

# Can We Trust the Bible?

*Part 5: The New Testament and the End Times*  
(preached 5/14/23)

Please turn to

LAST WEEK:

- The Devil is always trying to mess things up, and he tried it with the Bible...and FAILED.
- The Vorlage is the oldest known copy of the Hebrew Bible and was collated by Ezra the Scribe.
- After Akiba edited his copy of the Vorlage, he released it as the official/authorized Bible for the Jews and he labeled the Septuagint as “the Christian Bible.”
- Akiba’s Hebrew Bible was eventually given to Jewish scribes called the Masoretes, who carefully preserved it for 500 years. It’s now referred to as “The Masoretic Text.”
- The Catholic and most Protestant Bibles were translated from this text.
- We have the Septuagint, which was translated directly from the Vorlage.
- We also have the DSS which may have been a 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> generation copy of the Vorlage.
- We also have the SP.
- The Apostle Paul, who wrote 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the NT, was a Pharisee who read and wrote Hebrew. It’s postulated he had a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation copy of the Vorlage that he read and preached from.
- Most current translations have over 1500 manuscripts to rely upon and we’re finding more.
- The source material and textual scrutiny on the Bible is greater than ever.
- Technology and computers have helped greatly.
- The devil’s attempts to corrupt the Bible failed. *Through God’s divine providence and Spirit-led discoveries and scholarship, the word of God has been preserved!*

TODAY *we’ll talk about the New Testament and how some of what we’ve learned links up to the end times.*

**What of the Apocrypha?** The Apocrypha were ancient Jewish extra-Biblical books like Enoch, Jubilees, and Jasher that were never part of the 66/40 canon of Scripture. Every now and then you hear skeptics say that the Apocrypha was once “part of the Bible” and they’re right...sort of.

**The Septuagint and the Catholic Bible all contain the Apocrypha** to this day, and so did most Protestant Bibles up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original 1611 KJV includes these extra Biblical books within its pages as well.

SECONDARY READING. While the ancient Jews included these books in their Bible, they considered them “secondary” reading and **not** the inerrant, inspired word of God. One uncomfortable fact is that Jesus and the Apostles ALL reference and/or directly quote from several Apocryphal books in the Gospels and epistles. They all read these books as part of their Jewish upbringing, and my opinion is that we should too.

That being said, *the Apocrypha were never considered part of the canon of Scripture*. While we may read them for a certain level of historical value, **our beliefs and doctrine should only come from the 66 books of the Bible.**

**WHY ARE THE APOCRYPHA TAKEN OUT OF THE BIBLE?** The initial reasons aren’t that spiritual: *it made copying, selling, and purchasing a bible very expensive*. When the 1611 KJV came out, the people were looking forward to it until they saw the price tag and realized they couldn’t afford it. When they began to complain, the secondary reading of the Apocrypha were removed to make Bibles cheaper.

FUNDAMENTALIST REMOVAL. It was only later on when more “fundamentalist” Christians began to insist they be left out, as they weren’t part of the canon, and today they’re absent from most Protestant Bibles.

## HOW DID THE NEW TESTAMENT COME ABOUT?

CHURCH FATHERS HAD LETTERS. Please remember that, in the first century, the NT was still being written. Even though the letters of Paul, Peter, James & John were circulating, most had not read them. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, we see quotations from Paul’s letters by Church fathers Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Origen wrote a commentary on Matthew’s Gospel. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, most everyone in Christendom considered the Gospels and Epistles to be the word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**The 27 books of the NT** were “officially” assembled in 367 A.D. by a bishop named Athanasius, and canonized in Rome around 382 A.D. It’s not known EXACTLY how the NT mss were handed down, but it’s said to have been *directly passed down by disciples of the Apostles such as Polycarp, Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Tertullian*. Indeed, all the above and several others living at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century into the second all make direct quotations in their own writings showing they had possession of the originals or copies.

B.C AND A.D. Interesting fact: many of the early church fathers believed Jesus was going to return in 500 A.D. after they worked out some faulty math. When that didn't happen, the people were devastated (as they always are when they look to a date for the Lord's return!). In order to salvage the reputation of the Church and help people keep the faith, a monk named Dionysius of Rome created "BC" and "AD" in 524, encouraging everyone that we were still waiting for the Lord to return, and it was still going to happen. To simplify what happened: he reset the entire calendar around the birth of Jesus. Before then, it was dated Anno Mundi—to the creation of the world.

## END TIMES

Let's now take some of what we've learned and link it with the end times, which are the years right before Jesus returns! While we still don't know when our Lord is going to come back, we can look for certain earmarks to give us an idea.

**The are 2 keys to understanding the end times**, and they're parallel to each other.

**KEY #1: God's Kingdom promises coming true, which also means reversing past curses that resulted from sin and death.**

**KEY #2: the Devil's corrupt imitation of trying to make the same promises come true, but through him.**

**Example #1:** Jesus promised to reverse the curse of death and give us everlasting life when He returns, and we read the beautiful details of the same in *1 Corinthians 15* when Paul describes in detail what our resurrected bodies will look like.

DEVIL PRESERVES THIS BODY. Having no divine or resurrection power whatsoever, the Devil is trying to preserve us in our current, fallen human body through cybernetic technology and other means. The movement behind making us immortal AS WE ARE is called transhumanism.

ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY. You see many examples of this in the entertainment industry, some of which attempt to romanticize things like becoming a vampire and living forever. Remember what God said whilst Adam & Eve were on their way out of the Garden: "we need to hide the Tree of Life lest they eat from it and stay like this forever" [paraphrase].

***We look forward to the new body that Jesus is giving us that will be free from sin and death! The devil wants us to stay in this one so he can continue to tempt & threaten us.***

**Example #2:** before Babel, all of humanity spoke one language. After the rebellion at the Tower, however, God confused the languages—a curse due to sin.

**The Gift of Tongues** were given as the starting point to reverse the curse—when the Apostles came out of the upper room in Acts 2, they were speaking their own language but the spectators heard them in THEIR native tongue.

**When Jesus returns and establishes His Kingdom, tongues will pass away as the Lord restores everyone back to one language.**

*Look how technology has imitated the Gift of Tongues.* All languages are now on computer and translation programs are free. You can download an app to your phone that you speak English into, and it translates it AUDIBLY to almost any language on earth! God's gift "not necessary" with this technology!

Do you see how the devil attempts to supplant the Lord with his own version of bringing in the conditions of the kingdom?

**AI is all about the Devil trying to become God and get people to rely—worship—it.** I'm annoyed with this MS Word program I'm using to write this sermon, because it tries to finish my sentences for me. When I log onto the internet, an option appears to my right for AI to write messages for me: text, PMs, papers, whatever. It writes sermons too...no joke. I just saw a younger pastor with many followers on social media warning other pastors not to allow AI to "help" them write sermons.

*Speaking of worshipping an "image" let's go to Daniel 11:31.*

Daniel 11 speaks of the **Antichrist** to come and some of what he'll do and today we focus on verse 31:

**[Dan 11:31 ESV]** 31 Forces from him [the Antichrist] shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

**"Him" is the Antichrist**, and Daniel is revealing that he shall gather his forces to PROFANE the Jewish Temple, stopping the animal sacrifices taking place within. Last, he will "set up" this thing call "the abomination that makes desolate."

Jesus referenced the exact same event centuries later:

**[Mat 24:15-21 ESV]** 15 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

There are several more things to unpack here.

FIRST: the animal sacrifices referred to here are those done in the Jewish Temple for sin, and the reason it's called a "burnt" offering is that, after the animal is killed, it's burned.

SECOND: if this is referring to an event in our future, which I believe it is, we have a problem: there's no Jewish Temple. It was destroyed in 70 AD which also undid the Sadducees: the Temple priests, High Priest, and council called the Sanhedrin.

***Remember that we learned that, with the Temple's destruction, the Pharisees won.*** They transformed the Jewish faith into what it is today, called Rabbinic Judaism. With no more Temple or Priesthood to perform blood sacrifice, the Jewish people attempt to rely upon good works and obedience to both written and oral Torah to obtain righteousness.

Therefore, in order for the Antichrist to STOP this sacrifice and profane the Jewish Temple...**there needs to be one.** There also needs to be a qualified Priesthood who performs all the necessary rituals, sacrifices, and cleansings.

While there isn't a Temple, **ALL THE OTHER THINGS ARE IN PLACE HERE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.**

An organization called **The Temple Institute** in Jerusalem was created about 40 years ago and so far they've:

- Brought back the Sadducees: the Priests & Sanhedrin
- Recreated the Temple articles & furniture to exact Biblical instructions.
- Including a facsimile of the Ark of the Covenant
- Cut out the Chief Cornerstone to the Temple
- Have been able to properly sanctify everything with the blood of a pure red heifer.
- CURRENTLY keep all 7 feasts (Passover, Pentecost, etc) INCLUDING the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb!

Animal sacrifice in Jerusalem is taking place right now for the first time in 2000 years!

## SHOW VIDEOS

As both Daniel and Jesus have told us, the future Antichrist will, at some point, invade the area and **profane the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple**. The Apostle Paul gives us a little more detail:

**[2Th 2:1-4 ESV]** 1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. **For that day will not come**, unless the rebellion comes first, **and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, [the Antichrist] the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, **so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.**

**The Antichrist himself enters into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jewish Temple and declares himself to be a god, if not Christ Himself. He demands that all worship him.**

*What is “the abomination that makes desolate”?* We all know the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment which is not to take any graven images and worship them, commonly known as idolatry. Why did some do this? They believed that whatever god or spirits they worshipped would come and inhabit the idols they made. Therefore when they prayed and made sacrifices to these idols, they believed their gods would hear them and answer their prayers.

DESOLATE/EMPTY. In the OT, the Lord would explain to His people that said idols were DESOLATE—lifeless...EMPTY. That no spirit or god could or would enter them, so therefore praying and sacrificing to them was foolishness. The Lord would say that despite having lips, idols couldn't speak, and despite having ears, they couldn't hear.

Let's go one step further and listen carefully: ***prayer, worship, and sacrifice to an empty idol made the person doing it empty.***

IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIP. There was no god there, no life, no being...and remember its all about relationship. More than that, it's about ONENESS. If a person attempts to be one with a lifeless idol, the emptiness of said idol “infected” them and made them empty inside. In other words...they were MADE DESOLATE.

JOHN AMAZED. Let's go deeper. John the Revelator must have been mystified when he saw “the image of the Beast” because this is how he describes it:

**[Rev 13:14-15 ESV]** 14 and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

*The “image” [IDOL] has breath and can speak!* Is it a clone? A robot? A hologram? An AI? Who knows. Whatever it is, it seems to be alive, can hear, and can talk. It seems to have life. It appears as though the Dragon, who is Satan, is inside this thing.

Worshipping a statue made of wood is one thing. *Worshipping whatever this thing is with Satan inside it is another...it’s an abomination.*

**An Abomination that makes whoever prays, worships, or sacrifices to it desolate—empty.**

STANDS IN TEMPLE. Whatever this thing is, it’s what “stands” in the Temple telling everyone its god and demanding worship. It’s what stops the Temple sacrifice.

*Remember the purpose of the Temple was to house the presence of God,* so when the Antichrist enters it and declares that HE is god, it’s a corrupted version of Jesus’ Kingdom promise to live within us, the real temples of God. To come down here at His Second Coming and live among us.

**The Dragon sending his messiah (the Antichrist) to come here and live among us is his defiled version of Kingdom come.**

For all of this to take place, and it will, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple must be built...and many of the pieces are in place after 2000 long years of them not even existing.

The only reason we know all this will happen is because the Lord, through His written word, has told us so. We have Bibles we can depend on!

NO FEAR. While this is exciting stuff, we have no reason to be afraid.

- Even if the Tribulation starts tomorrow and even if we have to live through it, (and IDK if we will or not), we have Jesus and the sure word that He’s given us through our Bible.
- We have the Holy Spirit living inside of us, testifying that what we’re reading in Scripture truly comes from God.
- The Lord carefully revealed His plans for the future within these pages, so that we could all read and understand that He will be the final and everlasting victor!