

Matthew 24:32-35 “Signs of Jesus’ Return-Jesus Always Keeps His Word”

4.22.18

This morning we continue in our study of the life of Jesus as He’s making His way to Calvary and His death on the cross. You may remember...



...since His Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus and His disciples have been staying in Bethany, (just 2 miles away), with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Jesus has been making His way back and forth to the Temple from Bethany. On His way back to the Temple on Monday:



He sees a fig tree with no figs on it and He uses it as a lesson for His disciples and He curses it. Sure enough, they come back the next morning, (on Tuesday), and that tree had totally dried up.

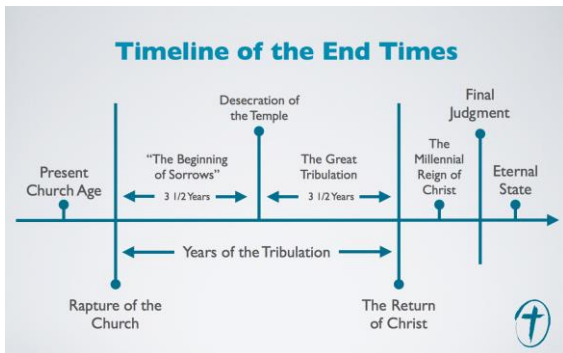


There wasn’t a leaf on it. And you see, here’s what’s important to know. The fig and the olive tree were like the national trees of Israel. And Jesus would describe to His disciples on their way back into Jerusalem on Tuesday morning...that **THIS IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION** of Israel. It’s barren and it’s dead and judgment is coming, because “Jesus came to His own and His own received Him not.”

And so on that hillside, called the Mount of Olives... Jesus pointed back to the Temple and the city:



and said, "Judgment is coming on the nation of Israel." And truly, when we look at the "Timeline of the End Times." That's what the Tribulation period is all about...



It is the "Time of Jacob's (Israel's) Trouble." That's the Tribulation period of 7 years in the middle of that chart. And this morning, Jesus once again uses a fig tree in His teaching to describe the certainty of all that will one day take place.

I stood on the Mount of Olives back in 2007 (probably within feet) of where Jesus stood and saw that same view that the disciples saw 2,000 years earlier...



and you know what? Everything that Jesus said came true. The Temple was destroyed and not one stone was left on top of another when the Roman General, Titus came in just 40 years later in 70 A. D. and destroyed the Temple and laid waste the city of Jerusalem.

Listen to me this morning! Everything Jesus said came true! Google it: "The Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D." It happened just as Jesus said it would. Listen, you can trust Jesus and His word, because He always keeps His word!

Matthew 24:32-35

³² "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is

near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Church family, what does Jesus mean when He says His word will not pass away? What is the lesson of a fig tree? Well, it's simple: shouldn't we naturally expect trees to bear fruit in their season? Yes, of course. If you have fruit trees that don't, you cut them down. The point, just as the seasons come and go, and trees bear fruit in their season, we can trust Jesus and His Word.

You see, Jesus was saying this, "This generation that sees the Antichrist will know my second coming is not far behind, count on it!" The generation of Jews that sees the Antichrist set up his image in the rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount in the act known as the Abomination of Desolation... Jesus said, "Count on it... I'm not far behind." Look at verse 35 again...

Matthew 24:35

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

What is His word? "My words will not pass away." Do we have His recorded words? Of course we do. We're reading it! It's the Bible... The Bible is Jesus... the Word that was made flesh and dwelled among us. Remember Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount...

Matthew 5:18

¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

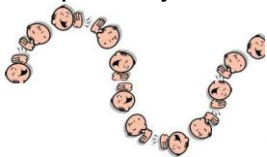
The prophet Isaiah said:

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The Apostle told Timothy, "The word of God is not bound (2 Timothy 2:9)... in other words, IT CAN'T BE STOPPED!"

Or can it? Do you believe the Bible is the word of Jesus? Do you trust it? Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God? Or do you believe (as is espoused by the skeptics today) it's been corrupted over the last 2,000 years? I mean, the skeptics say, "There's no way the Bible that we have today can possibly be accurate and anywhere close to the original." It's like the telephone game...



Where one person starts out with a message and by the time it gets passed along to the last person, the message is totally different. So, is that how it is with the Bible? Can we really trust that what we have today is the Word of God? This is so critical and it's what we must know in order for us to have confidence in our faith. Because if the Bible is not true and has been corrupted... then, how can we trust anything that's found in it!?

Turn with me in your Bibles to 2 Timothy chp. 3. As you're doing so- I want you to see a quote:

"The Word of God is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses. They report to us supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claim to be divine rather than human in origin." Dr. Voddie Baucham

And that's exactly what we're going to see this morning... So, what does the Bible claim to be?

2 Timothy 3:14-16

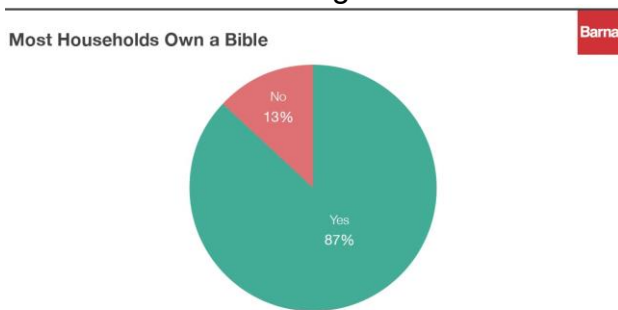
¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

Paul said, "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed." What was that? The sacred writings...the Scriptures! **Are you convinced the Bible is the Word of God? What about Americans? Here's the most "Bible-minded Cities in America"** according to Barna Research.



#1 Chattanooga, TN; #2 Birmingham, AL; #3 Roanoke/Lynchburg, VA; #4 Tri-Cities, TN; #5 Shreveport, LA; #6 (not shown) Charlotte, NC. Are you curious about the least Bible minded cities? Yep, they're all in the Northeast... Albany, NY; Boston, MA; Manchester, NH and Providence, RI. (How crazy... Providence, RI was founded in 1636 by Christians from England and named: "Providence" because of God's protection for them.)

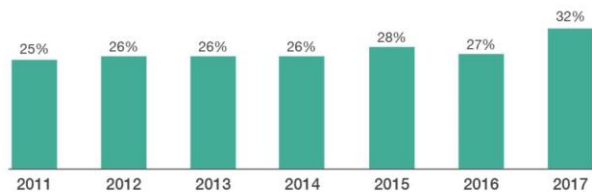
You know it's interesting: 87% of American Households own a Bible.



n=2,030 (telephone + online) | January-February 2017

But get this, 1/3 of Americans never read the Bible, or listen to it or Pray with the Bible...

One-Third Never Read, Listen to or Pray With the Bible



n=2,030 (telephone + online) | January-February 2017

Do you see where we're headed? In just the last 7 years we've gone from 25% to 1/3 who don't read the Bible. At this pace, within the next 20 years, more than 2/3rds of Americans will not read the Bible.

Now let me ask you: Do you read the Bible? You say you believe it...do you read it? You see, you can tell if someone really believes it, because they'll read it. Listen, the Bible will guide your life and be a "lamp to your feet and light to your path."

Let me ask this...How well do you know the Bible? At some point take the bulletin insert and see. Take the: **Basic Bible Knowledge Quiz**. See how well you know that basics.

You see, the Bible was "breathed out by God," to man. That phrase, "breathed out by God" is one word in the Greek. Here it is:

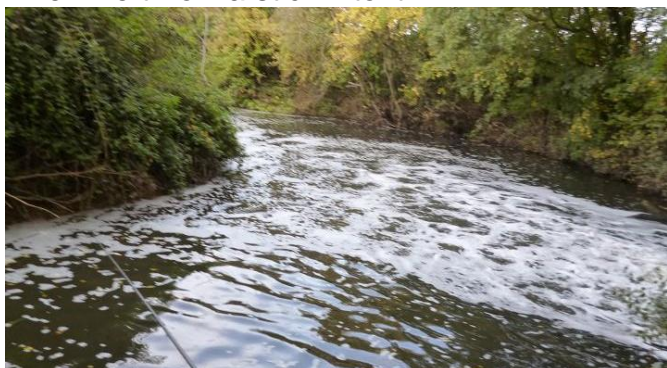
"Breathed out by God" (Thee-OFF-new-Stoos) Theopneustos – Inspired by God

Listen, God breathed...He exhaled...His word into 40 men. In other words, He literally breathed His word through them and they penned down what God breathed into them. Think of it like this... The Bible came from the pen of men, but it originated with God. Mankind had nothing to do with the origin of the message. The emphasis should be where the Word came FROM, not from whom it came THROUGH. So, the author of the Word of God is God and He used His Spirit to guide men to write down for us the things He wanted us to know about Himself and about how to live life and come to Him.

2 Peter 1:20-21

²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit carried the authors along in inspiring them as to what to write, like a creek does when we throw a stick into it.



The creek carries along the stick. The stick goes

where the creek directs it. And so, the Holy Spirit was the One who spoke into the writers, thereby directing them what to write.

But, many will say, “Wait a minute, you can’t use the Bible to defend itself.” That’s circular reasoning. No, it’s not...you’re wrong! It’s “self-authentication.” Listen, we can look to the Bible to see if what it reports is true. **Is there evidence from the Bible that authenticates, validates and gives credence that it is accurate and true?** The answer is a resounding: YES!! There has never been a single claim, date, place, name, or event that’s been chronicled in the Bible that’s been proved as incorrect. And there has never been a book more scrutinized and attacked than the Word of God and not one parcel of it has been proved as false or incorrect.

In fact, take archaeology for instance. There have been over 24,000 archaeological digs in Israel and there has never been a single dig that has disproved anything in the Bible. Each dig strengthens the Bible’s authority and reliableness. See this quote:

“No archeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible.” Dr. Nelson Glueck, President, Hebrew Union College and Israeli Archaeology Expert

Pastor and writer John MacArthur, says it this way: “God is not capable of revealing something that isn’t true.” And he’s right! God can’t tell a lie! Because the truth is, if any part of the Bible is a lie or untrustworthy, then how can you be confident you’re saved or going to heaven? You see, if we can’t trust the Bible in all parts, then we have an unreliable foundation for our faith. Why? Because every single Christian doctrine would be held question if it’s all not reliable.

If the Bible is not trustworthy and true in all aspects, then how can I preach it with authority, and why would you believe it? And WHAT IS MORE, how could Christians offer the world a reliable Gospel if the Bible is unreliable?

BUT I understand...there are those who will say, “But wait a minute, Mr. Bible thumper...you no longer have the original documents. Your beloved book of myths and fairy tales has long since rotted.”

Well, before anyone hits the panic button, let’s talk about this... Did you know that the vast majority of the writings of antiquity (or ancient writings or literature hundreds or thousands of year old) are gone? There are practically no originals of most of our oldest works of literature. You see, the writings of antiquity were written on things like this...



papyrus, or what is called parchment paper and animal skins, called vellums; thus, they decayed and are gone.

This is true of the original 66 books of the Bible, the originals are gone. But, we do have these...



Manuscript copies. Over 30,000 of them for just the New Testament alone! Take a look at this chart. See it? Translations of the original Greek of the NT in other languages have rendered to us over 24,000 copies.

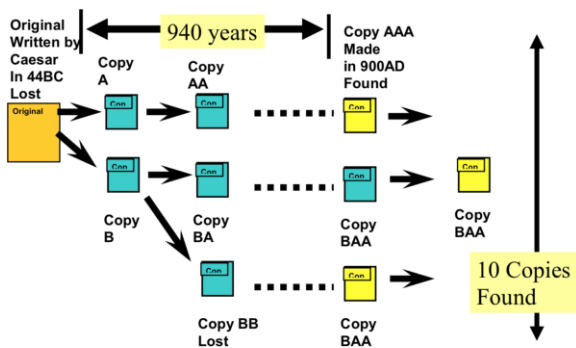
Translations of the Greek into other languages that we've found:

Latin Vulgate	10000 plus
Ethiopic	2000 plus
Slavic	4101
Armenian	2587
Syriac Pashetta	350
Boharic	100
Arabic	75
Gothic	7
Sogdian	3
Old Syriac	2
Persian	2
Frankish	1

Indeed, there is no other writing of antiquity that can boast this massive amount of manuscript evidence today. And no other writing of antiquity can boast the number of languages and countries these manuscripts have been found.

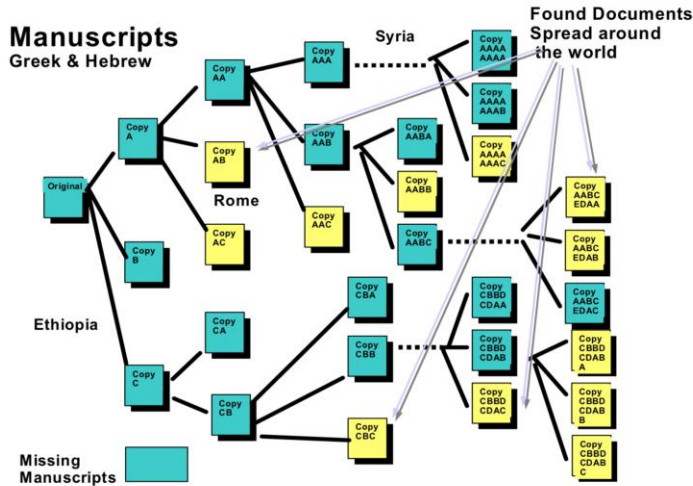
Let me give you an example. I want to use Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, written circa 44 BC.

Caesar's Gallic Wars



There are only 10 copies of Caesar's *Gallic Wars* in existence today. Only 10. And again, just like almost all writings of antiquity, we don't have the original manuscript. But, here's what I want you to understand. The length of time between the original written around 44 BC and the first copy we have found around 900 AD is over 940 years apart. And yet, no one questions the authenticity or the reliability of these copies, which represent Julius Caesar's accounts of the military campaigns against the Gallic tribes. Oh but they question the Bible, don't they?

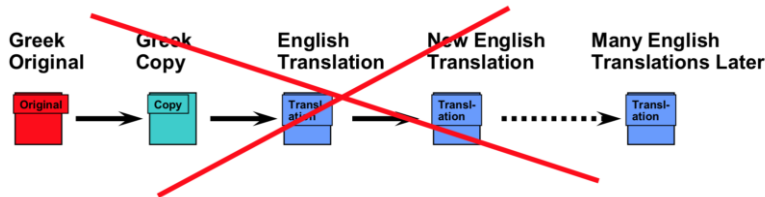
Take a look at the New Testament manuscripts...



The Greek and Hebrew Manuscripts of the NT that have been translated into (see the top of the screen) into Syriac in Syria, Latin in Rome and Ethiopic in Ethiopia. This represents the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. That's three continents, folks. LOOK AT THE CHART. Only the copies in yellow still exist. What's in green or teal, have been lost. But, we have copies that are within about 50 years of the originals.

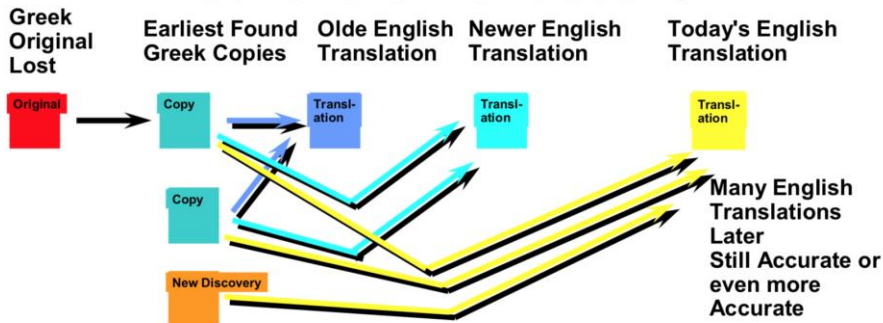
So, let's clear up the misconception of the "Telephone Game," that's even taught by a lot of misguided professors on liberal college campuses, who simply lying to their students...the Bible was not brought to us like this...

Common Concept of Translations



That's not true... This is a proper depiction...

Truth of the Translations



Now, Church Family, here's the amazing thing, when we compare the early manuscript copies from the three different continents where they've been found, with some of the copies being written down hundreds of years apart and then compared them...guess what...they're almost identical...

“Even if we had no Greek manuscripts today, by piecing together the information from the early manuscripts from the other languages and continents, we could actually reproduce the entire contents of the New Testament. In addition to that, even if we lost all the Greek manuscripts and all of the early translations from all the other languages, we could still reproduce the contents of the entire New Testament from the multiplicity of quotations in commentaries, sermons, and letters from the early church fathers.” Dr. Bruce Metzger, Bible Scholar, Translator, Princeton Theological Seminary in an interview with Lee Strobel

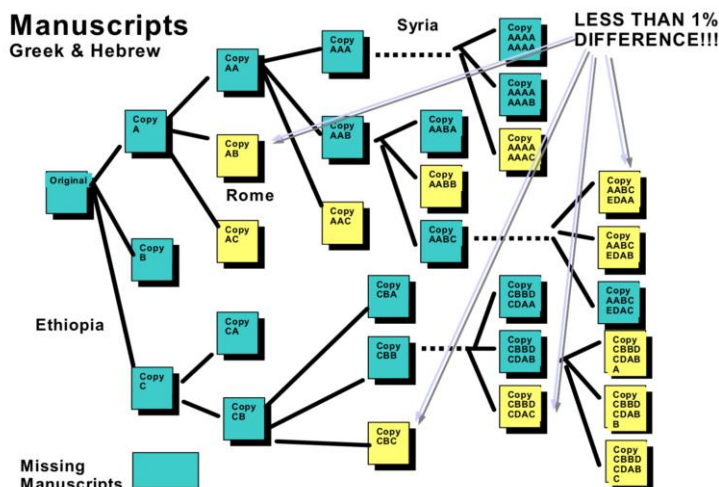
Who are the Early Church Fathers? Well, they are the men who lived within two generations of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus and were taught by the twelve. Take a look at this chart:

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline	General	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement (Alex)	1,107	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,992
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Grand Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

Look in the middle at Origen of Alexandria, Egypt...He was a prolific writer and wrote over 9,000 documents or letters in reference to the Gospels and over 7,700 from Paul’s letters. See at the bottom...Eusebius of Caesarea. He had over 3,000 writings on the Gospels and 1,500 from Paul’s letters. So, in total, just these 7 early church fathers had over 36,289 documents or letters or commentary writings of the New Testament.

Now get this...if you took all the old writings, letters and documents of the early church fathers and reassembled them, scholars tell us we’d have the entire New Testament reconstructed except for just 11 verses. Listen, there are 7,957 verses in the NT and that means with just the early church fathers, we’ve got 99.99% of the NT just from them!

But, I know...I know there are some of you in the room that’s still bothered by something I said earlier. The 1%. The 1% that I showed you on this chart...



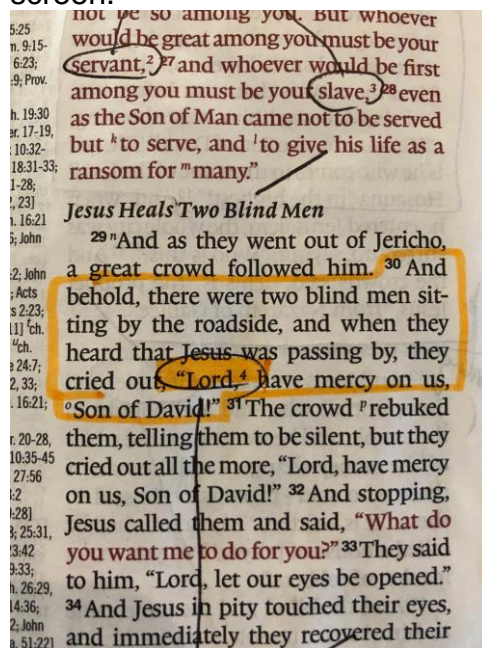
That less than 1% difference in the manuscripts from the different languages and continents... What about that 1%? What is that? Well, let not your heart be troubled! This 1% variance is called: “Textual Variants.” And textual

variants show up in all writings of antiquity. Quite simply a “textual variant” occurs when comparing two copies of any document or text, and you find a difference, that’s considered a variant.

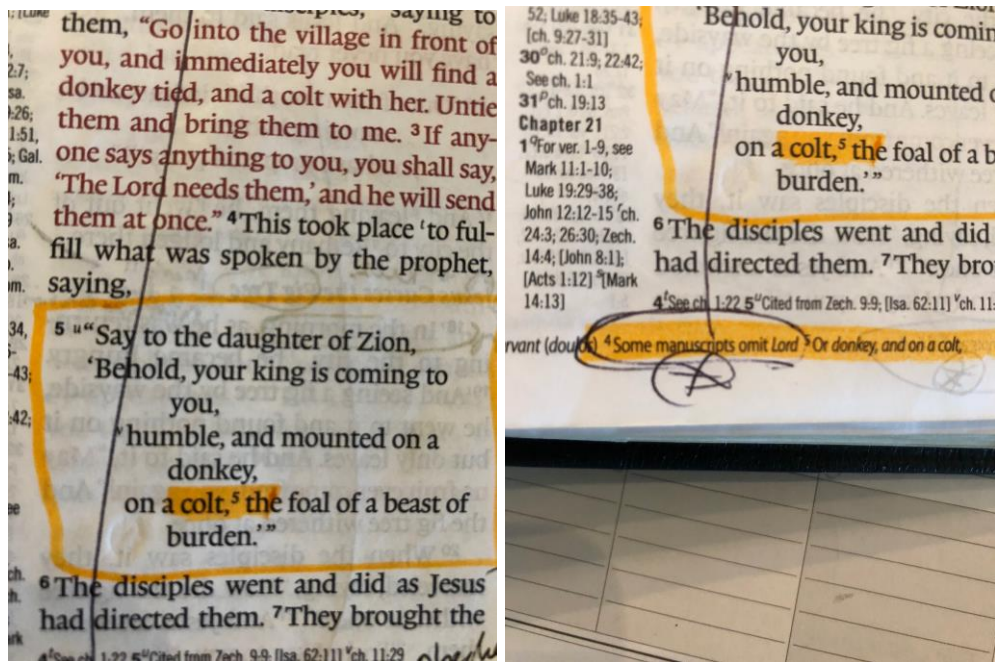
So what is this 1%? Well, those who study “textual variants” are called “Textual Critics” and they critique or study ancient writings and they stay the vast majority of the <1% of variants within the NT are simply spelling errors, or clarifications. Now remember, there are 7,957 verses in the NT, we’re talking about 80 verses that contain major variants.

Less than 1% of all textual variants are both meaningful and viable, and by “meaningful” we don’t mean to imply earth-shattering significance but rather, almost always, minor alterations to the meaning of the text. Significant textual variants that alter core doctrines of the New Testament have not been produced. Dr. Daniel Wallace, Professor of NT, Dallas Theological Seminary

Let me show you a couple very quickly. If you have a Bible that’s a Cross Reference Bible or a Study Bible you will have little footnotes and letters in your Bible. We’re in Matthew 24. For two quick examples, flip back to **Matthew 20, verse 30.** We’ll show this to you from my Bible on the screen.



Look down at chpt. 21:5



Wonderful! So what does all of this mean to me? Listen, Jesus said:

Matthew 24:35

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

He was telling the truth, Church Family! He was telling the truth! Not one of His WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY. Yes, heaven and earth will be changed... there will be a new heaven and a new earth, (that's what He's been describing to His disciples...the Tribulation)...but His word will last forever.

What does this mean to you? It means you can trust Him. You can trust every word He has ever said. You can trust Him when He said: "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." You can trust Him when He said, "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full." You can trust Him when He said: "I will never leave you nor forsake you till the end of time." Are you trusting Him today? Have you trusted your heart to Him? I pray you will right now!