripture, as no individual can survive without the application of the truth of Scripture. Right is not determined by a popularity contest, and it's not determined by a poll. It's determined by what God has said. And God has spoken in the moral and ethical and spiritual realm with very clear terms. No society will survive abandonment of the Bible as its standard, and ours won't anymore than any other. Our society will continue to disintegrate into unbridled iniquity at a rapid rate until and if, and unless I should say, there is a return to the Word of God. It's inevitable.

The Bible claims some amazing things for itself. I'm going to give you seven of them. These are things the Bible claims for itself and this will help you foundationally to understand what you're dealing with. You have in your hand one book and yet divided into two testaments. The first testament divided into 39 separate books, the second into 27. One called the Old Testament; one called the New Testament. You're familiar with that. You're familiar with Genesis to Revelation and places in between. But do you understand this document's supernatural character? This is not a human book, though it was written over a period of about 1,500 to 1,800 years and there were over 40 different men whose actual pen was placed on the parchment to write down the words. It is singularly authored by God, and those men who wrote these various books at various times in various places wrote under the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God who was conveying to them the revelation of God from His mind to that pen so that what was produced was the very Word of the living God. This is not a human document. This is a supernatural book.

And it makes some supernatural claims. First of all, it claims for itself to be infallible, infallible. That is to say that everything that it affirms is absolutely true. If it says something about capital punishment, and it does, then what it says is true. If it says something about marriage and divorce, what it says is absolutely true. If it says something about worship, that is absolutely true. If it says something Jesus Christ, that is true. If it says something about the nature of man, what it says is absolutely true. If it says something about the history of Tyre or Sidon or the history of Babylon, or if it says something about the future of a coming Babylon, or a beast or an Antichrist; if it says something about a man named Peter, or a man named David, or a man named Paul, or if it says something about a man named Adam who had wife named Eve and they had some children named Cain and Abel and Seth, and it says something about a garden, everything it says is absolutely true. It is infallible. And, of course, that's the testimony it gives for itself summed up in Psalm 19, "The law of the Lord is perfect. The law of the Lord is perfect." It contains no flaw.

The prophet said it is like silver tested seven times in a furnace. All that could be imagined to be of dross is burned away and it is absolutely purely true. Everything it says historically is true. Everything it says prophetically is true. Everything it says spiritually is true. Everything it gives us in terms of direction in life is absolutely true. It is infallible. That is why it has always been called the standard for life for faith and practice.

Two, it is inerrant. Now we're moving away from the content that it affirms to the specific words. When I say it is inerrant, I mean that the Bible in its original autograph, that is to say in the very document written by the inspired writer was without error. Now, you've got to know that's a challenge. To write anything without error is a challenge. Sometimes people come up to me and said, "Have you seen this part of your book? There are a lot of errors on this page? How did those get in there?" I don't know whether I made those errors, whether whoever input it in the computer made those errors, whether whoever was the proofreader made those errors, whether somebody was correcting something else and typed in an error where there wasn't one, I don't know. But I know one thing, it is near impossible to write something without error and especially going through this study Bible. I'm telling you, you can't even imagine the proofreading nightmare of 25,000 footnotes, semi-colons, colons, brackets, apostrophes, quotation marks, making sure they're in and out of the right parenthesis, making sure that there is standardization in everything that you do, and this vast volume of say almost 2500 pages of material. It's been proofread, I suppose by now 12 times, and it's being proofread another 5 or 6 times by professional people somewhere in Atlanta who are proofreading everything with a fine tooth comb, and even they can't get everything. And when we check what they've done, we find errors. It's very difficult.

But when the Word of God was written it was written without error as the Spirit of God superintended it. Proverbs 30 verses 5 and 6, "Every word of God is pure." Every word of God is pure. "Add thou not unto His words lest He reprove thee and thou be found a liar." You know, the scribes in the early years at the time of Ezra and before were so devoted to not putting an error in the Scriptures that they would copy the Scriptures with such fastidiousness it's just beyond belief. Some scribes, you'll find this hard to believe, would write one letter, take a bath, change their clothes, get a new pen, write another letter, take a bath, change their clothes, get a pen, write another letter. They didn't get a lot done, but what they got done was correct. There was this tremendous fastidiousness to this completion of the inerrant text and its preservation. That's why the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is so important because we had scrolls say from the eighth or ninth century A.D., and we were basing much on those copies, copies and copies and copies. You know, the Bible has been copied and copied. The original autographs don't exist anymore, or if they do we don't know where they are. So copies were made and copies were made.

People would say, "Well surely there are many, many changes, many, many mistakes that have come in." And then we found the Dead Sea Scrolls. They verified the current manuscripts that are being used for the translations of the Bible. And we saw that not only were they inerrant, were the originals inerrant, but the superintending work of the Holy Spirit as well as the careful diligence of the scribes had preserved that Scripture through all those centuries. In its origins it is inerrant, and that's why it says also in Proverbs 30 verse 6 you're not to add to it lest you be reprov'd and found a liar. It is inerrant.

In fact, in Revelation it tells us you're not to add anything to it or shall be added to you the plagues that are written in this book. You're not to take anything away from it or your name will be taken out of the Book of Life. This is an inerrant Scripture.

Thirdly, it is complete. It is complete. That is to say this is all God wanted to inspire. This is it. From Genesis to Revelation, all these 66 books sums it up. Deuteronomy 4:2, "You shall not add to the Word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it." That's very similar to Revelation 22. And Jude 3 says it became the "Faith once for all delivered to the saints." The content once for all

delivered to the saints. The canon of Scripture, called a canon because that's the word for standard, a word for a reed which was used as a measuring rod. And this is the standard. It is the standard. It is complete. Nothing needs to be added.

When John wrote Revelation in 96 A.D. on the island of Patmos as God was revealing it to him, it was 30 years after most of the completion of the New Testament. And this was the final, this was the end, this was the last bit of revelation called the book of Revelation to close out the canon of Scripture, which had begun with Genesis. It is comprehensive and complete. Everything necessary for life and godliness and spiritual knowledge is in here. This is a complete Scripture. It does not need *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Does not need the *Book of Mormon and the Doctrines and the Covenants*. Does not need the writings of Madame Blavatsky, Judge Rutherford, Annie Besant, or anybody else. This is the complete Word of God. There is no more inspired revelation beyond this. This is God's once for all delivered to the saints faith. And all Scripture is inspired by God, right? According to 2 Timothy, chapter 3 and verse 16. Second Peter 1:21, "Holy men were moved by the Spirit of God as they wrote this," and it is not of any private origin. It came from God. It is infallible, inerrant and complete.

Fourth, it is authoritative. It is authoritative. That is to say, that when it speaks you better listen. It is not a book of suggestions. It is not a book to be put alongside other books. It is not a book to be compared with the writings of Confucius or Buddha or somebody else, Muhammad. It is not a book to be compared with the writings of other ethicists through the years. It is not a book to be compared with other religious musings and writings or put beside Aristotle and Plato, or the writings of some other philosopher. It alone is authoritative. Isaiah 1:2 says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken." You better listen, God has spoken. Psalm 119:89, "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven. This is an authoritative book. It comes as commands, as we noted in Psalm 19.

Fifthly, it is sufficient. It is sufficient. It is all God wanted to say. It is all God said by way of revelation through inspiration, and it is all we need. Again, back to 2 Timothy 3, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for instruction, for correction, for reproof, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It is sufficient. Nothing more is needed for spiritual life than this Word.

Now we need to understand this Word and many books help us to understand it, but all spiritual truth necessary for life and godliness is found in this book. Sometimes I hear people say, "Well, there are people who have such severe psychological problems they can't start the sanctification process until they get some psychological help." That's folly. The Bible does not wait for human wisdom to jump start it. It is sufficient that the man of God may be perfect, completely furnished for all good works.

Sixth, it is effective. It is effective. In other words, it is powerful but effective sort of is a little more direct. What do I mean by that? I mean it impacts lives. It accomplishes divine purpose. Isaiah 55:11 and 12, "So shall My Word be that goes forth. It shall not return unto Me void but shall accomplish what I please." The Word never returns void. It always accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it. Throughout Scripture God says, "I will accomplish all My good purpose." Who is going to stop Me? Who is going to prevent Me from fulfilling My Word?

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but Thy Word will not pass away." Jesus came even Himself to say I have come to fulfill the Word, not to set it aside. It is

effective. Wherever it goes, it penetrates powerfully. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow as a discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. It just penetrates the heart. It cuts deep. It is effective. To some it is a savior of life to life, to others a savior of death to death. But it comes with power. It achieves God's purpose sometimes for grace and sometimes for judgment. What God says will come to pass. His Word will always be fulfilled.

Finally, it is determinative. It is infallible, inerrant, complete, authoritative, sufficient, effective and determinative. What do I mean by that? It is the Word of God that separates men and women. It is the Word of God that becomes the dividing line between those who are in the Kingdom of God and those who are out of it. It is the Word of God that distinguishes between the saved and the lost. It is the Word of God that distinguishes between those who will go to heaven and those who will spend eternity in hell. It is the Word of God that separates those who are God's children from those who are Satan's children. The Word of God is the determining factor.

You say, "What do you mean?" Listen to the words of Jesus. John 8:47, "He that is of God hears God's words. You therefore hear them not because you are not of God." Indifference to the Bible is a dead giveaway. Diffidence toward scriptural truth is a dead giveaway that one does not belong to God. If you belong to God you hear God's Word. Jesus put it this way, "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me." It is natural for a human being to seek oxygen. It is natural for a new creation in Christ to seek truth, the truth of God. A person may claim to be a Christian, but if they have no interest in Scripture you have a right to question the claim because attitude toward the Word of God is a determinative reality.

This is God's Word. In the Old Testament alone there are over 2,000 claims made by the Scripture that say this is the Word of God, and the New Testament adds to that. This is God's Word. As such, it is the determining factor. If you hear God's Word, you belong to Him. If you don't hear His Word, you don't belong to Him.

In fact, if you can't understand the Bible, it's a lost book to you, it's a maze and a fog, then you're a natural man who understandeth not the things of God because they're spiritually discerned. But if the Word of God enlightens your heart and opens your mind and brings joy to your heart, as the psalmist pointed out, and takes your simplicity and turns it into wisdom, then the Spirit is alive in you. You belong to God and you're hearing His Word.

So, beloved, we start at this point with an understanding of what we're dealing with. We're dealing with a supernatural document that is absolutely true in all that it affirms, that is inerrant in every word, that is complete, that is nothing is missing. You don't need anything beyond this to have the inspired revelation of God. It is authoritative, that is it speaks as commands. It is sufficient. It contains everything you need for all issues of spiritual life. It is effective, that is to say wherever it is unleashed it comes with power and impact and it always accomplishes what God wants it to accomplish. And finally, it is the determining matter when it comes to where you belong or in what kingdom you exist. God's people listen to His Word. You can do a little heart examination on where you are with that regard.

Summing up just those things, Joshua 1:8, one of the great Old Testament passages that exalts the Scripture, says, "This book of the law – " referring to Scripture " - shall not depart from your mouth," that is, it should be the constant topic of your conversation. Why? Because, "You shall meditate on it

day and night.” Now whatever you’re thinking about all day and thinking about all night will show up in your conversation. So he’s saying you ought to be dominated by the Word of God. It is the dominant thing in your life. Meditatively, it becomes the dominating thing in your life conversationally. Then it’s into action that he speaks so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. You meditate on it, you talk about it and pretty soon you begin to live it out. Then you will make your way prosperous. Then you will have success. But you need to do according to all that is written in it.

There are many Christians who can’t do according to all that is written in it because they don’t understand it. And that’s why it’s incumbent upon us to study the Scripture so that we can understand it, so that we can do it, so that we can be blessed and prosperous and have good success.

Here we are then, committed to this as Christians, absolutely committed to it in a world of people who are not only indifferent but frankly in our culture outright hostile to the Bible. It is not a standard that this world wants to accept. It is not a standard that our nation wants to accept, and that’s tragic.

In order to deny the Bible, they have to behave in a schizophrenic way. I’ll show you what I mean. Most all of our life is built on fixed laws. I mean, we just operate that way all the time. Take the scientific field itself, which is behind so much of our life. It’s behind what we eat. It’s behind what we wear. It’s behind what we drive. It’s behind what we live in. It’s behind all the health service involvement that we engage in to fix ourselves or to keep ourselves well. Science is behind all of this. Science simply is a means by which we deal with the physical world, the physical environment. And all those scientific dealings that go on within the physical realm are related to fixed points of fact, non-varying realities whether you’re talking about biology, anatomy, botany, physiology, astronomy. I don’t care what you’re talking about, whether you’re talking about engineering in terms of architectural engineering, mechanical engineering, any kind of function in the physical realm with any physical properties is based upon unalterable fixed and dependable laws right down to the most minute kind of surgery, which is predicated upon the knowledge that the body has the ability to respond in a certain way to this kind of invasion if it’s cared for in a certain manner. All the way to the macro kind of thing where we’re spinning things up into space with people in them knowing full well exactly what they will do and how they will behave and how they will return to a fixed point on this earth because there are inviolable laws that operate in the universe in an unvarying manner, and they operate without aberrations.

And so our world is devoted to the fixed character of the physical world. But, it moves over to the moral realm and is content with chaos and commits a kind of immediate schizophrenia in which it says we live in an utterly unalterable fixed order physically but morally? Ah, you can do whatever you want, and they choose chaos and reject absolutes. Any ethical system that’s comfortable with you, you can do whatever you want, be whatever you want, behave however you want and remain at harmony in your life. No you can’t. You break scientific laws in the physical world and you get results that are negative. You break moral laws in the spiritual world and you’re going to get negative results as well.

There is a morality built into this world that is fixed, just like there are laws in the physical world that are fixed and that if they are violated bring serious consequences. There are laws in the moral world that are fixed and if violated bring far more serious consequences. Better, Jesus said, better you should destroy your body than your, what? Your soul. Fear not those who destroy the body, but fear

Him who destroys the soul.

We take such tremendous care to operate within the scientific laws to preserve the body. We build these buildings, these massive skyscraper buildings with all of the science of architecture so that they don't collapse and crush all the people in them. We build great ships that go out in the ocean in the great depths, built according to standards of navigation and standards of floatation and all those kinds of things to preserve the life of those people with tremendous care. And yet we live in total moral relativity, which is just contrary to everything we know about the operation of the universe. Why do men do that? Because they love their sin, that's why. That's the only reason. Not because it's logical.

People always ask me, "How does AIDS fit into this?" AIDS is consequence to violation of moral law. You understand that? You violate moral law you get venereal disease. That's what Paul meant when he said you sin against the body when you join yourself to a harlot, when you commit fornication and adultery. The ancient world was rife with venereal disease. People died in pandemic kind of things, kind of experiences in masses because of venereal diseases. AIDS is no different. It is simply the built-in consequence to an ongoing violation of the moral law.

You know, it amazes me. I'm watching this massive movement against smoking that's going on in our country. You've been watching that? It's motivated by two things. One, it's motivated by the left to hate the corporate world. They hate these conglomerates that have so much money, like the Reynolds Tobacco Company and these others, who are multi-faceted corporations and have many different enterprises. But the left hates them because they represent the capitalistic establishment, so they want to bring them down. Many of them aren't so concerned about the smoking; they're just concerned to wreck these great institutions. But there are those who are very conscious of the fact that smoking is bad for your health, and I certainly agree with that. I don't think, as I've said, smoking is a sin, but I've been watching how these commercials have become more and more graphic.

And I saw one the other day that was so graphic it was just really a very sickening thing to see. There was a lady, they put a kind of a light on her that made her look near dead and black and white instead of color and she talked with this growly, gravely scratchy voice about smoking and then she took a puff through a hole in her tracheotomy, through a hole in her trachea and puffed her cigarette here because she had rotted out everything up here and then it went on to say, "You know, this is what smoking does to you." I understand all that. And so there's this massive, massive move to stop people from smoking because it affects your health physically.

At the same time, there is a concurrent and equally aggressive escalation of the normalization of homosexuality, which has produced a disease which has massacred people all over the world. Well how can they do that? How can they commit that kind of schizophrenia? Because they love their sin. Bottom line. And when they decide they're going to work in a fixed world in the physical realm and they're going to work in a random world in the moral realm, they are committing spiritual suicide. That's what they're doing.

You see the same thing in the high schools. All these posters everywhere trying to prevent drugs, and alongside of them where you can pick up your condom. If you have your choice in sin, I think many kids would opt out for the condom and forget the drugs. This kind of schizophrenia is because we are unwilling to live in a fixed moral realm, and that is precisely what God has designed and He's revealed it here. There is a morality built by God into the world that is fixed and when violated it

brings tragic results. And the Scripture has laid that out for us, absolute laws.

This is an incredible book. As we get into this book we say, "Well, yeah, but it's only a spiritual book." Well let me cross that line a little bit. The same God who ordered science wrote this book. And whenever it talks about scientific things or matters in the physical world, it speaks with accuracy. Remember I told you earlier everything it says is infallible. It is not just a book about spiritual things; it's a book about a lot of things, a lot of things. In fact, this book, this supernaturally written book authored by God and passed through inspired writers who wrote down every word without error under His supervision by the Holy Spirit, this supernatural book written by God to deal with spiritual issues, every time it deals with science is absolutely accurate because God knows that world as well as He knows the spiritual one, right?

It presents the only viable explanation for the universe, creation, catastrophism, the instantaneous creation in six days, the Noahic flood, reshuffling the surface of the earth, explains all the fossil record, explains all the strata in the rocks, explains everything. That's all you need to explain it. It's absolutely scientifically accurate.

The Bible affirms one of the basic laws of science which is called the First Law of Thermodynamics, the First Law of Thermodynamics is the conservation of mass and energy. That is to say all mass and energy that exists is perpetuated. In other words, from an evolutionary standpoint they would say, "Well once there was this little piece of mass and this little piece of energy, and it just kept going and going and going and going and going and going and going." What science knows, however, if it's honest with its data, is that there is mass and energy and it is conserved at the same amount. It came into existence at that amount and it remains at that amount. That can be explained by the creation. That can be explained in the Scripture. Energy doesn't go out of existence. Mass doesn't go out of existence. It alters its forms, but it doesn't go out of existence.

Listen to what Isaiah said, Isaiah the prophet. Verse 26 of chapter 40, "Behold, who has created these things? He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might for He is strong in power, not one of them fails." There's the conservation of mass and energy, the First Law of Thermodynamics. Nehemiah 9:6, "Thou hast made heaven, the earth and all things therein, the seas and all things therein and Thou preservest them all." Ecclesiastes 1:10, "Is there anything of which it may be said, 'See, this is new?' No, it has already been from of old." The Bible knows that.

The Bible also affirms the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The Second Law of Thermodynamics says this: while there is the conservation of mass and energy, the atoms that make up that mass and energy tend toward disorder, break down into chaos so that the longer the universe exists the more chaotic it tends to become. I'm waiting for some scientist to get a grip on this and apply it to the study of things like cancer. I sometimes wonder if the escalation of cancer isn't part of the realization of the beginning of the disordering of the normal structured order of atoms as they begin to break down. Who knows what other things may come? That's purely a hip shot from me, but there is a breaking down of order into disorder, breaking down of structure into chaos. That's the Second Law of Thermodynamics. It's the law of increasing disorder. And it disproves evolution alone because it says things start from order and go to disorder; not starting from disorder and ascending to order.

You say, "Well then why do they believe in evolution?" Because they don't want a God who is a Creator, because if they have a God who is a Creator they know there are moral laws and they'd have to live by them or be under His judgment. So the easiest way is to eliminate Him, they think.

There is never a real loss of mass. There is never a real loss of energy, but there is a declining ability of it to produce because it breaks down and order becomes disorder. All processes will ultimately wind down and cease and the universe ultimately go out of existence. The Bible is very clear about this. In Romans 8 it presents this to us in very clear terms. Listen to what the apostle Paul wrote before any scientist had come up with that. "The creation was subjected to nothingness." In other words, there was a point in time at the fall of man when the creation was cursed and subjected to a process of futility or emptiness, not of its own will but because of Him who subjected in hope. When God originally created it, it had perpetuity and order. But because of sin and the curse, it has disorder and was subjected by God to this futility.

The creation itself then is slave to corruption. And verse 22 of Romans 8 says it groans and suffers the pains of that corruption. The whole universe is experiencing this disarray. When the Bible talks about scientific things, it is exceedingly accurate about them.

I think about something I studied with interest when I was a college student called hydrology. Hydrology is basically the science of water and its cycle. And while it's very easy for us to understand, it wasn't until the seventeenth century that men began to figure out what the water cycle really was. The water cycle is very simple. Three words will teach you the water cycle; one is evaporation, the other is condensation, and the third is precipitation. That's the water cycle. From the great seas of the earth water evaporates. It is condensed in the clouds, carried over the land, precipitates in the rain and the snow, and runs back down to the sea from which it evaporates, condenses and precipitates again. That's the water cycle and there is no new water, folks. I think you know that. There isn't any new water being created.

Some people might think that when they turn their faucet on, new water is being created. No, there is not new water there. This is God's process of hydrology, the sea, the evaporation, the clouds. They move over the land. Rain, snow down into the land, rushing into the streams, the streams into the rivers, the rivers into the sea, and that's the cycle. Not until the seventeenth century was this believed. Until then the dominant theory was that there were subterranean reservoirs that just kept pumping up water. We know now that even water that is subterranean is in that hydrological cycle and they are made by seepage.

You say, "Well what does the Bible say about that?" Read Isaiah 55 verse 10. Read Ecclesiastes 1. Read Job 36 verses 27 and 28. Job is the oldest book in the Bible, and it describes evaporation and condensation. Whenever God spoke in His Word about something scientific, it was clear. Isaiah 55:10 gives you the water cycle.

And then a fascinating study of astronomy is interesting as well. Old ideas about the earth and about the solar system were very, very strange. Most people thought that the earth was a CD, you know, a flat disk, circular, and that was the view. When Copernicus came along from 1473 to 1543, he presented the idea that the earth was in motion. And when he said that, of course, people first of all thought he was crazy because they couldn't feel the motion. When he said the earth was in motion they were astonished and astounded, but eventually it took hold and, of course, he was accurate. Men like Brahe, Kepler and Galileo in the seventeenth century then began to give birth to modern astronomy and modern astronomy, it really got framed up in the seventeenth century.

Up to that point Hippocrates of a great mind said there were 1,022 stars. Ptolemy said, "No, there are 1,056." Kepler said, "You're both wrong. There are 1,055." Why didn't they read Jeremiah? Jeremiah

said in Jeremiah 33:22 they can't be counted. Might as well quit, fellows; they can't be counted. Now we know there are 100 billion in our galaxy, and there are billions of galaxies.

Job, the oldest book in the Bible, says, "God hangeth the earth on nothing." How did he know that? One ancient eastern book says it's on seven layers of sugar, honey and butter. Fortunately we're not on the gooey side. The Bible says, "He hangs the world on nothing." The oldest book in the Bible says he turns the earth "like the clay to the seal." What does it mean to turn the earth like the clay to the seal? In ancient times they had a piece of clay, soft clay, and they would take a stick and they would write in a legal document or some kind of thing before the development, or often even with the development of papyrus and other things to write to on. They used these for permanent documents. And then when they wanted to sign it they had a cylinder with a raised signature and they would roll it across the clay like that, with two sticks coming out of the end. And when Job said, "He turneth the earth like the clay to the seal," he's simply saying it rotates on an axis. How did he know that? Job said God imputed weight to the wind. It wasn't until about the seventeenth century that anybody understood that there was weight to the wind.

Another interesting science is isostasy. I don't know if you've ever heard about it? And this fascinated me too when I was a college student. Isostasy is the balance of the earth. You ever buy your little kid a rubber ball and it was out of round and it just goes like this, and like this and like this? Well, you can imagine what we would be doing all the time if the earth was not in balance, or probably bumping up six feet and coming down again. We don't think about things like that, but if this thing is going to spin through space at this velocity and rotate on its axis while it's flying in this orbit, it's going to have to be in absolutely perfect balance to keep the law of gravity constant at every point. God knows the balance of the earth and so did Isaiah. Listen to what Isaiah said in chapter 40 verse 12, "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand." In other words He knows the weight of the water. "He's measured the heaven with a span, has comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?" God alone. God knows the balance of this sphere catapulting through an endless universe. Scientific discovery yielded none of that in Isaiah's time. God revealed it to him.

And then there was a man who died in 1903, I think it was, named Herbert Spencer. Herbert Spencer was a brilliant scientist. He was a very heralded scientist because he had made a unique discovery. He had come up with the classification of the knowable. That is to say, he had come up with the classification of everything in existence. He said all that exists, all that is knowable can fall into five categories. And he won some great prizes and awards for this because this reduced everything to categorization. He said this, and this was the order in which Herbert Spencer wrote them. He said, "All that is knowable falls into these five categories: time, force, action, space and matter." Everything in existence falls into one of those five categories: time, force, action, space and matter.

Well Herbert did very well. But Herbert was real late in coming to something that the first verse of the Bible made clear. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning (that's time) God (that's force) created (that's action) the heavens (that's space) and the earth (that's matter)." Every classification of the knowable is placed in the first verse of the Bible. The genius of the mind of God is beyond anything man could conceive.

So when the Bible speaks to the scientific realm, it doesn't speak ignorantly. It speaks accurately. You know what they used to do to sick people maybe a hundred years ago or more? When somebody went sick, got sick, they took you in and you know what they did? They took out your

blood. They bled you. Now what they do is they give you blood because they finally figured out what was in Leviticus 17:11, "The life of the flesh is in the blood." That's what carries our life. How smart were they, huh? Sucking blood out of people who were already sick.

You know, when you talk about science and you look to the Word of God, you're going to find that God knows as much about that as He does the moral realm, and He's given us those little points of interest in the Scripture just so we never question His knowledge of the truth.

I believe this Bible. I believe it. It is scientifically accurate and that strengthens my faith. But I don't believe it because its scientifically accurate, I believe it because God's given me the faith to believe it. I am what's called a pre-suppositional apologist. That's kind of a long term, isn't it? Presuppositional apologist. An apologist is a defense or defender. I defend the Bible not as a non-presuppositionalist. That is, I'm not trying to prove God by the Bible. I presuppose God. I think you start with the cause and look at the effect; you don't start with the effect and try to find the cause. And the only way you can truly know and believe in the true God is by the Spirit of that God. God has given you the faith to believe in Him, because you believe in Him you believe His Word.

I've seen people who are lifelong evolutionists in a moment of time come to Christ and become immediately committed to the authority of Scripture. How? That's the work of the Spirit of the God in the human heart. Well you say, "Well what about all this apologetics and science and all that? What does that do?" That strengthens Christians. It gives reason for faith but faith is a gift from God, isn't it? I look at my Bible and somebody says, "Well how do you know you can trust everything in the Bible? It's just moral stuff." Well, whenever you see the scientific stuff, you know that's dead accurate.

And what about the prophecies of the Bible? Wow, 150 years before he was born, the Bible predicted there would come a man named Cyrus, 150 before he was born. And it names him and it says he will become the ruler in Babylon, and he will let the Israelites go back to their land, Isaiah 44:28. He'll make a decree and allow them to go back and rebuild Jerusalem. And 150 years later, he did it and his name was Cyrus. How did Isaiah know that? Couldn't know that. How could he know who wasn't born for a 150 years? How could he predict what who hadn't been born would do? No way. Only God controls history like that.

One of the great cities of the ancient world was a city called Tyre, which was on the north coast of the land of Palestine. Ezekiel chapter 26, the prophet Ezekiel predicted that Nebuchadnezzar would come, in verse 7 of that chapter, that Nebuchadnezzar the great Babylonian emperor would come and destroy the city. He predicted that Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the city, and that the city would be leveled to the ground, and then it would be cleared of all its rubble and scraped clean, and thrown into the sea. And it would never be rebuilt again, and it would be simply a little place where people dried fish nets.

Well it was quite a formidable prophecy because it would be like saying a few years from now L.A. is going to be destroyed, flattened and shoved into the ocean. You'd say, "Who could do that?" Well think of it in ancient times. The city had 150 foot high wall, 150 feet high, 15 feet thick. It had a massive army protecting the inland, and it had the finest navy in the world protecting the coast. Phoenicians were there. They were the colonizers, mariners of the ancient times. They were navigators. They had navigated around the Cape of Africa, established trade routes to the East. Three years after Ezekiel prophesied this Nebuchadnezzar came, and he did exactly what Ezekiel

said he would do. It took him 13 years to do it, and at the end he smashed down the walls, smashed down the tower. Finally, he entered the city and he found no spoils because the people had taken everything by ship out to an island. So when he got in there no people, no spoils. They had taken it all to an island off shore because Nebuchadnezzar didn't have a navy. So they laughed at him and mocked him. The island was only about a half a mile off shore but it was too far for them to go. So Nebuchadnezzar went back home and for 250 years the prophecy was never fulfilled about it being scraped and all the rubble thrown in the sea.

Two hundred and fifty years later came Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedon, world conqueror, 33,000 infantry men, 15,000 horsemen, 50,000 troops. They come marching down that area. They're headed East, conquering the world as they go. They send a messenger out to this little island city of Tyre and they say, "We want food. We want money. We want supplies." And they say, "Forget it, buddy. You don't have a navy either." They sent the messenger back and Alexander got mad. So what he did, he took all the rubble in the city of Tyre, all the rubble that was left, dumped it in the sea, built a causeway, marched out and destroyed them all, 250 years later, fulfilling exactly what Ezekiel said would happen. There were about 25,000 on that island at the time who were slaughtered and 30,000 more sold into slavery. He did it all in 7 months, and Ezekiel said the city would never be rebuilt. It never has been rebuilt. And just to make a comparison, Jerusalem has been rebuilt 17 times.

The Bible predicted the destruction of Ninevah which is the capital of Assyria. It had 100 foot inner wall, 50 feet thick, towers 200 feet high, 15 gates and a 150 foot moat. The city was 7 miles in circumference, a double wall, 2,000 feet outside the inner wall. It reached its high point in 663 B.C. Nahum says it's going to be destroyed. It was. The Babylonians, they came, entered, took it. Never rebuilt.

The Bible makes amazing prophecies and you can verify that they have already come to pass. So much more you could say about this book. You look it and it's scientifically accurate. Prophetically, there's no explanation. Nobody can write history. Nobody knows what the future holds, but this book does. This book nailed it to the very T over and over, and I've only given you two of dozens and dozens and dozens of prophecy.

Why do I believe the Bible? I believe the Bible because of its scientific accuracy. I believe the Bible because of its prophetic accuracy. I believe the Bible because of its historic accuracy. Archaeologists have found all kinds of verifications of the absolute accuracy of the Scriptures. I believe the Bible because of its experiential accuracy. You want to know something? It tells me about me, and I know it's right. It cuts into my heart and opens me wide up. I've experienced its power in my life. But more than anything, I think, dominating all those reasons why I believe God wrote this book is because of the one singular theme of this book, the Lord Jesus Christ. Forty plus authors writing over 1,500 to 1,800 years all over the place in all different circumstances writing on their own could never have maintained the continuity of glory and majesty and honor that is given to the Lord Jesus Christ from Genesis to Revelation.

This is a book written by one author about one person. Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures for in them you're going to find out about Me." Every book, every book points some way to Christ. From Genesis all the way to Revelation, He is the theme. He Himself on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 opened the Bible and began to speak of things concerning Himself out of the Scripture, the law, the prophets and the writings. You go into the law and He is the one that the law points to. He is the one who will fulfill

all law. He is the perfect sacrifice who will bear all sin. He is the one of whom the prophets spoke. He is the one who is to be praised in all the holy writings. He is the one who is wisdom personified. He is the theme of the gospels. His coming life, death, resurrection are the subject of the epistles, and He's the returning King of Revelation.

The dominating theme of Jesus Christ speaks of divine authorship, and I'll tell you why. Because human beings could never conceive of such a person. It's beyond human capability. Look at the gods of the nations. Look at the gods of pagan religions. They're like men. There's no explanation for Jesus Christ other than He is who He said He was. He is who God said He is and that He is God in human flesh. There's no explanation of the Bible other than that God wrote it. Nothing else explains its scientific accuracy. Nothing else explains its prophetic accuracy. Nothing else explains its spiritual and penetrating accuracy, and its ability to transform lives. Nothing else explains its miracles, which are from front to back in this book and verified by eyewitnesses, and nothing else can explain Christ; this monumental, inexplicable, inconceivable personality who could not be the figment of any human imagination, let alone the collective imaginations of over 40 different writers all over the place. This is God's Word. It is alive. It is powerful. And until you come to grips with what this document is, you're never going to be able to give to it the diligence that is required to learn all that is written in it so you can make your way prosperous and have good success. Well, let's pray.

Father, we know that men and women seek to have their life changed, have their life transformed, and You have said that the law of the Lord is perfect, totally converting the inner person. And people seek wisdom, and You've said that this Word makes simple people wise. And people seek joy and happiness, and You've said that Your Word is right, rejoicing the heart. People long to see clearly in the darkness of life and death, and You've said Your Word enlightens the eyes. And people are looking for a constant source of truth, and You've said Your Word endures forever as true. O God, what a treasure we hold in our hands. What a blessed treasure we hold in this book. Job said He loved it more than His necessary food. The psalmist said it was more precious to him than gold, yes than much fine gold and sweeter also than honey from the honeycomb because in it he found provision, protection, purification.

Father, we thank You for this great treasure and we want to understand that it is Your Word to us and that it carries power and blessing in ways that no document ever written can. But it's up to us to open those treasures, to search it, to study it diligently. May we understand what we have, as Paul said to Timothy, the treasure entrusted to us, and mine out its riches for our good and blessing and Your glory. In Christ's name, amen.

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