

## Q2 L01 - The Uniqueness of the Bible 2020-04-04

Jean Ross: Hello, friends, we'd like to welcome all of you to "Sabbath School Study Hour" here at the Granite Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sacramento, California. We'd like to welcome many of those who are joining us online today. We have our extended Sabbath School class, who are joining us across the country and around the world. I'd also like to welcome our regular Sabbath School members who are here in person this morning.

We're very excited about the new lesson that we're going to be starting today. It's a quarterly. The focus is on the Bible. It's called "How to Interpret Scripture." And I know those who are viewing, some of you might already have a lesson quarterly. If you don't have one, you could get one at a hopefully local Seventh-day Adventist Church. They should have that as well, or you can go online and you can download this quarter study, "How to Interpret the Scriptures." Today, our lesson is lesson number one. It's entitled "The Uniqueness of the Bible." Very important study.

Well, before we get to our lesson today, we'd like to remind our friends about the free offer that we have today. It's a book entitled "The Ultimate Resource," and it is all about the Bible; written by Pastor Doug. If you'd like to receive the book, all you'll need to do is call the number 866-788-3966 and ask for offer number 728. We'll be happy to send that to anyone in North America. If you would like a digital copy of the book, you want to text the code "SH091" to the number 40544 and you'll be able to read the book through a digital download that'll be sent to you.

At this time I'd like to invite our song leaders to come forward, and they're going to be leading us in our Sabbath School song today.

Female: Good morning, church family. We're going to be singing "I Need thee Every Hour," hymn number 483. And please sing verses

1, 2, and 4 with us.

♪♪♪

♪ I need thee every hour ♪

♪ Most gracious Lord ♪

♪ No tender voice like thine ♪

♪ Can peace afford ♪

♪ I need thee, O I need thee ♪

♪ Every hour I need thee ♪

♪ O bless me now, my Savior ♪

♪ I come to thee ♪

♪ I need thee every hour ♪

♪ Stay thou nearby ♪

♪ Temptations lose their power ♪

♪ When thou art nigh ♪

♪ I need thee, O I need thee ♪

♪ Every hour I need thee ♪

♪ O bless me now, my Savior ♪

♪ I come to thee ♪

♪ I need thee every hour ♪

♪ Teach me thy will ♪

♪ And thy rich promises ♪

♪ In me fulfill ♪

♪ I need thee, O I need thee ♪

♪ Every hour I need thee ♪

♪ O bless me now, my Savior ♪

♪ I come to thee ♪

Jean: Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you once again that we're able to gather in your house on a rainy Sabbath, but yet a beautiful Sabbath for we need the rain. But Lord more important than the physical rain outside, we need the rain of the Holy Spirit to come and fill our hearts and our minds, especially as we delve into a new series of lessons talking about the Bible and the importance of the Word. So we invite your presence. Come and guide our hearts and our minds. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Now, for those of you who are here in person, you can see, and maybe those who are joining us online, we have two podiums up here for our Sabbath School study hour this morning, and that means that Pastor Doug and myself we're going to be teaching together. It's such an exciting and important lesson we thought, "Well, let's talk about the Bible together." We do have a radio program called "Bible Answers Live," and I know it's the highlight of my week to be able to take Bible questions. So anytime we can talk about the Bible, that's always a good thing. Good morning, Pastor Doug.

Doug Batchelor: Morning, Pastor Ross. We thought this is such an important lesson that--you know, they say two heads are uglier than one, but they are better. And it would be nice to get the message in stereo today. And so--and we also want to especially welcome--you know, we're recording this live, and it is March 14th. And there's been a lot going on in the news nationally and internationally connected with this coronavirus and the potential threat that it poses.

A lot of folks have canceled their church services today and they're doing church online or at home, and we want you--you want to take a moment right now at the beginning of our study and then again later during our worship service. Call or text them and say, "You can participate in a Sabbath School program online if you can't go to church and you haven't already found one online." Encourage them to go to the Granite Bay SDA website. They can also watch Facebook--Amazing Facts Facebook page, my Facebook page. And we want them to be engaged. We don't want God's church to grow weak through lack of study.

So you can let them know that--by the way, if you want to know about the--in the next few weeks, things are going to be very unusual in the world, but we're going to continue to provide spiritual programming online. If you want to know when we're having a special online and you want to be in the loop, you can text right now the word online--just text the word "Online" to 40544. And those of you watching, those of you here--and that'll help you get the updates when we say we're having an online program and you'll be able to pass it on to your friends.

A lot is happening. Things are changing daily. You almost have to check the news every 10 minutes to know what's going on now. And so we want to do our best to try to keep our friends online updated with what's happening and some of the spiritual ramification of these things.

Jean: Actually, on that same line, pastor, that we've been having a lot of questions coming into "Amazing Facts" and people are just curious about this virus and--is there something connected to Bible prophecy? Does the Bible speak about pestilence and various diseases in the last days? Well, this afternoon--as Pastor Doug mentioned, it's the 14th, today, of March. This afternoon the 14th of March at 4 p.m. Pacific time, Pastor Doug and myself, we're going to be doing a live Facebook interactive Q&A session. So we want to invite those of you who are here. Tune in on Facebook--this afternoon on the Amazing Facts Facebook page, also on the Pastor Doug Batchelor Facebook page and you will be able to participate. And if you have a Bible question related to what's happening in the news, what's happening in our world, how does that tie in with Bible prophecy, we want to encourage you to just type your Bible question there on Facebook and we'll try to take as many live questions this afternoon. So that'll be at 4 p.m. Pacific time, and be sure to tune in. Tell your friends about that.

Doug: That's right, and we might even have a little special treat. We just heard, as I was coming in the church, a Jamie George is here in town and one of his events was canceled. He may join us and do some music before and after our prophecy study. We will have some people in the live audience. You know, we've got to keep that number down to 250. Looks like we're in compliance today and--but, you know, on my way this morning, I noticed that the gym, the parking lot was full, and they tell me the theaters are still full, and the casino around the corner still has customers. So I think the house of God is--we can do it safely. We ought to come together. And so we want to keep it safe, use good judgment, but we don't want to have church be the first thing that people stop doing.

Jean: That's right, and we're trying to do everything we can to communicate online, so, all right. Well, we opened up by introducing our new study on the Bible. Today's lesson number one, and it's called "The

Uniqueness of the Bible." And, Pastor Doug, I believe we have a memory verse.

Doug: I bet most of you could do this one: Psalm 119, verse 105. You want to say it with me? Psalm 119, verse 105, "Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." And that is, you know, one of my favorite verses. God's Word guides us. I was thinking about it, Pastor Ross, as I was preparing for the lesson; that if it wasn't for the Bible, I wouldn't know what to do with my life. Because my whole life is involved in waking up, studying the Bible, reading the Bible, teaching the Bible, preaching the Bible, writing about the Bible. I mean, the Bible is basically the axle on which my life rotates, and the Bible is Christ. He is the living Word. So how important is that to a Christian? And this study, this quarter, I think, is going to be very edifying for everybody.

Jean: Now, of course when we talk about the Bible, many of us think about this book and we know it's divided into two parts, you got the Old Testament, you got the New Testament, but really the Bible is a collection of 66 books that have been bound together into one book. Roughly 22 of the books of the Bible are largely historical. It's describing God's dealing with mankind. Twenty-one of the books of the Bible are in the form, for the most part, of letters written to individuals or written to groups of people or churches, about another 21 of the books have a lot of prophecy in it, and then we have two of the books of the Bible which is in the style of poetry. But whatever the style, the central theme of the Bible inspired by the Holy Spirit is, of course, Christ and the plan of redemption and hope for people today.

Doug: Amen. Now, when you say the word Bible, Bible actually comes from a Greek word *biblia*, and it means books. Now, the word Bible or *biblia* comes from a city in the area of ancient Lebanon. It was called Byblos, and it was a very powerful trading port where the Egyptians--one of the most popular commodities was papyrus. Papyrus was the paper that the Egyptians made, I think, from reeds and there's still a few very rare papyrus fragments that survived with different texts on it. It didn't hold up as well as some materials. But that's where you get the word paper, from papyrus. And people would go to Byblos to get papyrus, and it became also sort of a synonym for books because so much paper was purchased in this city. So that's a little bit of the history etymology of where the word Bible comes from.

Jean: Of course, the Bible is a very unique book for a number of reasons. For one, it wasn't written by just one individual. Roughly about 36 different people wrote the Bible. It was written on three different continents: Africa, Asia, and--what's the other one? Europe? Doug: Australia?

Jean: Australia, I don't know about Australia. And three languages. Probably the two most common that we know about is Hebrew and Greek, but there's a little bit of Aramaic and you find it in the Book of Daniel. So written in three different languages. Spanning a time period, and this is amazing to me, of about 1,500, 1,600 years. From the first time when Moses began to write until the last book, Revelation, written by John, you're looking at about 1,500 years. That's a long time to write a book.

Doug: I had some homework that took me that long when I was a kid. So who wrote the first book in the Bible? What is the name of the first book? Trick question. I heard some people get it right. As far as we know, the first book written, was also written by Moses, was the Book of Job. He probably wrote that before he wrote Genesis, and the time period it deals with is before the time of Moses. And then Genesis and the other five books that Moses wrote beyond that and so--he of course, is one of the most important Bible writers.

Now, Pastor Ross, some people, they say, "Well, you know, the Bible is so old. And after a book is that ancient, written over that long a period then, you know, its dependability is really in doubt, probably a lot of collections of stories that changed over time. And how can we know that the Bibles we hold today are accurate based on the original?" You ever heard that argument before? You know, it's fascinating to me. I never hear anyone question the existence of Alexander the Great or his deeds or his exploits. We've only got about eight documents that talk about that. People don't question Julius Caesar. They don't question a lot of ancient history, and we have very--far fewer documents of those things. Let me give you an example. Plato's original manuscripts, there's seven. Heraclitus has eight--there's eight manuscripts of Heraclitus, the famous historian, and he talked a lot about ancient battle than Alexander

the Great. Homer's "Iliad and the Odyssey," there are more than 263 surviving copies. But there are over 24,600 existent New Testament manuscripts from the first four centuries, either in part or in whole, 24,000. Why are people falling off that argument that we're not really sure? It is the most well-documented book in history as far as its authenticity.

Jean: Then of course one of the greatest discoveries in the last century was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which Pastor Doug mentioned. You got 24,000 more--more than 24,000 parts of the New Testament available. But what about the Old Testament? Well, you got the Dead Sea Scrolls that validate the Old Testament that date back to, some of it even, before the time of Christ. So there's plenty of historical archaeological evidence to substantiate that what we have in the Bible was indeed written way back when the Bible says it was written, and what we have today is accurate. It's faithful to the original text. So, you know, if you spend some time studying a little bit of the background about the Bible, your faith grows. Matter of fact, our free offer today, which is called "The Ultimate Resource," is a book talking about some of the origins of where we get the Bible from and how we know the Bible is trustworthy.

Doug: You know, when they found the Dead Sea Scrolls--and I think some of the manuscripts dated 200 years before Christ as--near as they can tell. But when they found them, the whole world was on pins and needles. They thought, "Oh, everyone's always wondered after 2,000 years how much has it changed?" And they couldn't wait to take--the Isaiah scroll was the longest complete document. They had the whole book of Isaiah, 66 chapters. And they said, "Let's lay that out next to what we have today." And it's getting very interesting.

People were kind of betting on how much has it changed, how different is it. It was absolutely astonishing that it was 99% identical. There was no substantive difference between the copy that was 2,000 years old because the Hebrews were so careful. Those Jewish scribes when they were copying the Scriptures, they thought, "This is the Word of God." They were very careful. Then it would be proofed by other rabbis to make sure that--and if there was a corruption in it, they would destroy it. And so it was probably the most carefully preserved book--it is the most carefully preserved book in history.

Jean: Of course, the Bible has a number of records to its title. It is the first book ever printed in the West on a printing press. It's also the first book to be translated in as many languages as the Bible is translated. It's the first book to be as widely distributed around the world, there's no other book so widely distributed as the Bible. And this is amazing, it is the first book in history that can be read by 95% of the people on the planet, that's if they can read, because it's been translated in so many languages. No other book can be read almost by every language group on the planet. So that's an amazing thought. This book is inspired and directed and protected by God.

Doug: Amen, you know, probably ought to start diving into some of the sections in the lesson. It's so much fun talking about the Bible. I think every week now as we go through the Scriptures, we're going to have more tidbits and some amazing facts on the Bible. The first section, Pastor Ross, is talking about the living Word, and the Bible is not simply ink on paper, the Bible is the words of God. And you can read where it says in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing." Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life." And maybe, Pastor Ross, you want to read that other famous verse there in 2 Timothy.

Jean: And one of my favorites. 2 Timothy chapter 3, and you can read in verse 16 and 17. It says, "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God." And then it says, "It's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God might be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And so we have all Scripture reference here. It's not just a portion of the Scripture, but the Bible itself says that it is God-breathed or inspired; God-breathed Scripture, it's the Word of God.

Doug: And there's been efforts through history where people find Scripture that they don't like what it says and so they try to get the Scripture to be changed to fit what they want. But in reality, the purpose

of the Scripture is to change us. It's not that we should change the Scripture. All of it is the message of God to us. And not the Bible needs changing, we need changing. And then when we talk about the living Word of God, one of the most famous verses that is--you're really on holy ground when you read 1 John 1. 1 John, verses 1 through 3, "That which was from the beginning--" I'm sorry, 1 John. Thank you very much, dear. 1 John 1, 1 through 3, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled concerning the Word of life."

See, these are living words. "The life was manifested and we have seen and we bear witness and we declare to you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us, that which we have seen and heard we declare to you that you may also have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." It's called the Word of life. It gives life. How did the universe come into existence? God said, God said, "Let there be." And God said, things came into existence. There is life in the Word of God. I love the story in the Bible where a leper comes to Jesus and he says--and it says he's full of leprosy. And he said, "Lord, if you want, you can make me clean." And he said, "I will. Be thou clean." It's like when God said, "Let there be light." And when God says be, it happens. And he said, "Let there be light." "Be thou clean." He was clean. There's creative power in the Word of God.

Jean: And, of course, Jesus is described as the Word. Now, we read 1 John. But if you read the other book written by John, probably the more famous one is the Gospel of John. Did you notice the similarity between the first few verses of the Gospel of John and the first few verses of 1 John? He's talking about the Word of God, the power of the Word. "And then the Word became flesh and dwelt with us." So not only is the Bible the Word of God, but who does the Bible talk about? Talks about Jesus. And so Jesus also described as the Word of God. Thus he is living--ever living to make intercession for us. So you can't separate the Bible from Christ that is the Word of God.

And, you know, Pastor Doug, I want to have a quick thought on that. You know, in the Book of Revelation, Jesus is described as the Alpha and the Omega. Now, do you know what Alpha and Omega is? Well, we say it's the first and the last and that's correct, but it's the first and the last of what? Of the Greek alphabet. So it's kind of a strange title Jesus is called the A and the Z of the Greek alphabet. Now, we might wonder, "Why is that?" Well, what do we do with the letters of the alphabet? We put them in different order and we create words. And what are our words? Our words are our thoughts expressed. So Jesus is God's thoughts expressed. He's the Word of God. That's why when the disciples say, "Show us the Father and suffices us," Jesus says, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." If you want to know what the Father is thinking, look at Jesus, he is the Word of God, he's God's thoughts revealed.

Doug: Amen, it's kind of like saying Jesus is the alphabet of God, the Word of God, everything God uses to communicate to us. He is the Word. And then, Pastor Ross, there's several verses that highlight an important truth about the Bible that--it is truth. Jesus said, John 17:17, "Sanctify them by your truth. Your Word is truth." And so when people begin to pick and choose in the Bible and say, "Well, we think this part is true, but, you know, Paul, he really didn't know what he was saying over here and can't believe that." Jesus has settled this. He said, "Thy Word is truth." The Bible, it's all truth. And Christ said of course, "I am the way, the truth." He is the Word. He is the truth. He's the embodiment of the Word. I think we have a couple other verses on the truth. John 15:26, if you want to read that one.

Jean: That's right, we got John chapter 15:26 to 27, Jesus speaking, he says, "But when the helper comes, whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me and you also will be a witness because you have been with me from the beginning." So there we find Jesus is referred to as the truth, but now the Holy Spirit is described as the Spirit of truth as well. So you have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all connected with truth. What is this truth? It's the way of life, how we can have everlasting life in Jesus.

Doug: You know, one point you can't really overstate is that when you think about the Bible, it is really a written embodiment of a person. For example, can a person be a book? Of course you've ever heard

someone say, "I can read you like a book." You know, Jesus is called the light. The Bible is called the light. That's our memory verse. Jesus is called the truth. The Bible is called the truth. Jesus is called the bread. The Bible is called the bread. Jesus is called the Word. The Bible is called the Word. Jesus is called eternal. The Bible is called eternal. You start looking through the different characteristics of the Bible, you'll find that they're often used in parallel to describe Jesus as well.

Jean: Now, probably that lesson brings up the point probably some of the most significant words that a person speaks, at least for those who know the person, would be some of his final words or her final words. And some of the final words that Moses spoke to the children of Israel were rather significant because he's challenging them, he's encouraging them to be faithful to God. And we find Moses's last words to the children of Israel recorded in Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 32.

Now, we're not going to read the whole passage, but one of the things that Moses is emphasizing to the children of Israel, he says, "Set your hearts on the words, these words that I speak unto you." He also says the children of Israel were to observe those words. They were to teach their children the truths and they were to guide their children in obedience to the Word. So what are some of the parting words of Moses to the children of Israel? He says, "Take the Word to heart. Keep the Word. Teach the Word. Order your life in harmony with the Word." So we see the centrality of the Word in the life of the believer.

Doug: Yeah, absolutely, keep talking. I was reading something.

Jean: Oh, you were reading, all right, just wondering what I was saying there. But not only is the children of Israel that need the Word, we need the Word, right?

Doug: I found what I want.

Jean: Oh, you got it, okay, because I wasn't quite sure where I was going with that, Pastor Doug.

Doug: Not only Moses at the end of his life when Pastor Ross is quoting that there in Deuteronomy, the first book of Joshua, notice the emphasis on Joshua's leadership. He said, "Be careful to observe--" And this is Joshua chapter 1, verse 8. "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth." That's what they called the Bible back then, the book of the law, they didn't have all of it yet. "It shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein, that you may be prosperous and that you will have good success."

Now, that's a promise to all of us. If we are having morning and evening worship and we're trying to live by not some but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, God promised Joshua, "You would be successful and you will be prosperous," and he was, but he said, "Day and night meditate on this book-- these words."

Jean: Now, of course the Bible is central--essentially in the Bible as we've already been mentioning is Christ and the good news of salvation. Matter of fact, not only is the Bible filled with prophecies in the Old Testament pointing forward to Christ, but even the stories that you read about in the Old Testament and the New Testament, particularly the Old Testament, are shadows or types that teach lessons about Jesus. Now, Pastor Doug, we haven't spoken about this before, but I'm sure you're going to be able to handle this. One of the things that Pastor Doug likes to do is to look at some of the stories in the Bible and bring out points in the story that emphasize Christ or some aspect of Christ's ministry, so I jotted down a few Bible stories. And can we bring up some sort of spiritual [inaudible]? The first is the story of Joseph. How does that teach us about Jesus?

Doug: Oh my, this could be the whole sermon now. Well, first of all, you've got the beloved son of an ancient father, he sends him looking for his lost brethren. Jesus is sent by the Father, looking for the lost. But when he comes to them, instead of being thankful, they mistreat him. They throw him in a pit. He's sold for the price of a slave. He's sold for 20 pieces of silver, where Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver. But he's willing to forgive them. The whole world is fed with bread from Joseph. His brothers don't know him. They didn't realize what an exalted position he had. I mean, he's number two in command. Jesus is number two in command, as you would say, to the Father. And there's just so many similarities. There's

finally a dinner with them, and there's a big dispute over a cup at a dinner where he sits down with the 12. Jesus seals the new covenant with a cup when he has a dinner with the 12. I can go on and on. Just the analogies and parallels between Jesus and Joseph—

Jean: What about Samson, Pastor Doug?

Doug: Samson, people think, "How could Samson be a type of Christ here? You got this womanizing drunkard." But Samson really was a type of Jesus. You know, he was tied up by his people and handed over to the enemy. Samson was betrayed by Delilah. Woman represents the church. And given into the hands of the Gentiles for silver. And the last--and the Bible says that Samson was--he was bound. He was blinded. And Jesus, they blinded him. They put a hood over his head, they bound him, they beat him, mistreated him. The last act of Samson's life is he stretches out his arms and he prays for God's Spirit, and Jesus commended his Spirit to God. Samson's filled with the Spirit, and the Bible says he slew more by his death than he did by his life. Jesus through his sacrifice more of the enemy are destroyed than anything, that's through the cross, right? A lot of analogies even about Samson.

Jean: And, of course, it's just the two stories, but you can probably look at all of the different stories in the Bible and learn lessons from teaching Jesus, yeah. All right, well, on Monday--we better keep moving here. The question is asked, who wrote the Bible and where was it written?

Doug: Yeah, the Bible is a fascinating book because it's written by every stripe and type of people. You've got prisoners. You've got people that are living in caves. You've got people that are living in palaces. You have shepherds. You've got tax collectors. You've got fishermen. I mean, they're writing from out in the wilderness, in the middle of a city. I mean, you think about the different experience. And so the Bible is something that everybody can relate to. Stories in the Bible are embraced by children, and then they challenge the deepest thinkers of the world.

Jean: Now, not all of those who wrote in the Bible were necessarily eyewitnesses of certain events. Some of them were eyewitnesses. Many of the New Testament writings are the story of Jesus. You got an eyewitness account from the disciples who wrote. Some of those who wrote the Scripture, they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, guiding them in writing. But many of them actually researched the writings of other Scripture or other Bible writers to help understand what they had seen in vision will help explain the truth that they were trying to portray. So you have eyewitness account in the Bible, but you also have inspired counsel; but then you have authors who have done research from other Bible authors under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring out different aspects. Often in the New Testament, you'll have Paul quoting from some passage in the Old Testament. So the Bible interacts with itself, and we find the writers also interacting with other authors in Scripture.

Doug: Yeah, sometimes today you'll hear Christian authors accused of plagiarism for quoting other Christian authors. In Bible times, they often quoted each other without giving credit. Read 1 and 2 Peter and then read the Book of Jude and you'll be surprised how many references there are and Jude never says, "You know, Peter said this first." Because it's a message from God. And early Christian authors, they weren't worried about who's getting the credit. They thought, "These are messages from God." And so you'll hear Paul quoting things that Jesus said that he did not hear Jesus say firsthand because he wasn't converted until later, but he heard the other disciples repeat it and then he says it.

And then you'll have--there's a few people who are some unknown writers in the Bible. They are not widely known. Here's one example. If you go to 2 Samuel 20, verse 23, it's talking about David's cabinet, it says, "Joab was over the army of Israel, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada that was over the Kerethites and Pelethites." These are like the honor guard. "Adoniram was in charge of the revenue. Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder." That meant scribe.

Now, when you're reading through the "Deeds of the Kings," who do you think wrote that? Or some of that may have been edited by Ezra later, but these scribes were inspired and some of it, I think, was contributed to--David had some prophets in his kingdom like Nathan, like Gad. And they don't always sign their writings, but--you know, that's why when we talk about how many people wrote the Bible,

you'll hear the number vacillate between 38 and 42. We're not exactly sure because there are parts--like when you get to 2 Samuel. When does Samuel die? At the end of 1 Samuel. So how did he write 2 Samuel? Email? So someone else probably wrote that, and it may have been the chronicles of one of the scribes that were a Spirit-filled recorder.

Jean: One of the passages I like is what Peter says in 1 Peter--actually 2 Peter. 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 16. This is what he says. He says, "For we did not follow cunningly-devised fables when we made known unto you the power of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." And then he goes on to talk about the voice that came. "This is our beloved son--" Or, "This is my beloved son." on the mount when Peter, James, and John were there with Jesus. So Peter is emphasizing the fact, he says, "We haven't made these things up about Jesus." He says, "We were there, we saw it, we're bearing an eyewitness account it is trustworthy." And if they're just come up with some story, if they had made up the whole story of the resurrection, why would you have so many of the disciples willing to die for that belief if they had simply made it up? So the fact that this belief was so central to them testifies that it was indeed true. They were eyewitnesses of the things that they talk about that we read about in the New Testament.

Doug: Amen, now, when you're thinking about who are the greatest contributors to the Bible--this isn't really in the lesson, but just something to exercise your minds a little bit. Who do you think wrote most of the Old Testament? Probably Moses. David's not far behind. And then New Testament? Probably Paul. I think Paul writes nearly half of the New Testament.

But let me give you something--did they know that they were speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit when they wrote? Interesting statement. This is one of the last phrases from David, who is one of the large contributors of the Bible, mostly the Psalms. In 2 Samuel 23, verse 1. Now these are the last words of David. "Thus says David the son of Jesse--" You know, usually it says thus says the Lord. But listen how he words this. "Thus says David, the son of Jesse. Thus says the man raised up on high, taken from a shepherd to the highest place in the kingdom. The anointed of God of Jacob." He remembered when the Spirit of the Lord came on him. "The sweet psalmist of Israel. The Spirit of the Lord's spoke by me, and his Word was in my tongue."

Well, that's something. I mean, he's--you got to call David very arrogant and a liar. You say, "This man was just stating a fact that he knew what it was like to have the Spirit of the Lord come on him." He knew what it was like to have the Spirit of the Lord leave him. That's why he prayed in Psalm 51, "Take not your Holy Spirit from me." But they knew they had a message from God. Some of the prophets had come in and say, "Thus says the Lord. This is a message from God." Some of them didn't want to do it. Moses didn't want to do it at first. Jeremiah didn't want to do it. Isaiah said, "Woe is me," and he called them and said, "I have a message, I want you to give it," and they spoke, let God speak through them and it wasn't always well received.

Jean: I like also what David says, speaking about being under inspiration. You find this in 2 Psalm that you're reading, Pastor Doug. The last part says, "The rock of Israel spoke to me. He who rules over men must be just." So he's referring to God as the rock of Israel. Of course, Jesus in the New Testament is referred to as the rock, as the foundation of the church. So just throughout the Bible is scattered the fact that Jesus is central to the Scriptures, and the plan of redemption is found from cover to cover.

Doug: Now, those who wrote the Bible--we probably won't be able to belabor this point too long, but they came from all different educational strata. Paul was deeply educated as well as Moses. Moses was properly educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, which was--that was the top university at the time. And he was probably being prepared for leadership in the throne, I'm sure he was deeply-educated. You know, one reason Alexander the Great was so successful, he was educated by Aristotle. I mean, you think about that, that's to have your own tutor one of the great Greek philosophers. Moses was being educated by some of the wisest people, people that can build pyramids that are still a mystery to us. He had a great education. He--good thing for you and me, he was able to write and he was able to read. And Paul was greatly educated. But then God calls fishermen. He calls people like Amos who says, "I was not a prophet

or a son of a prophet, but I was a gatherer of sycamore fruit." He calls Elisha who is out farming. And so from all different strata of society, God spoke through these people.

Jean: And God spoke through old people. He spoke through young people. For example, Jeremiah when the Word of the Lord came to him, he said, "Lord, behold, I cannot speak for I'm a youth." Of course, Daniel, when he was taken captive along with his three friends to Babylon, they were still probably in their teens and yet God spoke through him and through them. So God could use old people. For example, John--the Apostle John, when he wrote the Book of Revelation, he was an old man. The last of the apostles still alive. The rest had died a martyr's death. Very old, but the Word of the Lord came to him and he spoke--he wrote the Book of Revelation. So God can use young, he can use old. He's not limited by education, background, culture. He's able to communicate his will through whoever is willing, a willing vessel that God could use.

Doug: Yeah, and of course he can communicate to anybody today through you to others if we're willing. You know, there's a nice quote that's in the lesson. It's from "Selected Messages Book 1" page 26. It says, "God has been pleased to communicate his truth to the world by human agencies, and he himself by his Holy Spirit qualify these men and enabled them to do his work. He guided the mind in selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is nonetheless from heaven." Yes, it is true that the people that God chose to write the Bible were not sinless. You know, they made mistakes. You can go from Moses to Paul and Peter all the way through. But they were spirit-filled. They were consecrated to him, and he was able to fill them with the Spirit and speak to them and through them.

Jean: The next section in our lesson talks about the Bible is prophecy, and about 30% of the various parts of the Old Testament is pointing in some way or another towards Christ or some prophetic event associated with, not only Christ, but with the nation of Israel or something willing to our time in the day of judgment near the end of time. So prophecy is scattered throughout the Scriptures. And we find in Amos chapter 3, verse 7 this very well-known verse, it says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets."

So what makes the Bible different from any other religious book is because the Bible not only sent as in Jesus or in Christ, but it also can tell us things that will happen in the future. And the prophecies given in the Scripture have all come true just perfectly as given in the Bible. And, you know, we might touch on some of that, Pastor Doug, if we have time. But "Amazing Facts" prepared a DVD called "Kingdoms in Time." And I don't know if you've had a chance to see that, but what it does is it looks at some of the most compelling prophecies in the Old Testament and some in the new that Jesus made and how history has proven those prophecies to be perfectly fulfilled, like the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. So when you look at all of the prophecies and how accurate they are, that increases your faith in the Word of God. We can trust the Bible.

Doug: Amen, who knows where you find the first prophecy in the Bible? Genesis 3:15. "And I'll put enmity between thee and the woman." And is--the last verse in the Bible, is it a prophecy? "Even so come Lord Jesus." Last words in the Old Testament: "Behold, I send you Elijah the Prophet." Is it a prophecy? And that isn't far before you get into the first chapter of the New Testament it talks about prophecies of Jesus' first coming. Matthew spends a lot of time quoting Old Testament prophecies that are fulfilled in Christ. So the Bible is really a book of prophecy. Every now and then, you'll run into a preacher out there and says, "Oh, these folks that focus on prophecy, they're wasting their time." You have to ignore the Bible if you say you're going to ignore prophecy because it is very integral to its message.

Jean: And some of the prophecies--we don't have time to go through all of them because there's about 65 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in a life and ministry of Jesus, but just a few of them. Genesis chapter 49, it tells us that Shiloh will come--speaking of the Messiah, will come from the tribe of Judah. Well, we know that Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. Psalm 22, and this is an amazing prophecy, tells us that his hands and his feet would be pierced. That's exactly what happened to Jesus when he died on

the cross. His hands and his feet were pierced.

Doug: Pardon me, one more thing about Psalm 22. You know what the first verse is? "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The very words he spoke on the cross were the first line in a messianic prophecy. So it may even be the thief hanging on the cross next to Jesus knew that psalm and when he heard Jesus quote from that psalm and then he looked at his hands and his feet being pierced and being surrounded by dogs and gambling for his Ramon, he's going, "This is the Messiah." Not to mention the sign above his head that said, "King of the Jews." And so that's a very important psalm, Psalm 22.

Jean: And of course one of the passages of Scripture that is a challenge for the Jewish people who reject Jesus as the Messiah is Isaiah 53, which really describes the suffering Messiah. What he would do? And of course all of those prophecies were perfectly fulfilled: He's a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief. He was rejected by his very own, and yet he was the sacrifice for sin. I mean, it's just an amazing prophecy pointing to Jesus, which was perfectly fulfilled in Christ's ministry and in his death.

Doug: And then the prophecy that made me jump up and down when I first read it and understood it was in Daniel. Daniel has a lot of prophecy. The 490-year prophecy that perfectly outline the ministry of Jesus: when he would be baptized, when he would die, when the message would then go to the Gentile world, and to see how perfectly that all lined up. What is--what does prophecy do for you when you read it and you see it fulfilled? I remember Dr. Leslie Harding used to frequently say, "Prophecy is best understood looking back." You know, Jesus said, "When these things come to pass, then you will know it's redemptive." The purpose of prophecy is to increase our faith in the Bible. When I--you know, as an atheist, when you see prophecy coming true, I started out that way, you say, "Wow, there's a God. He must understand time and maybe he knows what's coming and there's a future, and the rest of what the Bible says is true." People have it--it's easier for people to believe in the message about heaven and hell and everything in the Bible when they see God has been accurate in prophecy. That's why so many evangelists when they do an evangelistic program, what's their first sermon? It's usually Daniel 2. They usually -- because if you get people coming that don't believe the Bible, you've got to get them to develop confidence in the book, and prophecy is one of the best ways to do that.

Jean: Probably moving on to the next section here is Bible is history. Not only is it a prophetic book, but it's also a book of history. But it's a unique book of history. It's not just simply stating what individuals have done over time or what has happened in different nations, but central to the history in the Bible is how God interacted with his people, how God interacts with individuals, and how God directed in the affairs of the earth. So it's unique history book in that it send us upon God and his dealing with mankind.

Doug: When you say the word history, it's really composed of two words, his story, and history is really his story and it's the way that God deals with men. You know, some of the great people through history that have talked about the Bible--Abraham Lincoln, for instance, he said, "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to men. All of the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book." It's quite a statement.

George Mueller, this is true also. You know who George Mueller was, that famous Christian that sustained an orphanage by faith for years. Never asked for an offering. The money always came through prayer. He said, "The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." I think that's inspiring. The vigor of our spiritual life will be in proportion to the place that the Scriptures are held in our life and our thoughts. If you've got a very low esteem for the Bible, that'll usually reflect in your spiritual life. If you have a high esteem for the Word of God, for sharing, living by the Word of God, reading the Word of God, that will lift you. And Dwight Moody used to say, "Sin will keep you from the Bible or the Bible will keep you from sin." And I find that's true as well.

Jean: Now, of course the Old Testament has a central hope, and the New Testament has a central hope. What do you think is the central hope and focus of the Old Testament? The coming of the Messiah. That was the central hope. You find that in the very first prophecy. What do you think is the central focus and hope in the New Testament? The second coming of Christ. So central to the history in the Bible is looking

forward to Christ coming the first time; and in the New Testament, it's looking forward to Christ coming the second time. So the hope in history is Jesus. Matter of fact, he's the only hope for history. If you look what's happening in our world today and what's happening amongst the nations, is there any way our world can ever put itself together and live in peace? No, there is hope only in Jesus, we need his kingdom to come. That's why we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Doug: Amen, I just say amen to that. You're preaching there. You know, when Jesus came the first time, he came as a lamb, and he's coming the second time as a lion. And people need to understand the reason for his first coming and embrace his sacrifice in order to be ready to survive the second coming. And that's what the whole map of the Bible is about. You know, we have 2 minutes left, Pastor Ross. Can we get to the part about transforming the power of--the transforming power of the Word? We just got a few verses here. And you want to read Hebrews 4, verse 12?

Jean: Yes, it's under the section "Transforming Power of the Word." It says, "For the Word of God is living and powerful," Hebrews 4:12, "and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; and it is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart." Probably the greatest evidence for the inspiration of the Bible is the way the Bible can change people's lives, and we have exhibit A standing right next to me today, Pastor Doug. And the work of the Lord has done through him through the Word, and what a powerful story of lives changed by the Bible.

Doug: There's a story that they asked you to read. And we'll not have time to read it all now, but I really recommend it there in 2 Kings chapter 22. You can read the whole chapter. There was a young king who--well, he told them to clean up the temple, and in the process of cleaning up the temple they found the book of Moses that had been lost. Just been covered over through the reign of some bad kings and here--you know, they were a Jewish nation, but they'd really lost the Word. And they read it to the king. And in the process of reading, probably the Book of Deuteronomy, to King Josiah, he just wept, tore his clothes. He repented. There was a revival in the nation, and it all sprang from the rediscovery of the Word.

And I'm hoping that during this quarter when we are delving into the Word of God, both here locally and those who are joining us online around the world, that there will be a revival that takes place. We remember why we believe what we believe and why we are who we are, it's all going to spring back to the foundation in the Word.

Jean: You know, the Bible tells us in Romans chapter 12, verse 2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." It is through the Word that our mind is transformed. It's the power of the Word of God. So we don't want to underestimate the power of the Word of God. Matter of fact, how many people--how many times in your life and in the lives of people you know you have been sustained by quoting and claiming a promise found in the Bible? Just this morning, a verse kept going around and around in my mind as I woke up and I thought, "Wow, what a promise." And I repeated it several times. There is power in the Word of God. We can claim the promises of the Bible and have a way of transforming us, and that's good news, that's power.

Doug: Amen, thank you so much friends who are joining us online. And God willing, we'll look forward to studying his Word with you again next week. I do want to mention we have a free offer. They're going to put that back up on the screen, and I think it's the book, "The Ultimate Resource." Yes, "The Ultimate Resource." Call 866-788-3966 and we'll send you a free copy. You can also download it. If you want to text, simply text the code "SH091" and you text that to our number, which is 40544. You'll get the information there on how to get a free copy. You can download it right then. God bless you, and let's stay in prayer. We'll study his Word with you again online next week.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select a digital download option on the request page. It's now

easier than ever for you to study God's Word with "Amazing Facts" wherever and whenever you want, and most important to share it with others.

Male: I grew up in a church-going family. I mean, we were at every meeting. I sang in four of the choirs there. I directed three. Very involved, very active. It almost seemed like busy work sometimes. You know, I went to Sunday school, I knew about God, I knew about Jesus, but I didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

My senior year in high school, I got the news my father had been murdered. I played it off well. No one really saw that I was struggling with it. It just really felt like there was a hole that needed to be filled, and I tried to fill it with drugs, with alcohol, with partying. After college, I just stopped going to church altogether. One day on a Sunday because I didn't feel like going to church with my mom, I thought, "You know, I should get a little bit of Word." She had the satellite system hooked up, and I'm flipping through channels and then the logo pops across, "Amazing Facts Presents."

I've listened to a lot of different ministers, but this was the first time that he's actually saying something where I had to grab my Bible and actually pick it up. "And I've never heard this before. Let me look through and find this." I went through all the Storacles. I went through all the study guides that I just couldn't get enough, and then the Sabbath came up, and he's going through the appeal and I'm just going, "Lord, I hear you. I have to go to the church." So I show up, it was funny, I didn't feel like I was going to be judged, anything judgmental, anything. I walked in the door and I just felt at home, but there's still a problem. I'm still partying. I was still going out to the bars. At this time, I was selling cocaine to pay my rent.

Sixteen days later, I find myself in a life-or-death situation. I just came back from a liquor store and grabbed a bottle of vodka, and there I am high off cocaine with my Bible in hand trying to do a Bible study and I heard an audible voice, "Just look at yourself." And I did and I was like, "What am I doing?" And I got on my knees and I said, "Lord, if you do not take this away from me now, I'm going to kill myself." I was going to continue this lifestyle and I was going to end up overdosing, having a heart attack, whatever it was. "You have to take this away, all of it." And that day, he lifted all of it away from me. It was all gone. When God does something in your life, he does it complete.

Doug: So what is the brightest light in the world? Well, naturally you'd say the sun, but we're talking about the brightest man-made light in the world. It's the light that shines out of the roof of that pyramid-shaped hotel in Las Vegas called the Luxor. There in the cap of that hotel, there's a room that contains 39 washing-machine-sized Xenon bulb, and each of those bulbs requires about 7,000 watts. All together, they produce about 40 billion candle power of light. Can you imagine getting that electric bill at the Luxor Hotel every month? That light is so bright that planes can see it 250 miles away. They are shining light 10 miles up into space; meaning if you happen to be floating by, you could read a newspaper up there. And as you might have guessed, that bright light has become the world's best bug attractor, bringing in moths and bats and owls creating its own ecosystem there are at night above the hotel.

But the sad thing about the brightest light in the world is especially when the night air is clear, without any particles, the light doesn't hit anything and it's invisible. It shoots up into empty space. The brightest light in the world illuminates nothing. You know, the Bible tells us that there's another great wasted light, and that's the light of God's Word. It says in Psalm 119, verse 105, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," and yet so many people are walking in darkness. Furthermore, Jesus said, "If you do have that light, make sure you don't put it under a bushel, but you let it shine and illuminate the lives of others." Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5, "Set your light up on a hill like a city so that all might see it."

Light only benefits others when it reflects off of something. God wants our lights to illuminate the lives of others. So are you glowing for God? Remember, Jesus said, "Let there be light."