

Q2 L12 - Dealing With Difficult Passages - 2020-06-20

Doug Batchelor: You probably heard the expression before, "If you don't like the weather in Texas, just wait. It'll change." And you've also heard, "Everything is bigger in Texas," the ranches, the belt buckles, the cowboy hats, but the most famous slogan about Texas is "Remember the Alamo."

The violent battles and bravery of iconic heroes have been the stuff of legends throughout which entire cultures often draw their identity and pride, even long after centuries have passed. And in Texas, the story of the Alamo has been a rallying cry of Texas independence for 200 years. One reason that Texans love to brag that everything is bigger in Texas is, of course, because Texas is the largest of the lower 48 U.S. states. It's hard to believe that this massive state got its beginning in a very small Christian mission during the Battle of the Alamo. Every year, this famous mission museum receives over two and a half million visitors from all parts of the planet that are eager to get a good look at this legendary site.

The Alamo played a critical role in the Texas Revolution. In December 1835, Texans and Tejano volunteers battled Mexican troops cordoned in the city, forcing General Martin Perfecto de Cos, to surrender. The victorious volunteers then occupied the Alamo and strengthened its defenses. Famous Americans like Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and Colonel William Travis, made this location, this ancient mission, the beachhead, the last stand in an epic battle to win independence of Texas from Mexico. On February 23, 1836, the arrival of General Antonio Lopez Santa Anna, nearly caught them by surprise. Undaunted, the Texans and Tejanos prepared to defend the Alamo. For this small, ragtag group of rebels, the youngest of who was about 16, and the oldest, 75, was against the well-trained and organized Mexican Army of 6,000-plus soldiers.

It was a fierce and lopsided battle, yet the small force of rebels was able to repel the troops for 13 days. Legend holds that with the possibility of additional help fading, Colonel Travis drew a line in the ground with a sword and asked any man willing to stay and fight, to step over the line. All except one crossed over. The final assault came before daybreak. On the morning of March 6, 1836, the 13th day of the siege, cannon and small arms fire from inside the Alamo beat back several Mexican attacks. Regrouping, Santa Anna's soldiers scaled the walls and rushed into the compound. The desperate struggle continued until the defenders were overwhelmed. By sunrise, the battle had ended, and the garrison were slain.

You know, historians may debate some of the details regarding the Battle of the Alamo, but none of them questioned the incredible sacrifice that was made and the courage that was displayed during that intense conflict. They made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives, and this is why the story of the Alamo is so inspiring and so encouraging.

You know, and that's why the Bible is so inspiring, friends, because someone was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice and give His life so that you can have freedom and eternal life. Don't you think you could trust your life to a friend like that, that would give everything? The story of the Gospel is a story of courage and hope. It's a story of a God who will never leave you without defense and support. Jesus is the good news, and the Gospel is a story worth remembering.

Doug: Hi, friends. Welcome to our "Sabbath School Study Hour." We're so thankful that you're joining us here. We have a very important lesson we're going to study in just a minute, but before we get to the lesson, a couple of important announcements. As always, we have a free offer that goes along with our lesson. Today we're offering you the book "12 Steps to Revival," and it's very simple. If you'd like to get a free copy of this, you can simply call the number 866-788-3966. That's 866-Study-More, or you can text "SH001." You text "SH001" to 40544, and you can download a free copy of this. If you call us, ask for Offer Number 780. You'll get a free copy of "12 Steps to Revival," written by yours truly.

And sometimes, lately, I've been doing these lessons with Pastor Ross. We've been being interactive. Today he's participating in graduation of their daughter, and so he could not be with us today. Another important announcement, as we often do with our study, I've got some faithful helpers here in the studio if you have questions about today's lesson.

Now, the lesson today is a really important one. It's dealing with difficult Bible passages, and I won't pretend that I've got all the answers to all the difficult Bible passages, but we're going to address some of those today, and we're going to talk about how to approach difficult Bible passages in our study today. But before we get into our study, it's always a good idea to pray, and so we'd like to invite you to join us.

Loving Lord, thank You so much for Your blessings. Thank You so much for the Word of God, and we just pray that

the Holy Spirit will take charge of this study today, that, as a result, when the dust settles, our faith will be stronger in the infallibility of Your Word, and so we just pray that You will be glorified and You'll speak, in Jesus' name, amen.

So our lesson today is "Dealing with Difficult Passages," and we have a memory verse. And the memory verse-- [clearing throat] Excuse me. The memory verse comes from 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 15 and 16, and this is a very important passage for a number of reasons. "And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, has written to you, also in as all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable, they twist to their own destruction as they do the rest of the Scriptures." And this is from the New King James Version.

In the things that Paul says, there are some things that people who are untrained twist to their own destruction as they do other Scripture. Very important verse. For one thing, he's calling the writings of Paul Scripture, while Paul is still alive. And so they understood that the writings of the apostles were to be added to the sacred canon, even in their own lifetime. And something else I just think is worthy of notice that so often when people get mixed up in false doctrines relating to law and grace, they almost universally turn to Paul's writings because they twist these Scriptures, and they misunderstand them.

So what do you do when you come into difficult passages or apparent contradictions in the Bible? If you got questions about that, friends, we want you to go ahead and send those in to the Doug Batchelor Facebook page or the Amazing Facts Facebook page. And they're going to just hold up their hand, and I'll--it'll be like you're raising your hand, and we're going to get to be--we'll be selective with the questions because we want to make sure they're on topic. We'll try to make this study time as interactive as possible.

And something I'd like to begin with before we delve into some of the dealing with difficult passages, what is the official position of the Seventh Day Adventist Church regarding the Scriptures? And this is from our Fundamental Belief Number 1: "The Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will."

Now, notice that wording there. It's not saying that there might not be some scribal or clerical error in the translations. It's saying that in the Scriptures, you find the infallible revelation of the will of God. "They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, the trustworthy record of God's acts in history." So some people say, "Well, Seventh Day Adventists, yeah, don't you base your writings on a magazine or on a committee or on a particular person?" No, we base our teachings on the Bible, the Word of God. Folks sometimes confuse us for others, and we are a Bible-based church. The Bible is the final arbiter, final Word of God in determining what is truth.

Now, having said that, are there any--well, certainly, there are apparent misunderstandings in the Bible, and there are some apparent contradictions in the Bible. We'll get to those in just a minute. That should not shake our faith in the Word of God. Now, what are some of the possible reasons for apparent contradictions in the Word of God? You look in 2 Timothy chapter 2--and I'm going to read verse 10 to 16. "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we'll also live with Him. If we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful. He cannot deny Himself. Remind them--"

Paul is telling Timothy, "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words or--that do not profit, to the ruin of hearers. But be diligent to present yourselves approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness." You know, it was even someone like Mark Twain, who said, "It's not the mysteries in the Bible that caused me sleepless nights. It's the good, I understand, I know I should do that troubles me."

And so there are people who will quibble over small, apparent discrepancies in the Word of God, and then they neglect the very clear, unmistakable, consistent truths, the vast preponderance of evidence. They neglect that, and they focus on a fly on the wall, and they miss everything else. And so don't make that mistake. Paul is telling us, "Look, shun the vain and idle babblings. Study to show yourself approved unto God." All right, question is, "If God is the Creator of all things, how can God be good and create evil?"

The Bible says God is good. Look in the Garden of Eden. Everything was good, good, very good, and Bible tells us

that "Only God is good." In fact, the word for "good" in English is connected with the word "God." But why is there evil? Because God is good, He makes His creatures free, and that means they're free to choose, and His intelligent creatures, they can choose between good and evil. And in order to love Him, they have to be absolutely free. And so, if God only makes creatures that will love Him and worship Him, then it's not true love.

In order to have true love, there must be true freedom. That means you take a risk that some will choose not to love. And I think it was C.S. Lewis, who said, "The lake of fire is the greatest evidence that God is a loving God, that He really makes His creatures free."

All right, now, I want to give you something to think about. We're going to take a look at some of the inconsistencies in the Bible. We're going to invite you to maybe ask about some of them. And you just remember, look at Psalm 139 verse 6: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot contain it." As we are talking about God and the Word of God and the things of God, there are some things that it takes a while for us to understand. There were simple truths in the Bible that I did not understand because I was unlearned. And it's like Peter said, "There are some people who are unlearned and unstable, and they twist the Word of God to their own destruction."

I remember when I first started reading the Bible, I smoked, and I drank, and I got convicted by the Spirit that I should stop, but I did not want to stop. And then I read that verse that said, "It's not what goes in a man's mouth that defiles him, but what comes out." And I took that Scripture, and I twisted it to my own destruction. I said, "Well, there you have it. It's not what goes in my mouth, whether it's smoke or alcohol. It's what comes out." And I just felt that was not a good interpretation.

I was still convicted, and, finally, God said, "Doug, what goes in your mouth affects what comes out your mouth," and whether it's tobacco breath or alcohol that makes you say things you're ashamed of. And so I was not rightly dividing the Word of God and--or I read that verse in the Bible that said, "If your right hand offends you, cut it off. Better to enter heaven missing the hand than go to hell with two healthy hands." That's a paraphrase. And then I realized, "No, God is not saying that anybody should pluck out their eye or cut off their foot or their hand if they offend because, if you steal with your right hand, then you get it cut off, you'll just deal with your left hand."

It happens in the heart. Jesus was using that to illustrate that, even if it means separating yourself from something or someone so close to you, they're like a right hand or an eye or a foot, it's better to do that. Make that sacrifice. Go through that struggle than lose eternal life. And so, when you read the Word of God, you need to rightly divide it and know what are the parables, what are the metaphors, and even the disciples sometimes understood.

Jesus is crossing the sea. I'm saying even the disciples sometimes misunderstood. Going across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," and all the disciples in the boat looked around, said, "Oh, we forgot the lunch again." And Jesus said, "No, that's not what I meant. I meant beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees." So sometimes even the disciples misunderstood and misapplied the Word of God. So don't be surprised if church members do if the apostles sometimes did it.

So I remember reading a verse in the Bible, in Proverbs 24--or 26, verse 4 and 5, and I thought, "This is a contradiction." Proverbs 26, verse 4 and 5, Solomon said, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him." If you start trying to argue with a fool, you sound foolish. But the very next verse says, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he is wise in his own eyes." And I'm thinking, "Solomon, make up your mind. Do we answer fools, or do we not answer fools?" Why does he say two opposite things? Which is it? Answer the fool, or don't answer the fool? And, finally, it occurred to me, what Solomon is saying, tongue in cheek, is "If you argue with a fool, you'll lose if you don't answer him. He'll think he's right. And if you do answer him, you sound like him." Any communication with a fool is a lose-lose situation. It's like someone said, "Don't wrestle with a pig because you'll get dirty, and the pig will enjoy it." You just--it's not helping anybody out.

What if it's someone who's even part of your own family? Well, not if you're married to them. Bible tells us what the criteria for marriage is. If you have somebody that is taking you away from the Lord, sometimes a person will convert, and their family are unbelievers, and their family are making it very difficult for them to live out their convictions, they might want to separate from those family members so they can live out their convictions. Jesus said, "You need to love Me more than father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, houses or lands, anything." Loving the Lord first.

All right, let me give you a common misconception that is--often comes in. People say, "Pastor Doug, why does the Bible say, 'Thou shalt not kill'?" in Exodus 20:13, and then you read in 1 Samuel 15, God says to King Saul, "Go and attack Amalek," the Amalekites, "utterly destroy all that they have. Do not spare them. Kill man and woman,

infant, nursing child, ox, sheep, donkey, camel." God said, "Don't kill." Then he says, "Kill." Well, the answer to that, firstly, is the word is not really "kill." I know King James says that. If you look in the New King James Version, it says "Thou shalt not murder." And even in the King James Version, when Jesus, in the New Testament, quotes the Ten Commandments, he says, "Thou shall not murder."

"Murder" is different from "killing." "Murder" is the unlawful taking of innocent life. When soldiers come home from defending their country in battle, they are not convicted of murder. Now, of course, there are certain wartime rules of law as well. There are war crimes, but, you know, if they're lawfully attacking the enemy, when God told Saul--and other times: Joshua, when they entered the Promised Land, they were told to attack and sometimes annihilate the enemy. When God sent the flood in Noah's day, what's God doing? He annihilated everybody in the world except Noah and his family.

God has the right to judge. And, by the way, if God doesn't send annihilation, we're all under a death sentence. Everybody is dying. If God speeds up that process of judgment, if He uses floodwaters, if He uses another nation, what's the difference? People are all dying without the Gospel, and God can send His judgment any time.

Question is not "Why does God kill?" But the question is "Why does God spare?" If the penalty for sin is death, why is He so merciful with us? Everybody spins that the wrong way. So it's really "Do not murder." By the way, it's in Luke 18:20, where Jesus said, "Do not murder." "Murder" is different from "killing." If you pull a weed, you're killing the weed. That would be considered a sin if you take it by that clinical definition. And--but we need sometimes people to help us understand, and this is part of the job of Christian teachers. That's one of the gifts of the Spirit, pastors, evangelists, is to expound, to explain, to exhort what the Word of God is saying.

This very bright--he's an Ethiopian treasure for the queen. He's obviously a smart man. He's riding along in his chariot. He's reading the book of Isaiah. Philip asks him, "Do you know what you're reading?" And he said, "How can I understand unless someone guides me?" God has a place for teachers. And all of us are really ignorant, just in different areas. We need sometimes someone to explain and to teach us and help us understand things. Don't ever be afraid.

Now, there are times where you're going to run into not just misunderstandings in the Bible or apparent contradictions. There are some very real areas that are hard to resolve. They're not many, but there's a few. Let me read a statement to you from the "Spirit of Prophecy." This is in your lesson under the first section, Selected Messages Book 1, page 16: "Some discrepancies in Scripture might be due to minor errors of copyists, translators. Ellen White stated, 'Some look to us gravely and say, "Don't you think there might have been some mistakes in the copies to the translators?" This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over the possibility or probability would just be as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God.'" That should not shake the faith of anybody.

I got a question coming in. "So since Jesus said there will be plagues before the Second Coming, do we need to do what the Israelites did and maybe put blood on our door before the seven last plagues to protect our family?" No, in the Hebrew plagues, that lamb's blood was a symbol for Christ's blood. We must have the blood of Christ applied to our lives. Just like only those who were in the house of Rahab with a red rope in the window were saved, only those that are in Christ, with the red blood of Christ, they've accepted His sacrifice, are going to be spared. So, in that sense, it's similar, but it's a symbol.

Now, talking about some of the discrepancies in the Bible, if you're walking through Colorado mountains, and you're dying of thirst, and you suddenly see a creek where there is crystal-clear water coming down from melted snow. No factories above this mountain, it's as pure as you can find on earth, you probably would not hesitate to get down and to drink some of that water, and it would save your life. And you would very likely be just fine and much better for it.

But if you take that water to a laboratory, and you look at it under an electron microscope, in that water, you're going to probably find microscopic particles of clay, sodium, algae, some bacteria, and even microscopic particles of gold. Even the bottled purified water that we drink is not 100% pure. It is 99.999% pure, depending on the water and the company that you buy--get it from, but we don't have any problem drinking that water because we know that it is really pure water.

The Bible--just keep perspective, friends. The Bible has 783,137 words in the King James Authorized Version. That's 3,116,480 letters. When you take all of the apparent contradictions in the Bible, sometimes they are one digit of a number that is different from another place. That's one character out of three million. Sometimes it is one letter, a word, or said letter that may--a name may have been pronounced differently in one book than

another. One letter in the name was different. And people say, "Ah, there's discrepancies in the Bible. It can't be trusted."

Folks that look at stuff like that will die in the mountains because they won't drink spring water. The Bible is a pure book. So I wanted to establish that because now, as we go through the inconsistencies, I want to make sure you understand they are microscopic when you can look at the size of the Bible, how big it is, and how much is in there.

Okay, let's keep moving here. Let's deal honestly and carefully when we run into discrepancies in the Bible, or apparent discrepancies, because not all of them are discrepancies. Some just look that way at first glance. 1 Chronicles 29:17, "I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart, I have willingly offered these things, and now with joy I've seen Your people, who are present here, who offer willingly to You."

Something that God really values is honesty and an uprightness and a willingness of heart. And so as we encounter different challenges in reading the Bible, don't just, you know, put in your prejudice right away, what your opinion is. Don't defend something if you really don't know what the answer is. Say, "You know, that's a good question. I'm going to have to study that and find out more." We do a Bible-answer program every week, and sometimes people ask me a question, and, frankly, I don't know the answer. I said, "You know, can you call back next week? I'm going to look that up and see if I can find a better answer for you." Only God knows all things, and so have a humble, teachable spirit. God respects that.

Why do the four gospels seem different when it describes the women that went to the tomb? Actually, that's one of the examples where there really is perfect harmony. What you have that's different is the timing. Now, I researched this in depth because I wrote a book, called "At Jesus' Feet: The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene," and I had to sort this out. But Mary is the first one who comes to the tomb. She comes alone while it's still dark. As she sees the stone is rolled away, she leaves. She encounters the other women, and then she goes back with them to say, "Look, see? It was as I said." They then go, and they tell the others. Peter and John come. Mary is there. Peter and John leave. Mary stays. Jesus then appears to Mary. And so it's the sequence of how it happened that looks like different groups are coming at different times. And, of course, each gospel writer, they're reporting the absolute truth. They're reporting different parts of the chronological time of the Resurrection morning.

Okay, back to the lesson here. In Proverbs 2, verse 7, it says, "He stores up sound wisdom for the upright." You want to understand? Be upright in heart, be honest. "He's a shield to those who walk uprightly." 1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed to yourself in the doctrine. Continue in this, for in doing this, you will both save yourself and those who hear you." In the process for searching out the truth--and Jesus said, "Thy word is truth."

The Bible is true. God has miraculously preserved His word and kept it pure. And something else I thought you would find interesting, I was doing some research on the average book when it's printed. Oh, yeah. Errors in a typical novel. There are millions of books that are printed in the world and in North America, and a top publishing editor said, "A book that's been hastily proofread by just one proofreader may display one typo per 1,000 words. This is not an unusual thing among published books. I have been sent to read and review. I'm more comfortable with three typos, single-letter errors, or two letters transposed per 10,000 words." Based on the very best publishing editors, the Bible is above all of that, when you consider there are three million words and very few of these typographical errors that you're going to find in the Bible.

All right, let's move on here. In Matthew chapter 13:19, Jesus said, "Those who are unstable," if you're not grounded in the Word, "you can be easily confused." "When anyone hears the words of the kingdom, if he doesn't understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he who receives the seed by the wayside."

And so, when we first read, you really need to pray for the Holy Spirit. If there's part of the Bible you do not understand, or it seems there's a discrepancy or some contradiction, hold fast to that which is good and keep reading. The answers will come as you continue to study. Remember, Isaiah 55:9, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out."

So here's an example of some of the discrepancies that you might run into, and, believe it or not, in our lesson today, I'm trying to cover most of the major ones here that we run into. By the way, I should mention that Amazing

Facts has a couple of books out that deal with answers to difficult Bible questions, and on the radio program, we've compiled the most common questions we get: "Who did Cain marry?" And some of these, you know, "Why did God say kill?" And it's often just that people are not--they don't continue reading, or they're not reading it in context, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Now, here, for instance, is an example you'll commonly run into: 2 Samuel 24, verse 1, "And, again, the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them, saying, 'Go, number Israel.'" Anger of the Lord, Lord moved him. But you read that in 1 Chronicles 21:1. It says, "Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number them." "Wait a second," you're thinking, "How can it be one verse says, 'The Lord moved David to number Israel,' and the other one says, 'the devil'?" I mean, how could you be more confused than that?

Sometimes, when I'm preaching, I've gotten tongue-tied when you're in a hurry. And, you know, sometimes I've been preaching, I've gotten "Moses" and "Noah" mixed up, and Karen's often there in the audience as she is today, and she'll say, "Oh, you meant to say, 'Noah.'" I say, "Oh, yeah, yeah." People usually let you off the hook. Or I've gotten my "Peter" and my "Paul" mixed up while I was speaking quickly. But one of the things you don't want to do is get your "Jesus" and "Satan" mixed up, but I've done that too when I was talking about the temptation of Christ. And Karen said, "No, no, you mean, 'Jesus,' not 'Satan.'" I'd say, "Oh, yeah, let's get that straight."

Well, how can you have, here it says, "The Lord moved David," and "Satan moved David"? Well, here's a verse in Acts chapter 2, verse 22 and 23, that helps explain what's going on behind the scenes. "Men of Israel," Acts 2:22, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know--Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, and crucified and put to death." God's purpose allowed this in advance, but it was something that the devil did. Even the devil had to ask God for permission to go and to tempt Job. So are you going to blame God? Are you going to blame Job? Do you notice that Job said, "Shall we not receive good from the hand of the Lord, and evil?" It was the devil who did it, but Job said, ultimately, God is almighty. He's enthroned.

And so, you know, God sometimes loosens the devil's leash, and so people will say, "Well, it was God," and other places will say, "It was the Lord." And it's just the sovereignty of God that sometimes creates confusion in that. So, yeah, the Lord allowed the devil, because of David's pride, to test David, and he failed the test with pride. Another question, "Why does the Bible say, 'Jacob I have loved,'" in Romans, now, was it 9:13? "Jacob I loved. Esau I have hated"? And, actually, when Paul says that in Romans, he's quoting from the Old Testament. When it says, "I loved Jacob," "I hated Esau," it's not talking about the brothers. He's talking about the nations that came from the brothers. And the Edomites became carnal. Jacob ended up wanting the spiritual birthright, and so God is saying, "Look, I love the people that want the spiritual blessing. I curse, or I don't want those who are carnal." They just want the physical immediate beans in the pot. And so God is not saying that he pre-determined, "I'm going to hate Esau, and I'm going to love Jacob." God was now loving and hating how they responded to His grace, and some wanted the spiritual blessing, some wanted the earthly, carnal blessings.

All right, let's get back into some of those that are in the lesson, some of the apparent contradictions or contradictions. Look, for instance, in Ecclesiastes 7, verse 29. "God made man upright." Okay, I like that. But then, you read in Psalm 51, verse 5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity." Well, which is it? Were we made upright or brought forth in iniquity? Well, the answer is that God originally made man perfect. Everything in the garden was pure. But after the fall of sin, David is talking here about his fall with Bathsheba and killing of Uriah. Here, he's saying, you know, after the fall, all of us are brought forth with fallen natures, and so they're describing two different things in this verse.

So when you come to some discrepancy in the Bible, who does God give knowledge to? The Bible says God will teach the humble, and this is under the section "Dealing with Difficulties with Humility." Psalm 25, verse 9, "The humble He guides in justice. The humble He teaches His way." Don't jump to conclusions. If you don't know, admit you don't know. Humbly wait and pray that, as you continue to study, you will understand. Read James 4, verse 6: "He gives more grace. Therefore He says, 'God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.' Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil. He'll flee from you. Draw near to God and He'll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He will lift you up."

So when we humbly confess we're confused on a topic or an apparent contradiction, and we seek for wisdom, God delights then to give us the wisdom. You know, as you study the history of the Adventist Church, there were a number of times when our founders were confounded by a certain passage, things they didn't understand, and

they'd come together, and they'd humbly kneel, they'd pray, they'd study, they'd debate, and God would guide them. Sometimes as final enlightenment, Ellen White would be brought into vision, and she would point to the Scriptures that gave the answer, and all of a sudden, the light would come on. And so sometimes we need that spiritual guidance in that way as long as it's all based on the Bible. That needs to be the key. And in Zephaniah 3:12, "I'll leave in your midst a meek and a humble people. They will trust in the name of the Lord."

Okay, I want to start talking about some of the apparent discrepancies in numbers in the Bible. There's quite a few of these. For example--and I wrote a book on this--the demoniac, if you read in Matthew and if you read--I'm sorry. If you read in Mark and Luke, it says there's one demoniac. Mark chapter 5, verse 2, "When they came out of the boat, there met Him a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit." One man, singular. But Matthew chapter 8, verse 28, "When He was come to the other side, into the country of the Gadarenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so no man might tame them." And says, "Oh, well, one says it was one. One said it was two."

It's the same story. Why does one say there was one man, and one says there was two men? Well, because evidently there were two men, but one was probably at the forefront. One was the one who did the speaking. One was exceedingly fierce, more so than the other, and when they reported the story, they reported it based on this one outspoken individual, but there might have been someone else that was in the background there in that story.

You'll also find the same principle when they have the healing of Bartimaeus. Notice here, Mark chapter 10, verse 46, "They came to Jericho. And as He went out of Jericho with His disciples, a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging." And this talks about this one man who said, "Son of Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." You read in Matthew, and Matthew, two times now, he's got double. Matthew says, "As he went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. Behold, two blind men were sitting there, saying, 'Son of David, have mercy on us.'" Same event, it's the same miracle. There probably were two. Bartimaeus is one of them. He was the outspoken one. He's the one that ran forward. The other one may have come secondly.

And so--and this is actually--this strengthens my faith in the Bible because, if the gospel writers are just copying each other, why would they make a mistake like that? But Matthew, who was a firsthand witness of both those events, he knew there was actually two, and he wrote that. And the other gospel writer, he said, "I'm going to talk about the one who did the speaking." He mentioned the one. And maybe he thought, "This is such an amazing miracle. If you say there were two, they won't even believe it."

You know, I'll tell you a little story--is that a recent movie was made by Mel Gibson about a Seventh-day Adventist, named Desmond Doss, called "Hacksaw Ridge," and they tried to follow the book as well as they could, but there's one story that was so miraculous, they left it out of the script. And when asked why, Mel Gibson said, "This is just so incredible, people will think we're making it up." But it was true. And so, you know, sometimes the truth is even harder to believe than fiction. Yeah, let me give you a couple more examples of some of these numerical discrepancies. In 2 Samuel 24, verse 13, Nathan the prophet says, "You've got to choose your judgment. There'll be seven years of famine."

But when you read it in 1 Chronicles 21, verse 12, it says, three years of famine. Which is it? Well, it was probably three because he talks about three days, three months, and that stands a reason he would've said three years. Maybe the scribe who was doing this or the copyist who was copying this manuscript, he was thinking about the seven years of famine in the story of Joseph. It was late in the day and he wrote down "seven." That's one possible explanation.

This is a place where there's a definite discrepancy. Another possibility is, in Hebrew, the character number for three and seven are very similar. Have you ever read--somebody give you a phone number, and they put down the number two, but they wrote it so quickly, you say, "Is that a two or is that a seven?" And I've seen people that, kind of, halfway do a five, and it looks like a two. And so, same thing in Hebrew, some of these are very old manuscripts, and the actual number one, the number seven, and the number three, very similar, and it's easy to misunderstand. You can let something like that shake your faith. The whole story is true. God gave him these options of judgment, and when you look also--you do corresponding documents. When you look at the Arabic version of the Old Testament, Josephus' writings on this account, when you look at the Syriac version, they all say "three." And so you, just, you go to some outside manuscripts. You say, "Oh, okay, there's consistency there. Here's one manuscript where he mixed up a two or a three for a seven." Don't let that shake your faith.

Here's another example of that: When he talks about King Solomon's stalls for horses, you read in 1 Kings 4, verse 26, he had 40,000 stalls. That's quite a few stalls. You read in 2 Chronicles 9:25, it says he had 4,000. Well,

someone says, "See, look at that exaggeration. You can't trust the Bible." It's just a scribal error in the numbers that were written down, you know. You know what a big difference it can make when you're writing out a check if you put the comma in the wrong place? You can end up giving somebody \$10,000 instead of \$10. You got to be very careful. One little comma can make a big difference. Don't let that shake your faith. Probably was 4,000 stalls. How do we know that? Because it talks about how many chariots he had. Talks about how many soldiers he had. He really didn't need 40,000 stalls for horses.

But then you go to another example when it talks about how much water was held by the laver in the temple of Solomon. You read in 1 Kings 7:26, there were 2,000 baths. "Baths" was a Hebrew measurement. You read in 2 Chronicles 4, verse 5, 3,000 baths. Which is it? Now, this one, I think, has an easier explanation. Next door, you know, right now we are taping, and pretty soon we're going to start meeting in person, friends. This is really exciting. Maybe even as soon as next week, we'll have a small group meeting in a church, and we're praying about that, but right now we're meeting in our Amazing Facts worship room.

Next door, we're finishing the worship center, convention center sanctuary, for the Granite Bay Church, and we got a baptistry in the front, and it is a big baptistry. You can just about dive in there. When you were asking, "How much does it hold?" We have two answers. We have how much will it hold when you do a baptism because you do not fill it all the way when you use it, or all the water splashes out. So we would say, "All right, it holds 2,000 gallons." But how much would it hold if you filled it to the brim? Three thousand gallons because of the steps that go out. You see what I'm saying? And so when they give two different measurements for how much water was held in the laver, don't let that rattle your faith. The priests might've been saying, "All right, for regular use, we don't fill it to the top. It would all splash out. We fill it with 2,000." Someone says, "Yeah, if you actually fill it up, though, it's 3,000." So, yes, there is a little discrepancy there. That should not shake your faith in the Word of God.

So another example of a numerical discrepancy, how old was King Jehoiachin when he became king of Jerusalem? 2 Kings 24, says, he was 18 years of age. 2 Chronicles 36, says, he was eight years of age. There's an error here. He was probably 18 years of age because why would the Bible say that he did those things that displeased the Lord, so he was judged? Eight years old? God's going to judge him and overthrow him because of his evil? Oh, I've known some bad boys at eight years old but--and the other thing, it talks about his wives. Eight years old? No, it's easy, just like English and Hebrew, to miss one digit, and instead of it being "18," they left something off, and it came out "8." The other manuscripts say he was 18 years of age. And the other reason we know this, it says, "In the 37th year of Evil-Merodach, he had mercy on King Jehoiachin--" the last verse in Jeremiah-- "and he lifted his head from prison." So he's probably in his 50s when that happened. It all works out.

So, yes, there is a minor discrepancy there, and some people think that, "Well, then, can you say the Bible is infallible?" It is an infallible revelation of God's will. The originals, I believe, are infallible, but as translators and copyists go through history, you'll sometimes encounter discrepancies or apparent discrepancies. Ninety percent of the people who say, "I found a discrepancy in the Bible," it is an apparent discrepancy that can be explained. It is not real. It's just because of their perception.

Any last questions? "If the Bible says the Sabbath will endure forever, because it's holy, what about the Jewish feasts?" No, the Jewish feasts were not part of God's law before Creation. It was added because of sin. The Sabbath was part of God's perfect plan in the Garden of Eden.

You've been a great class. I don't know if I'm going to have time to get through much more. I think I've shown you a lot of the apparent discrepancies, and I want to remind you that I have more notes. If you go to the amazing Facts website, when you look under "Sabbath School," you can actually download our notes that, whoever the teacher is from week to week, we post our notes just in a Word document so you can say, "Oh." If you didn't get through it all and you're teaching a class, and you want to use our notes, we invite you to download the notes.

I also want to remind you that we do have a free book that is available to anybody, that you simply ask for it. It's called "12 Steps to Revival," written by yours truly, and if you want to call in, call 866--this is for North America: 866-788-3966. That's actually 866-Study-More, or you can text, and you text 40544, and text the letter "SH," then "001," and you can download "12 Steps to Revival." We trust that you'll enjoy that.

I've enjoyed talking about some of these discrepancies because I want people to have more faith in the Bible. And, you know what? I just will tell you in closing, friends, over my years as a Christian, so many times I've opened the Word of God, and when I ran into a problem, God then, when I prayed about it humbly, He gave light and showed the answer. You can trust the Bible.

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 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.

Brittney: I was addicted to all different types of things. I finally hit rock bottom when I got pulled over one night after a heavy night of partying with some friends. I was drunk, high on Ecstasy, and I realized then that I had to make a change.

Vince: Was in the military and listening to very satanic music every day and heard this whisper to carve "666" into my knuckles. Contemplated on it a while, and I was sitting at my desk, and I had my knife on me, and I started carving the horizontal lines for the sixes into my index finger first with serrated edges and started to enjoy it. I wanted to make it known who I wanted to follow, actually, and not knowing I was following Satan at the time. Just, I thought it was a cool thing to do.

Brittney: So I met this guy online, and that was my husband, Vince, and I noticed his ears, and we started talking, and he was just adorable.

Vince: Flew down and actually met her here in Arizona.

Brittney: And, at that point, I found out quickly after we met that I was pregnant.

Vince: So shortly after our daughter was born, it was a very exciting moment, but the nurses and doctors notice something right away that she was extremely orange with jaundice.

Brittney: And she ended up in the hospital, very sick, and it was extremely hard on us. We were teenagers. We were scared. Our baby was sick. I was with someone that was very angry, and at that point, we were in the hospital room, and I remember a chaplain coming in and speaking with the people. Since it was like a conjoined room, we had a roommate, and the chaplain had said, you know, if he could pray for the other family, and that's when I knew that it was my chance. I had to take that opportunity, and I asked my husband, "Should I go talk to him?"

Vince: I said, "No way." I wanted nothing to do with God. I wanted nothing to do with talking to this chaplain.

Brittney: I decided that I was going to get up anyway, and I got up, and you could tell he was very angry that I decided to walk over, and I went to the chaplain, and I asked him to come over and speak to us, and he did.

Vince: And he came in, and we asked him questions, and he actually came to visit us every single day.

Brittney: The chaplain that we met with mentioned Amazing Facts study guides and, just, the ministries.

Vince: He showed us videos and study guides from Amazing Facts, specifically. It was on "Final Events" and "Cosmic Conflict." At that point, we had transferred hospitals to an outpatient hospital, and we were able to watch these videos, and we were hooked on them.

Brittney: It was a huge blessing. We would watch Pastor Doug, and we would sit up late at night, watching sermons, and we were just teenagers. Most kids our age were out doing crazy things, and here we are at home with popcorn and chocolate bars, watching Pastor Doug.

Ben Lundquist: This young couple came into the Camelback Church holding a beautiful little baby, and this was one of the first times that I had ever met Vince and Brittney.

Vince: We needed somebody to show us that they loved us, that they supported us, and Pastor Ben was there, giving us Bible studies on marriage counseling as well as baptism.

Brittney: I was still smoking and drinking lightly, and a few things along those lines, and it was one day when I woke up on February 15, 2011, after watching many sermons on "Amazing Facts" from Pastor Doug, and having a really solid church family, that I was able to say, "No more." And from that day on, I stopped all of my addictions.

Charles White: And, ultimately, their lives began to take on just a new dimension of congruity because Jesus was there, and He was the one that was bringing that sense of belonging and hope and help.

Brittney: We decided to get baptized and married, and we got baptized one day and married the next, and it was an amazing experience.

Ben: And we found a spot by the lake, and it was absolutely perfect. The evening was coming to a close. The sun was about ready to go down.

Vince: And we were standing on the water with Pastor Ben, and the sky was such a deep red. The reflections off the sky was almost as if we were standing in blood. We were washed in the blood of Jesus.

Ben: And that was the moment that God painted the canvas of the sky with the most beautiful colors, signifying the journey that He was going to be laying out for Vince and Brittney.

Vince: Shortly after we were baptized, about a month later, we had realized that my scars were gone. I was completely healed physically of not having the "666" on my knuckles anymore, and I struggled with that for so long because of what I did, and He forgave me.

Malcolm Douglas: Many times, when we think of the way that we've been led to Christ, we think there's usually one individual, but having been able to work alongside Pastor Ben and Pastor White, it's been great to see how we've been able to work with Brittney and Vincent and seen them just really grow. And this has really been something that's been beneficial to me. You know, sometimes I think about this, and the Bible says, "More blessed is he who gives than receives," and I feel, in many times, more blessed, just seeing them and seeing all the challenges they've gone through, all the difficulties, and seeing them overcome these things, it just--it amazes me.

Vince: As I reflect back on everything I've done in my life, completely going against God, wanting nothing to do with Him, He still tried so hard as if I was the only one that was lost, just as He promises. He still went and found me even though I wanted nothing to do with Him.

Brittney: Having Amazing Facts and the pastors in our lives help us so much, it's really a blessing, and I feel like now we're happy, and we have these two healthy, beautiful, little girls, and God has truly blessed us, and I just want to share it with everyone. I want to scream it. I'm so excited, and I feel really blessed to even have this opportunity to share my story.

Doug: We're here on the beautiful coast of the island of Puerto Rico, and if you were to travel east about 2,000 miles, of course, you'd be out in the middle of the ocean. But you'd also be in the middle of a mystical sea called the Sargasso Sea. It gets its name because of this common brown seaweed that can be found floating in vast mass. The area of the Sargasso Sea is about 700 miles wide and 2,000 miles long.

Now, the seaweed itself is fascinating stuff. It was first observed and called gulfweed by Christopher Columbus. It gets the name "sargum" from the Portuguese. Some people use it as herbal remedies. But out in the middle of the Sargasso Sea the water is some of the bluest in the world. It's there you can see 200-foot deep in places. It also has a great biodiversity and ecosystem that surrounds the Sargasso Sea.

For years, scientists wondered where the American and the Atlantic eels were breeding. They knew the adult eel swam down the rivers, out into the Atlantic, but they never could find the place where they reproduced. Finally, they discovered it was out in the middle of the Sargasso Sea.

So it's a fascinating place, but if you were an ancient sailor, you did not want to get stuck there. Being caught in the doldrums was extremely difficult for the ancient sailors. Of course, their boats were driven by wind and sail, and they'd be caught in the vast mass of the seaweed that would wrap around their rudder. Barnacles would begin to grow. It's an area that is notorious for light and baffling winds, and so they'd make no progress. They'd get stuck. The men would become extremely dispirited. Sometimes, violence and even insanity would break out as people were trapped in the doldrums.

Well, friends, perhaps sometimes you've felt that you're trapped in the doldrums. You've gone through episodes of depression. You feel like you're going in circles. Life seems stifling. You know, the Bible offers good news. There is a way out. The Bible talks about a famous character that was trapped in a cycle of depression. He was low as you could be. Matter of fact, he even had seaweed wrapped around his head. His name was Jonah. But God gave him a way of escape.

In Jonah chapter 2, verse 3 through 7, we read: "For You cast me into the depths, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me. All of Your billows and Your waves passed over me. Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight, yet I will look again towards Your holy temple.' The waters surrounded me, even to my soul. The deep closed around me. Weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains. The earth with its bars closed behind me forever, yet You've brought my life up from the pit, O Lord, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple."

You know, friends, the way that Jonah got out of his discouraging circumstances, he turned to God, and he prayed. And if God could hear Jonah's prayer, just think about it: He was as far away from God as anybody could be. He was in the belly of a sea monster in the bottom of the ocean in the dark, yet he turned to God, and God heard his prayer.

You know, these ancient sailors, when they were trapped on the deck of a ship for weeks, stuck in the doldrums, discouraged, sometimes they would have a prayer meeting and pray that God would send a breeze that would set them free and get their boats moving. They turned to God in prayer, and often miracles would happen, and the wind would flutter in the sails and bring them out of their seaweed prison.

Friends, maybe you have been stuck in the doldrums. Maybe you've been caught in a cycle of depression. If God can do it for Jonah, if He can do it for the ancient sailors, He can do it for you. Turn to the Lord in prayer. Trust His Spirit to blow through your soul and to set you free.