

Q2 L04 - **The Bible - the Authoritative Source of Our Theology** - 2020-04-25

Jean Ross: Hello friends, we'd like to welcome all of you to "Sabbath School Study Hour" coming to you from the Amazing Facts World Headquarters in Sacramento, California. Of course, this is part of the Granite Bay online church service and as many of you know, across the country, and really around the world, we're doing something different as we can't gather together in large groups because of the virus, but we can still gather together and study God's Word. We have a very exciting lesson that we want to share with you today. It's in our lesson quarterly entitled How To Interpret Scripture, and today we find ourselves on lesson number four and it's entitled, The Bible, The Authoritative Source Of Our Theology, very important study. What do we believe, why do we believe it? It needs to be based upon the Bible.

Well, before we get to our study, I'd like to remind our friends joining us across the country and around the world about our free offer. This is actually our first lesson in the Amazing Facts lesson study series entitled, Is There Anything Left You Can Trust? And it's all about the Bible, how do we interpret the Bible, how do we understand the Bible? If you'd like to receive this study guide for free, the number to call is 866-788-3966 and you can ask for Offer Number 103. You can also text the number, or the code, SH043 to the number 40544, and we can send you a digital link where you'll be able to read and study this right online on your phone, or your iPad, or your computer, whatever it might be.

Well, even though we're not meeting with our regular congregation, it still gives us an opportunity to lift our voices in song wherever you might be. We invite you to join us for our Sabbath School song and Jolene will come and lead us in our song this morning.

Jolene: Thank you, Pastor Ross. I invite you to bring out your hymnals wherever you are, and we're going to sing hymn number 523, "My Faith Has Found A Resting Place." My grandpa and I used to talk about what it would be like just before Jesus came. He always wondered, what is it going to be like? How will the earth fall apart? This week when I was walking, I thought of grandpa and I thought, boy, if you could see things now, Grandpa, you'd know that we are about to go home.

So, we're going to sing about that, 523, we're going to sing the first, the second, and the last verse.

♪♪♪

♪ My faith has found

a resting place ♪

♪ Not in a manmade creed ♪

♪ I trust the ever living One ♪

♪ That He for me shall plead ♪

♪ I need no other evidence ♪

♪ I need no other plea ♪

♪ It is enough that Jesus died ♪

♪ And rose again for me ♪

♪ Enough for me that Jesus saves ♪

♪ This ends my fear and doubt ♪

♪ A sinful soul ♪

♪ I come to Him ♪

♪ He will not cast me out ♪

♪ I need no other evidence ♪

♪ I need no other plea ♪

♪ It is enough ♪

♪ That Jesus died ♪

♪ And rose again for me ♪

♪ The great Physician ♪

♪ Heals the sick ♪

♪ The lost He came to save ♪

♪ For me His precious blood He shed ♪

♪ For me His life He gave ♪

♪ I need no other evidence ♪

♪ I need no other plea ♪

♪ It is enough that Jesus died ♪

♪ And rose again for me ♪

Jean: Amen, thank you, Jolene, for that beautiful song, and Pastor Doug, welcome. We are going to be looking at a very important study this morning.

Doug Batchelor: Thank you Pastor, Ross. Thank you, Jolene. We're going to be talking today about the authority of God's Word. We're going through our quarterly talking about how to interpret Scripture and the study today in particular is talking about the authority of the Bible. And we have a memory verse and the memory verse is from Isaiah chapter 8, verse 20. Any good evangelist knows this. It says, "According to the law, or to the law, in the testimony if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." And the Bible needs to be the bottom line.

Now, we want to make this as much as an interactive class as we can since we're studying with you online, and so if any of you who are watching now on Facebook, YouTube Live, that would be the Doug Batchelor Facebook page, The Amazing Facts Facebook page, the Granite Bay Facebook page, and you have questions about the lesson, we want to tell you right at the beginning, Pastor Ross is sort of plugged in with someone who's getting your messages, and they're going to send them to him. Just give your name and what your question is about the lesson. You may have a question about some of what's happening in the world today, and we'll screen through those as well. Send them in, we want to try and answer as many questions as we can. And then we'll, you know, take them.

Matter of fact, I'm going to invite Santiago up here. We've got people listening or anyone tuned in from around the world, Santiago? Yeah, come on up here. We can, we're going to put you--we'll hold our breath, don't worry. Well, we'll put you right in here. We're trying to maintain our social, social distance. He's kind of keeping track of who's tuning in.

>> Santiago: Yeah, we have a Winsome watching from watching from Michigan, Elizabeth from Germany, Yancey says Happy Sabbath from California. We got Andrew from South Africa saying Happy Sabbath, Oscar from Florida, Nellen from New York, Byron from Canada. We got Adeli from the North Fork Church, Marina from Las Vegas.

Doug: People all over. All right, so what will happen now, if you have a question about the lesson, you go ahead and put that into Facebook, it's going to be relayed to Pastor Ross's computer and he'll share that with us. Thank you, Santiago, appreciate that.

Jean: Well, Pastor Doug, before we get to our lesson, it's probably always good to have a Word of prayer. When we open up the Bible, and we're studying especially about the Bible, we want the Holy Spirit to help and guide our understanding. So, let's bow our heads for prayer.

Dear Father, we thank you once again that we do have this opportunity to gather together here in Sacramento, just a few of us in the studio, but those gathered around the world in homes. We pray, Lord, that you would be with all of us as we open up your Word. It's so important, it is the anchor to our faith and we pray that you give us understanding as we look at this important lesson. In Jesus' name, amen.

Doug: Amen. Jean: Well, Pastor Doug, as you mentioned a little earlier, we are going to invite those who have Bible questions, probably the theme of the questions that we're hoping for today, anything related to the Bible. If you have questions about how to understand the Bible, or maybe there's a particular verse in Scripture that has puzzled you and you're wondering, what exactly does this mean? We'd love to hear from you. You can just type that Bible question on Facebook. I believe it's the Amazing Facts Facebook page, or the Doug Batchelor Facebook page, and they're going to email it to me, and I'm going to try and take as many of these questions through our program. We do want to make sure we have enough time though to cover the lesson because there's some very important points that we need to highlight in the lesson.

The first thing, if you look on our opening study, the first day it says tradition as being sort of the subject that we need to look at as it relates to the Bible. Doug: Absolutely. Now, this subject about the authority of Scripture, it really was the turning point for the Protestant Reformation because the church had said that really the church and tradition are above Scripture and their argument was, who is it that interprets Scripture? It must ultimately be the church that interprets Scripture so the authority of the church is above the authority of Scripture. I know that sounds a little convoluted to a Protestant, but for the Protestants they said, no, the Church must be guided by Scripture and the church's authority is

measured, or regulated, or restrained by Scripture. The ultimate authority must be Scripture, even above tradition. Now, this is no new problem. Jesus dealt with that during His earthly ministry. And maybe to kick this off, Pastor Ross, if you want to go ahead and read Mark 7, go ahead and read 6 through 13, and then we'll comment on that.

Jean: The verse that we're looking at is Mark chapter 7, beginning then in verse 6. If you have your Bibles, you can follow with us. "He answered and said to them," Jesus speaking, "'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.' He said unto them, this is verse 9, 'All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother.'" Of course, it was more than just Moses who said that, that's part of the Ten Commandments. "And, 'He who curses his father and his mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father and mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift of God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Doug: You know, I used to wonder when I first read through the Bible, what does this mean where they would say, Corban, and they didn't honor their father and mother. And evidently, they had a manmade tradition sort of developed by the priests in the temple, that, you know, they were anxious for funds to support the temple. And someone said, "Well, I would donate to the temple, but I need to take care of my mother and father in old age." And they manufactured a law that pretty much says if you choose to dedicate or will your assets to the temple, then you can declare Corban over it, that word means gift, and you can tell your mother and father, "I can't really support you in your old age." Keep in mind, they had no Social Security back then.

It was really the obligation of a family to care for their aged parents. They say, "Sorry, mom and dad, I'm going to have to actually boot you out on the street or we can't help you because it belongs to the Lord now." You could use it as long as you live, but you couldn't give it away because it was dedicated to the Lord. And so, they kind of made this law that you can neglect the law about honoring your father and mother in order for the temple to get the money, and the tradition was trumping the commandment of God. And He said there's many things like that you do. And so, now, do we have some of those manmade traditions that seemed to trump the commandments of God in the church today?

Jean: Well, you know, Pastor Doug, it's interesting in the time of Jesus, that he was upholding the authority of Scripture. He would say, "It is written." The religious leaders, they were upset with Jesus because He placed the Word above their traditions. Well, you come down a thousand years later to the time of the Reformation and you find once again, the religious leaders of the day being very upset with the reformers because they said, in essence it's the same thing that Jesus said, is that Scripture is above the church's traditions, and that offended a lot of people. It actually led to persecution of Bible-believing Christians.

Doug: You know, Matthew Henry in his commentary, he said that during the Dark Ages, the church had manufactured a similar law to Corban. If someone said that they were going to join the monastery, they could give all their money to the monastery, they joined the monastery, they didn't have to give anything to their mother and father to take care of them. And so, he basically said, "You know, this isn't the first time that's happened, what happened there." But why do people go to church on Sunday?

Jean: Biblical reason for that.

Doug: You know, and people say, "Well, we've done this for over a thousand years," which certainly makes it a tradition. When you do something a long period of time, it sort of becomes a tradition, but I've often stood up in live meetings with hundreds, thousands of people and I say, show me one verse in Scripture that commands us to keep the first day holy as the Sabbath. And there's usually a deafening

silence, nobody says anything. I say, all right, then why are we doing it? Tradition. And they'll have lots of arguments like, "Well, it's because we're not under the law." So, why are we keeping Sundays the Sabbath? It's the Lord's day. But where are we commanded to do that? "Well, it said John was in the spirit on the Lord's day." So, where does it say He's resting and that is a new Sabbath? Where does it say God threw out the Old Sabbath? It's just a tradition.

Jean: But if you look at what the Lord's Day is in the Bible, it's pretty clear that there is a day that God claims is His. That's the seventh day, it's the Sabbath. So, the idea that Sunday is now the new Lord's day, it's not biblical. You know, we do have folks who are sending in questions, Pastor Doug, as you mentioned, they are coming in, and let's try and take a few of them. Manny's asking the question, "Who decides what is, or which is Scripture?" We're talking about the authority and importance of Scripture but who gets to decide this? Is it the church that decides what Scripture is?

Doug: Well, the Bible, the Bible is the one who--the Bible is the one--the Bible is the book that has been agreed upon from the days of the apostles, and I can hear where the person's coming from. They're saying, "Well, it's the church who decided what was Scripture." It says the authority of the church is above the authority of the Bible. Once the church comes together and decides this is Scripture--it was the early church in the time of the apostles that first recognized what the books of the New Testament were. By the time of Christ, Jesus tells us what Scripture is, and in the time of the apostles, they're telling us what Scripture is. And these are the holy men that are moved by the Holy Spirit, so that's been established since 100 A.D. right into the Book of Revelation.

Jean: What I find interesting is that the Scripture precedes, if you like, the church. Let me explain, in the time of Abraham, you know, God spoke to Abraham and his descendants, God communicated directly with him. But it's not until the time of Moses that you actually have the Scripture being written down. And we believe that during the 40 years when Moses in the wilderness, he began to write possibly the Book of Genesis during that time, the Book of Job. So, by the time the children of Israel come up out of Egypt and they, in essence, become the Old Testament church, there is already a Scripture given under the inspiration of God by Moses, maybe just one or two of the books.

But as time has gone on, the time of Christ, the Old Testament, which was the Scripture, was already established. And in the New Testament era, the Scripture that the apostles refer to was the Old Testament. And then as time went on, you find some of the apostles referring to the writings of some of the other apostles. So, it's not a church that gets to say, "I think this is Scripture and that's Scripture," it's really the Bible that tells us what is inspired and what's not inspired.

Doug: And even the last book of the Bible was Revelation and it says, "If any man thinks to add to the words of this book, he's going to be called least, or the curses will be added to him if he thinks to add or if he takes away, his name is going to be taken away from the Book of Life." So, now are all traditions bad? Just because something's a tradition doesn't mean it's no good if you can't find it in the Bible. You know, we, in our culture, we mentioned there's no commandment to keep holy the first day of the week. But there's nothing wrong with a person going to church on Wednesday, or Thursday, or any day. It's just not commanded as the Sabbath. Nothing wrong with keeping Thanksgiving. We've got a tradition, you might say in our culture, that Thanksgiving is a great time for families to get together, but there's no command to do that, but there's nothing wrong morally with it. You know, we have a tradition that people shake hands.

Jean: Can't do that now.

Doug: Yeah, that's right but I was going to say, where does that come from? There's no commandment. In the Bible, it says greet the brethren with a holy kiss. So, while we're talking about this, let me read a couple things here. For instance, if you look in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 12, maybe next you can read 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 6 through 7. I'll read 1 Corinthians 11, verse 2 rather. "Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions." Now some people say, "Well, they're just telling us keep the traditions." That word "tradition" there is actually precepts or ordinance. So he's

saying, "Keep the precepts and the ordinances that we taught you." So, the disciples were not saying, the apostles were not saying that we're to keep manmade tradition above Scripture. That word there is really talking about the precepts or the teachings that were given.

Jean: You know, the apostles gave practical information on the church, how the church was to worship, how they were to organize, how they were to take care of the needs of certain members in the church, and these sort of became traditions. They didn't trump the authority of the Bible, but it helped to do things decently and in order, as the Bible says. 2 Thessalonians chapter 3:6 and 7 says, "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you."

Doug: That's right. And so there again, you see, we've given you an example in our lives and it's also based on the Word. You know, even in our church, we've got some traditions. I know when I first--I came from the Sunday keeping churches before I became a Seventh Day Adventist, and they said, "Yeah, we're going to get together for haystacks." I thought, what's a haystack? So, you know, for those who are watching that don't know, it's sort of a traditional potluck meal where everyone brings their chips, and their beans, and their sauce, and their lettuce, and their olives, and their onions, and they chop it all up and they kind of make a vegetarian tortillas or something like that.

Jean: You know, Pastor Doug, that is an international Adventists tradition because I grew up in South Africa. I didn't know anything about Mexican food. We don't get Mexican food in South Africa, but we all knew what haystacks were, all the Adventists did. So it crosses borders.

We have somebody asking a question about the Bible. It's Natie is asking, "There are those who said that the Bible borrowed many things from Egyptian mythology, but they say that the book of the dead is older than the Bible, and how true is that?" I guess maybe to add to that a little bit, people say, "Well, there were sacrifices in these pagan religions. Some will argue that Moses just adopted some of these pagan practices and incorporated that in the sanctuary service.

Doug: All right, well, I'll respectfully disagree. I think that there may be truths that you'll find in other cultures that went from the Tower of Babel to their cultures that originated with God. The sacrificial system predates the Tower of Babel. And so, many cultures had sacrificial systems, and many of them would only sacrifice clean animals. It might just be clean birds. I think there are a number of tribes in Africa that would only sacrifice what the Bible would call a clean bird, and they did sacrifice cattle too, the Masai and others. So, I think that if they found some truth in the Egyptian writings and the Egyptian practice, they were probably holdovers that came from the truths of the Bible. And so, rather than Moses borrowing it from them, they got it from Noah, and Adam, and Eve. And, of course, it just, that's why you see a similarity there.

Jean: And of course, this is not only talking about the sacrificial system, but I think we mentioned this a week or so ago that even the story of the flood is carried down in different tribal traditions or legends talking about, in some cases, it's a group of eight that were saved by a canoe. They talk about a big bolder, box or something, and it's got essence of truth. But you find the real true story, of course, found in the Bible.

Somebody else has another question. Ruthie's asking, "There's a principle in Bible interpretation. How can you be sure that a day in Bible prophecy stands for a year?"

Doug: All right, when you're interpreting Bible prophecy, of course, look at the context. Is it a time prophecy? And God gives the example that for the 40 days, the 12 spies went through the Promised Land. He said for every day they went, ten of the spies did not believe. He says you're going to spend a year marching through this wilderness, a day for a year. God told Ezekiel you lay on your side, I believe it was Ezekiel. He says, "For every day you lay on your side, it will be a year." And Jesus, I think gives a really good example of a day for a year. When John the Baptist had been arrested, it may have been even after John the Baptist was beheaded, some came and told Jesus what Herod had done. They're basically

saying, "You better run and hide. Look what happened to John." He said, "Go tell that fox that I teach, do cures, cast out devils. Today, tomorrow, and the third day, I'll be perfected."

Well, this happened six months into Jesus' ministry. He did not teach three more days, he taught three more years, and he was making a prophecy, a prediction. And so, even Jesus used the day for the year principle.

Jean: And of course, if you take that principle and you apply it to a prophecy found in Daniel 9, we call it the 70 weeks, you have to apply the year for, a day for a year principle otherwise, it really doesn't have any meaning. But if you do apply that principle, it has great significance because it points to the coming of Christ, the Messiah.

Doug: Yep, very good. And jump in with any other questions or we can keep going.

Jean: Yeah, let me ask one more and then we'll move to the next section. Here is one that's asking, good question, a lot of questions. Thank you for your questions. This one is from Lynn, "How can you explain to an atheist that the Bible is authoritative? How can you explain the authenticity," exactly the way she worded it, "of the Bible to an atheist?"

Doug: Well, I'm glad they're asking that question. We have a section here in the lesson that talks about reason, and I'm just going to jump to that now because none of these really have to be given. I don't think the authors of the lesson will mind if we jump around. These are just five principles of how you understand the authority of the Bible. Martin Luther, when he stood before the Diet of Worms and they were asking him about his beliefs, he made a kind of a famous statement.

He said, "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by clear reason, for I do not trust that either the Pope and his counsels alone, since it's well known they've often erred and contradicted themselves, I am bound by the Scriptures I've quoted and by my conscience that is captive to the Word of God. I cannot recant anything since it is neither safe or right to go against conscience. May God help me." But I think--and he said, "May God help me, amen." So, I think Martin Luther there he's saying, "You need to show me by Scriptures and reason."

Well, the Lord says in His Word, "Come now, let us reason together." God wants us to use our noodle. And whenever an evangelist, you're talking about reaching an atheist, every time, you know, you've done an evangelistic meeting, we just finished a meeting here, Carlos did, in Folsom. And every evangelistic meeting I have performed, I always assume that there are people there that don't believe the Bible or don't understand the Bible and so, I need to show them through logic and reason why the Bible should be believed.

Amazing Facts just completed a DVD, it's called, "Kingdoms in Time," where we take approximately 40 prophecies in the Bible and we show how these prophecies were made before the event, and then they're fulfilled. And a logical person would say this is a supernatural book because it foretells something and then you see it was foretold before the event happened. It's exactly fulfilled. This author of this book must have supernatural insight, and that then gives credibility to the rest of the Bible as sacred message from God, as a sacred message.

Jean: I think that's one of the most compelling reasons. If somebody were to look, even if they're an atheist and they look at the prophecies in the Bible, so many which have become true, you got to just use reason. And if you have some sort of understanding of history, you're going to reach the conclusion that there's something unique and special about this book. No other book, no other religious book, whether it's the Qur'an, or whether it's some writing of the Hindu faith, has prophecy that has been so accurately fulfilled and the prediction hundreds of years in advance. That sets the Bible above any other book.

Doug: Yeah, and the prophecies about Jesus you read in the Psalms where it says, his hands and his feet would be pierced, they would gamble for his clothing, he would declare from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" That a mob would surround him and mock him, that he would be

betrayed by a close friend for 30 pieces of silver, and that silver would be cast down in the house of the Lord.

These things are given a thousand years in advance. That detail, I mean, you look at the prophecies of Nostradamus, and I'm not recommending that. But, you know, some people have talked about the prophecies of Nostradamus and I look at them and I go, what a garbled bunch of fortune cookie utterances. It doesn't make any sense. And people try to force history into these very vague prophecies, or the Oracle of Delphi, and it's just all these strange mutterings. The prophecies in the Bible are explicit, and clear, and precise, and there's no misunderstanding them. So, that, I think, would convince a person.

Jean: Talking about the prophecies in the Bible, we have Monica that's asking a question and it's related to one of the verses in the Book of Revelation. It says, "There is a verse that refers to the seven Spirits of God, what are those Spirits?" Is the question.

Doug: Good question. Let's take a look real quick in our Bible, and I think that one of the keys for understanding the authority of the Bible is let the Bible explain the Bible. I'm going to go to Isaiah chapter 11, almost there, verse 2. And it says, "The Spirit," speaking of the Messiah, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

So, when it's talking about the seven Spirits of God, you have here seven, if you include the Spirit of the Lord being one, you get seven facets of the Spirit of the Lord. Seven is, of course, a perfect number and it's talking about the all knowing. You know, time is developed in a seven day week. God created our first cycle of time. And it represents that God is all knowing, the perfect, complete cycle. The Holy Spirit knows all things, He guides, wisdom, peace, so forth. And so, some have thought, "Well, these are the seven attributes of the Holy Spirit."

Jean: Absolutely, of course, that verse found in Revelation chapter 4 that talks about the seven spirits, Revelation is a symbolic book, and there are some very significant, you know, the numbers in Revelation are significant. Number one and number three, the number seven, number four, I mean these are significant numbers, number 12.

Doug: And it talks about that lamb that's got seven eyes. That's obviously unless you've seen a lamb with seven eyes before, that means God, he knows all things and he's got seven horns and that represents all power in the Bible that it was the power of their cattle. And so, all right, what else? Shall I go back to the lesson? Do you have another question?

Jean: I got another question, Pastor Doug, and then we'll jump right in the lesson. Abraham is asking, "What do we say to people who said that the Bible is out of touch with modern society?" What can we share with them to say? Well, no, it's useful. It's true for us today.

Doug: Well, in our next section, that's probably a good segue, it's talking about culture, not tradition. It's talking about culture. And when you read in the Bible about culture, you've got to keep in mind, not only the culture that we're living in, which should not compromise anything, we shouldn't be compromising truth to accommodate culture. But when you read the Bible, you need to recognize the culture in which it was written. You know, a lot of what Jesus said, it was an agrarian society where they had goats, and they had sheep, and they were farmers, and they fished. And Jesus tells parables about fishing, about farming, about goats.

Now, living most of the world today, they do not live on farms. Most of the world is living in cities today. And so, we need to keep in mind, who is Jesus talking to? It helps us then to understand their culture as we read the Bible. So, that's one aspect. But then we are in a culture that is, does a lot of things that are not biblical. Now, there's some cultural things we've got, there's nothing wrong with it. As I mentioned a minute ago, you know, we've got the habit of shaking hands or something like that, but you should never

Jean: Even in other cultures, I mean, for example, you just reminded me, Pastor, that when we were in

India, you asked to speak at one of the largest Christian churches. It's amazing. It's actually in India, but part of their tradition, when you go up onto the stage and you begin to preach or go in front of the pulpit, you remove your shoes. Now, that's not something we do in North America, but it's a sign of respect and a sign of reverence. When you go into church, you take your shoes off.

Doug: This church had 30,000 cubby holes for shoes. I thought I'd never get my shoes back.

Jean: Everybody places their shoes outside the church and then they go in. So, now there's nothing wrong with that. You know, that's a sign of reverence. Here in North America, if you're a man and you're going to the church and you're wearing a baseball cap, you'll take it off. It's a sign of reverence and respect.

Doug: But when we were in Israel, we went to the Wailing Wall, I had to keep my baseball cap on. They prefer you use a yarmulke, but they said at least if you've got a head covering, so a lot of people went up with their baseball caps. I kind of turned mine around backwards to be more respectful. But, so that was purely a cultural thing, whatever the respect is in your culture.

I might read a little definition here, what is culture. "Culture is the characteristic and knowledge of a particular group of people encompassing language, values, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and art." And so, values, there may be values that change in a particular culture, but biblical values should always trump, or go before, the values of the culture.

Jean: So, we find two things, we find traditions and we find principles. The principles are founded upon the Word of God. The ultimate set of principles is of course, the Ten Commandments and that needs to be absolute. But the traditions might vary from place to place, and it's not always wrong. It might have cultural influence, but we never want to have a tradition stand in opposition to a biblical principle. You know, in the case, we have Daniel and his three friends. We got the three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It might have been cultural for them in Babylon to show their loyalty to the king by bowing down to the golden image, but that was going against a biblical principle. And even at, you know, losing their life, they were willing to lose their life than violate one of those biblical principles.

Doug: Yeah, and like for an example, we're wearing ties right now. There is no command in the Bible, thou shalt wear a tie. And a lot of good pastors, they don't wear ties. And, you know, even in our office dress code, we've talked before at what point, I think a few years ago we decided, you know, it seems like ties are sort of going out of style as far as formal, you know, workplace attire. It's a cultural thing. There's no biblical principle here. It probably carries a lot of pathogens on it as it drags around. So, good idea to get rid of the tie. But some things that cultures change, you don't want to change.

And, you know, I might just mention, for example, in the world today, there's a lot of confusion in the culture about how important is it that the distinctions the Bible makes between men and women? And well, does the Bible say something about that? Jesus said, "From the beginning of the creation," this is Mark 10:6 and 7, "God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife."

Well, this creates in the Bible talks about the roles, and the Bible talks about that a man should not lie with a man, a woman with a woman, but in our culture today in the last 20 years, that has totally flipped on its head so that now it's almost like people are serving and say, "What do you, what gender would you like to choose today?" And people sort of get to choose their gender. And in spite of the fact that the genes, the cellular, chemical levels, biology it says, a person is inherently male or female. That's, we're living in like a fantasy that people get to decide these things. So, the church has been having to grapple with, how do we deal with that? Do we accommodate what's going on in our culture at the sacrifice of the Word of God? Or do we say, "No, this is what the Bible says and we need to stick with the Bible."

Jean: You know, Pastor Doug, even secular entities are having some challenges with this new interpretation where you can be whatever you want to be. There are some athletes who were born men or male, and for some reason they decide to be female and then they want to compete in maybe a race

with girls, or with women. And the women are saying, "Wait a minute, it's not fair, you have an advantage. Your genes are different than ours." So, even secular entities are realizing that there is a fundamental difference. It's not just a matter of choice. God is the one who created us. He's the one that set the DNA the way he did, and there's a reason for that.

Doug: I heard of one example where there's this gentleman that was a fighter, MMA, very brutal form of fighting, and he decided that he wanted to go through the transgender operation, which he did, and now he wants to fight the girls and they're all protesting and said, "No way in the world. You're a man. Everything about your anatomy is different, you'll cream us." And I'm paraphrasing. So, yeah, I think even in our culture they're beginning to say that, you know, it doesn't matter how much wishful thinking you have, a man is never going to ovulate, and lactate, and give birth. There are some physiological differences, but, you know, we're grapple--we're in a culture where there's all kinds of things that we have to evaluate.

Jean: Well, you know, Pastor Doug, there's a reason behind it, we don't want to miss that. The two institutions that God created, even before sin entered the world, Sabbath. Remember, he rested on the seventh day of the week, and he created marriage, he created male and female. It seems that the devil is doing everything he can to undermine those very principles established at the beginning of time. We know what he's done for the Sabbath trying to substitute a counterfeit day for the Sabbath, but now we see what he's doing to marriage, redefining marriage, and also trying to redefine male and female. So, there is a conspiracy, if you like, the devil's conspiracy is trying to undermine the very institutions that God established.

Doug: Everything in Genesis, the evolution is seeking to undermine creation, the confusion about gender, the importance of the family, the original diet for man, you could just go through the foundational things in our culture are all the Sabbath, or they're all under attack.

Jean: Right, I think we got a text coming in, a question that somebody's asking about different Bible translations. "Could you explain which is the best Bible translation and why?"

Doug: Well, this is sort of a subjective question. You and I will maybe have our favorites, and I hope we have an evidence for the reason. I believe the most dependable for Bible study, there are some modern paraphrases that might have some creative renderings that are useful, but I think as far as Bible study and accurate theology, you want--in English, there are more translations in English than probably any other language. You want to have something that's based on what we would call the textus receptus documents and that's mostly New Testament or the received text. And King James, New King James, New American Standard, New English Version, I think are very good translations.

Jean: I think it's important, Pastor Doug, to recognize that at least in the English language, you do have two categories of what we call Bibles. The one would be a paraphrase, which could be somebody taking, you could write your own paraphrase, you can just take the English Bible and you could read a verse, and then write in your own words. And I'm not saying all of them are bad, you can get some wonderful insights, but we need to recognize that, that is a paraphrase. Then you have a translation, and then a translation, you go to the original language and you hopefully, you have people that are translating the original Hebrew or Greek as closely as they can. So, when we're studying a doctrinal point, I think it's important that we go to a genuine translation.

In our Bible program at the beginning of the year, we have a lot of people calling in and they ask a question, and you can tell they're starting to read their Bible through starting in Genesis. One of the common questions they have is, who are the sons of God? Were they somehow talking about taking--were there angels that were marrying people on earth, woman on the earth? And part of that idea came from, really a paraphrase. Maybe you want to explain a little more what that is.

Doug: Yeah, I think it's the Good News Bible and it says that angels married with men and they had these giants, and it doesn't say that in the original and so, it creates a lot of confusion. But we still got a lot left and we got 12 minutes to go so maybe we can get--and then we'll try and take some more.

Now, I never did get into the section on experience, I jump right to culture. Where does a person's experience come in when it comes to interpreting the Bible? When we read the Bible, is there any role of experience? And I would say that, first of all, Scripture needs to go ahead. By the way, when we talk about the authority of Scripture, it's where we get the word "author," it's the authorship. And since God, all Scripture is God breathed, He is the author and so it is the supreme bottom line, it's the foundation.

You know, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, My word will not pass away." And so, that's the bottom line for everything, but experience does play a role. As we read the Bible and we put the words of Scripture to the test, and we pray, and we get answers to prayer, our experience informs the validity of Scripture and we see that God wants us to have an experience based on the Word of God.

In other words, when we read the Word, and we try the promises, we experience that it's real. I think people ought to have an experience in the Word of God putting the promises to the test. But we never say, "Well, I prayed, I didn't get an answer. The Bible must not be true so I don't believe the Word anymore." But I think that if the Word, if we are reading the Word, you will have an experience.

Jean: Absolutely. You know, the devil is always apt to try and get people one way or the other, either putting tradition above the Bible. And now in our culture today, there is a tendency to put an experience or a feeling above the Bible as well. So, someone might say, "Well, you know, I know what the Bible says, but I feel this way, or I have this experience so I must have the Holy Spirit," even though they're contradicting what the Bible says. So, the devil doesn't mind when he gets tradition above the Scripture or some type of feeling above the Scripture, he wants to keep people away from what the Word says.

Doug: That's right. And if we're reading the Scripture and following the Scripture, there ought to be a change in the experience. And I'll read here Titus 3, verse 4 and 5, "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but in accordance to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." And so, there's a renewing, there's a washing that takes place.

And I remember hearing stories about atheists that say, "You know, why do you believe that bad book, the Bible? It just causes all kinds of problems in the world." And this lady responded to this atheist by saying, "I live at home with my brother, sir, and he was an alcoholic, a gambler, a loafer, he cursed. He was immoral. He started reading the Bible, and now there's peace in our home. He works. He earns a living. He takes care of our mother. And he stopped drinking, he stopped gambling, he's saving money." She said, "You might think the Bible is a bad book, but it made a good difference in his life." And so, there should be an experience that's seen.

Jean: You know, we read the stories of the Great Reformation in the early 1800s that swept across North America, and the stories go how that these preachers would go preach in villages and towns, and there would be a marked decrease in crime as a result of the preaching of the Word of God. So, the Bible changes people's lives and that's a powerful evidence for the Scripture being what it is.

Doug: I heard about a revival they had in Scotland years ago, and the Holy Spirit moved so much, that this one factory had to build several sheds to store the goods that workers brought back that they had purloined over the years. They had kept buying replacements and but they were also convicted by the preaching of the Word, they began to bring back all the tools and things they'd stolen from the factory. And they ended up with much more than they started with because of the Holy Spirit moving in their lives. Any other questions?

Jean: We do, somebody, we have Carl who is asking the question, "Is there any missing books that should be in the Bible?"

Doug: Well, we don't believe there are. Now, there are other inspired books you can read in the Bible where it talks about the book of Gad, the book of Gad, Nasher, and there were other prophets who wrote inspired messages that were present truth for their day for particular people or particular time. God did not see fit that they should then be added to the canon of Scripture that we have today. But so,

you can't really say there's missing books. We have everything that is sufficient in here to save souls.

You know, years ago, I'll tell a quick story, years ago, I was part of a mission that was called Land and Seas Missions of God. And they had a special ministry where they would go out into the Pacific Ocean. Now, this would be bad now, but this is what they did. They were trying to get the gospel into Asia so they put New Testament--no, no, they put the gospel of John, that's all that could fit in a bottle. And they would fill thousands of bottles with the gospel of John, they would dump them in the ocean, they'd take the boat out to the currents where they knew the currents would bring it to the shores of North Korea, and China, and even the Philippines. Then they'd get messages back of these people that were reading these gospels of John in their languages. And they found people were finding the Lord just through that one book of the Bible. And so, instead of saying, "Well, we don't know what truth is because we may be missing a book," we've got more than we need.

It's like Mark Twain, of course, Mark Twain is not the best person to quote for the Bible but Mark Twain used to say, "It's not the mysteries in the Bible that cause me sleepless nights. It's the good I know I should do. It's the part I do understand." He said, "It's not arguing about the stuff I don't understand." He says, "I'm convicted about the stuff I do understand." So, there are all these wonders about Christians arguing about the things they don't understand. You see, you got more that you do understand you're not living up to. So, I don't think there's any missing books. We've got already too much information.

Jean: We've got a really important question I want to try and get in here, Pastor Doug. Elijah is asking, he says he's a newly converted Christian. He wants to--or he's asking, "What Bible version explains better to my understanding what I should do when I read the Bible?" What can we share with somebody who's wanting to start a Bible reading plan with reference to a Bible version, and then how do they go about reading the Bible?

Doug: I would strongly encourage, was it Elijah the name? Jean: Yes. Doug: I'd strongly encourage Elijah to go to the Amazing Facts website and sign up for our free online Bible program and just take--I think it follows the New King James Version, the new lessons if I'm not mistaken. And so, get yourself--New King James is not hard to understand. And I think that people can learn. You know, I started reading the King James Version, and I had no experience growing up in a Bible Church and I struggled, but I got where I really am thankful that I learned to read the King James Version, and even the New King James. There's some ancient English in there, but you know what? We can learn. Instead of dumbing down the Bible, I think we smarten up the people. We can learn what these words mean. The whole English language has been shaped by the King James Version and even the New King James. And you'll pick it up. If I can, anybody can.

Jean: One of the suggestions is start reading, if you like, if you haven't read the Bible before, start with Genesis because that lays a great foundation, and then maybe you want to also connect that with maybe the Book of John or maybe the Book of Luke, or Mark. Mark is the shortest of the four gospels and you can also begin to learn more about the story of Jesus. And as you read those two together, you'll begin to see a change taking place in your heart and life. There is power in the reading of the Word.

Doug: Amen. You know, and maybe before we run out of time, Pastor Ross, let's get to that section on the Bible. We talked about culture and reason. A lot of people are looking for signs and wonders instead of Scripture. Like the father came to Jesus and he was thinking in his heart, "If Jesus heals my son, then I'll believe in Him." Jesus knew what he was thinking. This is in John chapter 4, verse 46 through 48 Christ said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." And the father then implored Jesus said, "Lord, come down here or my child die." So often, they were looking for signs and wonders and Jesus said, "It's an evil generation that seeks after sign."

Now, the reason I wanted to mention this right now, friends, is because we've got a lot happening in the world today and boy, this would be a great time for someone to show up false prophets and false Christ to start doing signs and wonders. People are wondering, they're looking for direction. And boy, I'll tell you, we need to understand now more than ever, it's according to the law in the testimony. What does

the Bible say? We're going to have to measure everything that's happening in our culture, in the world, in the governments.

People are wondering, are we violating some Christian principle by not gathering together during the pandemic? No, the Bible says, "Do not tempt the Lord." You know, there's a good time for us to, you know, give it a break. The Bible talks about sanitation and isolating things when there's a sickness. There's nothing, no moral problem here and this is something that's going across the board equally for all religions, and it'll pass. But so, we're going to need to have a good judgment in these last days to know, you know, how to apply the Scriptures, and we need to know them for ourselves because we're going to be brought to answer.

Jean: You know, this is a verse I think, a powerful verse, John chapter 7, verse 38. Jesus said, "He who believes in Me," he's talking about Himself. Then he adds, "As the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." Jesus is referring to the Scriptures to sort of back up his claim that he is the Messiah. So, we find even Jesus, who didn't have to do that, He was the Word of God, yet he was saying, "Look to the Scriptures, they testify of Me."

Doug: Yeah, absolutely. And as I think we mentioned in our study last week from the gospel of Luke chapter 24, he said, "We're slow of heart to believe all that prophets have said and beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself." And there's that verse it says, "Lo, in the volume of the book, it is written of Me." So, the volume of this book, it's telling us all about Jesus and he's the bottom line. So, really the most important point we want to leave people with, it's like Peter says here, 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 24 through 25, "All flesh is as grass and the glory of man is the flower of grass. The grass withers and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever." Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, my Word will not pass away." He says, "Not one jot or one tittle will pass from the law, till all is fulfilled." And so, and it's, "The Word of the Lord endures forever. Now, this is the Word by which the gospel was preached to you."

You know, maybe we could just mention to our friends, before we tie off our Sabbath school time, that we do have a free offer. What was that free offer?

Jean: We'd like remind everyone, this is the first of our series of study guides and if you're looking to study, now maybe you have a little more time on your own and at home and you'd like to study the Word, we want to encourage you to call and ask for our free offer. It's the study guide entitled, Is There Anything Left You Can Trust? To receive it, just call the number 866-788-3966 and ask for Offer Number 103. We'll be happy to send that to you. The Postal Service is still up and running so you'll be able to get it. If you'd like to receive a digital copy of our study guide, text the code SH043 to the number 40544 and we'll be able to send that to you.

Doug: Amen.

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 key word on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen and be sure to select the 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.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Charlie Green: My life was in turmoil. My wife and I were fighting all the time. I got away from everything and everybody. I don't know, just I always had this emptiness in my heart I wanted filled. I just felt like I went my whole life, you know, just searching for something. And my father died, and that ruined me a lot. My father didn't believe in suicide and I didn't want to live but rather than disrespect him, I decided I would just become so mean someone else would do it to me, you know, and I wouldn't have to.

So, I joined the Army thinking, what better place to get killed than the Army? While I was in the Army, my daughter got injured, she was in an accident and she was blind and paraplegic, and it's just like I felt the whole world was coming down on me.

One morning, I just really got mad, and I gave God a cussing like you wouldn't believe. I said, "I'm not Moses, not Abraham, you know, I don't--but I put my sandals on just like they do and I'm a man. I don't want to know why this is happening to me, I just want to know that it's happening for a reason. If you tell me right now this is all for a reason, then you can stack it on me from here till the end of time and I will never complain again."

And that little TV came on, had been sitting there just static all night long. And there's this minister when he pops up and he says, "Today's lesson's from the Book of Job. God only lets those suffer that He loves the most." And I said, "Well, that's all you had to say, Lord. I appreciate it." From that day forward, I knew that He was there, He was in my life, and that He would help me.

I went to prison just almost immediately. I was in prison for aggravated assault. I was in one the worst prisons in the state of Tennessee. It was full of gang activity. I got my throat cut, 52 stitches. My neck, I could take those fingers and stick them all the way to out my mouth. I'd gone to the library that day because it was really about the only thing to do. But I ran across this little book called "The Richest Caveman." This book is hilarious, but it is great. I'm sitting there with this big beard and I'm thinking, hey, I know what it's like to look like a caveman.

I'm not an educated person, I guess you'd say, but I'm a simple guy. I'm just really a simple guy. That's what I loved about Doug Batchelor because this guy is just straight out as you can get. And my wife and I, we've kept contact through all these years. And so much has gone on. And I told her, I said, "Listen, this is the center of my world right now." And I said, "I really want you to be involved in it with me. I need it," and I said, "And you will too if you ever just take hold of it." I told my wife I said, "Listen, they've got this Amazing Facts Bible study going here and this is the best way for you to get this information, I think," I said, "because it's broken down and they give you questions and to make you look for these things, you know? So, it's not anyone telling you, you find it on your own, and they teach you actually to use the Bible."

She was there faithfully every Wednesday until we decided, you know, she wanted to be baptized also. She saw it coming around. The choice was made and October 4, 2014, my wife and I were, we were baptized in the water at the same time and we started our walk together, I guess you'd say.

I went through everything that a man could possibly go through, I guess, from marital trouble, loss of family members, death in my family. My children were harmed. My daughter handicapped for life. I went to prison, but still I kept my Word to God that He could stack it on me as much as He wanted, and I'd never question Him again, and I didn't. But I can say this much, He never put nothing on me that I couldn't handle, and He walked with me through it all. And I'd like to say that anyone who is in prison, not to give up. Don't lose hope. Put your faith in the Lord and study and seek Him and He will seek you. And my name is Charlie Green, and I want you to know that you and Amazing Facts have changed my life.

Doug: Hi friends, this is Pastor Doug Batchelor. Would you like to hear an amazing fact? More and more of the world is turning now to natural forms of energy to try and find their power, and they're resorting to things like the wind farm that we have here in Jamaica and Wigton.

You know, I remember years ago, my wife and I going to visit the Big Island of Hawaii, and we were amazed at all the potential there for natural power, but they weren't using it. There at the south part of the island, there was volcanic activity. You can make geothermal power there. If you went to Waimea, the wind was constantly blowing, but they had no windmills there. If you went over to Kona, sun always shines, solar electric, but they didn't have very much solar electric there. And if you went to Hilo, it was always raining, hydroelectric. And in spite of all that potential for power there on the big island of Hawaii, they were powering the island back then, with dirty diesel generators.

Made me think about how we sometimes waste the power of God's Spirit that he's making available to us, and each of us can have that Spirit if we simply ask. You can read in Zechariah chapter 10, what do we do? Ask of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, and he will send flashing clouds. Jesus also said in the Book of Luke, "If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask?"

When you look in the Book of Acts, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, it says there was a sound of a mighty rushing wind and that power that launched the church back then, can still power your life today, friends. So, why don't you ask Him?