

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

January 2, 2022

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

What's So Special About The Bible?

PART

1

TITLE

The Credibility Of The Bible

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:1-4



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

If you are new with us, we're thrilled that you're here. And if you happen to be at home, I know there's a lot of people sick today, we just pray God's grace upon your life, we're glad that you also joined us. If you have a Bible turn with me to Luke chapter one, if you don't, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. And if you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have it. We're going to start a new series this morning, it's called what's so special about the Bible?

And as we get started in it, I want to pray for us. Okay? Father in heaven we bow before you, recognizing that we live in your world and we want to know you and we want to live in a way that is in accord with how you could created us to live. And we thank you that you made all that so clear for us in the Bible. We thank you that you revealed who you are, who we are and how to live in your world. And we pray now that you would give us wisdom and understanding and confidence Lord, to be able to see and to believe what is true.

And so would you fortify our own faith, would you melt skepticism, would you create belief, would you create confidence where there's a lack of confidence in the credibility of the Bible itself, would you use this as a simple contribution towards that goal? And so we look to you in faith, would you speak through weakness, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Well, many people in our culture and I know that you know this already, think it's very strange for educated seemingly well adjusted individuals like yourself to take the Bible seriously.

You open the Bible and you find spectacular stories, miracles that suspend natural law, evil practices, moral compromises. You find the condemning of certain behaviors that are currently celebrated in modern culture. You find an exclusivity of a single savior who claims authority overall. And the fact that the Bible is really old leads many people to disregard the Bible altogether. And yet in this room, I ask you to turn to Luke and I heard people shuffling.

Many of us own a Bible, we brought a Bible, we read a Bible and we attend a church that teaches and discusses the Bible. Many of us would say that we believe the Bible and we even try to obey what the Bible says, even when it challenges our beliefs and our practices. And yet, in spite of all of our confidence in the Bible itself, many of us would struggle to know or to explain why we trust the Bible as we do. And so let me ask you, why do you believe the Bible?

Why do you trust the Bible is true? Surely the number of our own kids who graduate providence, who have abandoned their faith, when they reach an age of independence combined with our own occasional doubts in life or in the Bible, prove that answering just because is insufficient for faith and life and Godliness to flourish. And so over the month of January, what I want to do, and what we want to do is to be able to explain what's so special about the Bible by showing its five different things.

It is first credible, we want to show you its message, its inspiration, its authority and its sufficiency. What we want to do today is to talk about the fact that the Bible is credible. And when you talk about credibility, you're

talking about evidence and when you're talking about evidence, it feels academic. Some of you came in and you just lost somebody, you've experienced some significant hardship and you want me to point you immediately to something that's so comforting and edifying your soul.

And although the Bible is just absolutely packed with things that I would love to be able to talk to you about in that moment where you're at right now, what we need to do in this time is to answer a very specific question. Every week when we come in here, one of us stands up and we say, turn in your Bible to, now why do we do that? Why do we have confidence to open it up and begin talking about it? And so this sermon, admittedly is going to feel more academic because it's packed with evidence. And because of that, I want to provide my notes even in expanded version of my notes.

And so you don't have to do it now, you can do it later, but if you want to follow along right now, you can go to pray.org/bible. You could do that on your phone. I have to be just starting the fifth paragraph of what's there. Okay? It's long. It's going to be longer than what I can actually cover today, but I want to fortify us as a church family with evidence as to the credibility of the Bible, not only for our own personal faith and own edification, but also it for our heirs and in particular, for our children.

I believe the Bible is true, I mean, all of it. I believe the Bible is true and one of the reasons that I believe the Bible is true is because I believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. If Jesus rose from the dead after dying from my sins, proving himself to be the son of God, then he has as he said, all authority over heaven and earth. And therefore I ought to listen and agree with what he says. And one thing we know for certain is that Jesus believed and taught us to believe that the Bible is true.

He says, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, the smallest letter and the smallest formation of a letter will pass away from the law. Now I can hear though, skeptics or critics saying something like Brian, look, you simply cannot say to us that you believe in Jesus resurrection because the Bible says so, and then say you believe the Bible because Jesus rose from the dead. And yet this line of reasoning when it's combined with historically credible sources is the very science of history.

Let me give you an example. I believe that George Washington was the first president of the United States. And the reason I do is because there are historically credible sources and a number of them that attest to the fact. And on that basis of those credible historical sources, I only believe people and books today that affirm that George Washington was the first president of the United States. In other words, it is the collective testimony of historically credible sources that verifies events in that day and that warrants, opinions, thoughts, conclusions, beliefs, convictions in our day.

And so what if we were able to verify the historical credibility of each book of the Bible before believing that Jesus rose from the dead, what confidence would that give us? And what if we could see that the Bible was not an effort by the church to authenticate its religion, but a collection of historical books written over 1500

years by more than 40 people living on three continents who simply told what happened in their day? And what if we could see that each book of the Bible had the past cultural standards of credibility in its own day?

And what beliefs would be warranted in our day if all this credible evidence that tested to the fact that Jesus as Christ rose from the dead and then subsequently affirmed and taught us to believe that the Bible is true? Years ago I remember watching a short film that traced the inglorious journey of food from the farm to the market, where the food is created and where it's sold. And the big takeaway to me in watching that documentary was how we develop our food is just as important to our confidence in eating it as its taste.

And the same is true, the Bible, the chain of events that took place that show how the Bible came to be and how the books of the Bible are historically credible is critical to our confidence as much so perhaps as the goodness that's bound up in each page that Psalm 19 says is more desirable than gold and is sweeter than honey. So what I want to do in these moments today, before we take the Lord's Supper is to trace the chain of events, how we got the Bible and how each book is historically credible.

The first link in the chain begins with God, that God inspired people to write what they saw and heard. God in time and space came to this earth, moved on this earth in the lives of people, spoke to people and people who saw what he did and heard what he said, some of them were inspired to write down what they saw and heard. In the Old Testament we find the phrase, thus says the Lord over 400 times in specific events from people such as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah as history passed through creation and the fall and the formation of nations while a remnant of God's people called Israel, waited for the Christ to come.

When we get to the New Testament, writers such as John, the apostle John who followed Jesus for three years, who observed what he did and who heard what he taught, he described his intentions in right this way. 1 John 1:3 says that which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you. It was God that we are told who inspired the authors to actually write the very words that they did. Peter says no prophecy was ever produced by the will of men, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the holy spirit.

So the holy spirit carried these writers within the boundaries of their own culture, vocabulary and personality to select the very words that he wanted to say, which is why the apostle Paul says that all scripture is breathed out by God. Now inspiration is so important that we're going to actually leave it and we're going to come back in the third sermon in the series. It's all about the inspiration of the Bible, in particular, what do we mean by inerrancy, that the Bible is inerrant. In particular when different accounts of the same event differ in detail, how are we supposed to think about those things? So we're going to come back to inspiration, but I want to continue to the next part of the chain.

And that is that God protected the Bible's credibility by placing the writers in accountable communities. Eyewitnesses become a very important thing. You see, one of the most important questions that we could ask and should ask at this point in time is can we be confident that the biblical writers were honest, that they

weren't simply embellishing or creating legends, but that what they actually saw and what they actually heard is precisely what they wrote down.

How do we know they were honest? Well, the writers of the Bible, they go out of their way to try to explain. I can only show you today, the one from Luke. Luke chapter one, starting in verse one says in as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses, ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also having followed all things closely for some time past to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught.

Luke was a doctor and Luke, when he trusted Christ became a ministry partner of the apostle Paul. And Luke had a friend named Theophilus, who is a novelman of some sort and that's why he calls the most excellent Theophilus, who had been told stories about Jesus and was looking to verify the accuracy of what he had been told. And so as a service to his friend, Luke developed, as he says, an orderly account of Jesus' life based on the testimony of eyewitnesses so that Theophilus could distinguish between fact and fiction.

And essentially what he says is, I spoke to eyewitnesses of Jesus and I studied other written accounts that already existed that were based on eyewitnesses. Matthew and Mark were written before Luke. And he says, and after my thorough investigation, I wrote this orderly account so that you may have certainty. Now, this is so important that you hear this, right? Because most religions, they have a holy book that they said someone founded under a rock or was dropped out of heaven. Luke, one of the writers of two of the books of the New Testament, Luke and Acts, Luke never set out to write a book of the Bible.

He set out to write a friend, an orderly account based on the testimony of living eyewitnesses who could confirm his words to anyone inside of that accountable community, who is desiring proof. And by starting this way, Luke, what he's doing is he's answering one of the most common accusations about the Bible today and the gospels. And that is aren't the gospels including Luke, just an embellished legend? Isn't just fanciful made up stories of a glorified man. Now, what Luke says is my account is developed from carefully preserved testimony from eyewitnesses, which means that these eyewitnesses were not only consulted, but they were still alive to be able to verify the events.

And this is why the gospel writers in particular go out of their way to add details of historical credibility that have nothing to do with the story. For example, Mark, Mark's gospel tells us that a man named Simon of Cyrene, who was standing in Jerusalem when Jesus was carrying his cross, he became so exhausted. He dropped to the ground, they grabbed Simon and said, you carry the rest of the way. And you know what Mark says, without any explanation whatsoever? He says, oh, Simon was the father of Rufus and Alexander, why would he do this?

His sons weren't even there, they have no part of the story. Why were they there? Why would Mark add this? And the reason is because Rufus and Alexander were still alive and they were known by the early church. And they could be asked about their dad's testimony about what he saw that day. On another account in Mark chapter 10, there's a story about how Jesus heals a man who is blind, beautiful story. And Mark's gospel, before he tells us that Jesus healed him, he adds all of these details. He says, as he was leaving Jericho, that's Jesus, as Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timeaus, was sitting by the roadside.

Now, if you just wanted brevity in the Bible, you could say there was a blind man. And the next verse says, and Jesus called to him and then they begin a conversation and then he heals him. But instead, what do we get? We get a real city and a real man's name and a real dad who could attest to the man's blindness. And not only his disciples could bear witness to the healing, but there was a great crowd, citizens living in Jericho. Well, Mark was written somewhere between 20 and 30 years after of the resurrection of Christ, which means that some of this crowd was still alive. They could go and ask, hey, do you know Bartimaeus? He may have still been alive, I don't know.

All of this evidence was given so that people could go inside this accountable community to verify. All the writers in the New Testament live in this same accountable community. For example, Paul in first Corinthians tells us that after Jesus rose from the dead, that he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time. And then he just simply adds, oh, and by the way, most of them are still alive. First Corinthians was written somewhere between AD53 and AD55, 20 years after the resurrection of Christ. That's why he says, you go ask him. Now, you can't go ask him. Right? But if you were living in his day, you could.

It bears witness to the credibility that some of these eyewitnesses were still available to be asked. And this is true of all of the books to the New Testament. They were all written within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses. Matthew, Mark and Luke were all written within 40 years of the resurrection and John within 60. And this brings me to one last consideration regarding the trustworthiness or the honesty of these authors, why would they lie? You only lie in order to get out of something to create an advantage, that's why people lie. So why would they lie? Well, their motive couldn't have been personal comfort, right? Because most of them were killed as martyrs for their faith in Jesus Christ and their refusal to recant the very things that they say took place, nor could it have been a personal honor.

We know this because these gospel writers kept recording their own sin, their own unbelief, their own prejudice, their own stumblings, their fear. In fact, if you think about it in every religion birth in this culture, an honor shame culture, the founder of that religion dies at peace surrounded by brave followers. But in the gospels, the disciples, terrified, desert Jesus Christ and Jesus dies shamefully, naked, on a cross, crying out about being forsaken by God. If you're trying to invent a religion in an honor shame culture, you do not shame yourself or your savior in order to build credibility, nor could their motive have been cultural approval.

One of the beautiful things that you find when Jesus rose from the dead is that he first appeared to women and he told them to go and testify to the disciples and to others that Jesus had risen from the dead. What a beautiful thing? Now, why is that so significant? Well, because in first century Jewish culture, women, apparently weren't even allowed to testify in a court of law. And so the fact that Jesus would appear first to women and tell them to testify about his resurrection, not only tells us something about the inherent dignity of a woman, but if the resurrection was invented and packaged for cultural approval, they wouldn't have led in that culture with testifying women.

The only reason to tell the story this way is if it happened this way and if it could be verified that it happened this way, and that leads us to the third part of this chain. And that is that God protected the canon of scripture from other writings. The question that we should concern ourselves at this point is can we be sure that the right books made it into the Bible, that the right things that Paul or Matthew wrote, they probably wrote a mother's day card, right? Why isn't that in the Bible? Can we be sure that the right books ended up in our Bible?

The canon of scripture, when we're talking about the canon of scripture, we're not talking about a big gun. Okay? The word canon, it means standard or rule. And so the canon refers to the list of books that form the standard of God's truth, that says they begin here, they end here. This is what's true, inside these boundaries. Well, God led his people in the Old Testament to recognize the writings of people like my Moses and David and Isaiah and the prophets as divinely inspired, and to organize them into three different sections, the law, the prophets and the writings.

If you go today on your website and you just pull up Hebrew canon, you're going to find the law, the prophets and the writings, they're in this order. The law, the first five books of our Bible is the same as theirs, genesis, Exodus, Leviticus numbers Deuteronomy. The next section is the prophets, Joshua, judges and then notice, Samuel. Now, in our Bible there's two books, we have first Samuel and second Samuel. Okay? And they are just one, they just come on. It's not that they cut one out it's just, they're combined. Okay?

Samuel, Kings one book, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. And then they have one book called minor prophets and they include all the books in English Old Testament, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi. And then the last section is the writings. The writings are Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Eze-Nehemiah, one book, Chronicles, one book.

Now what that does is this, the Hebrew canon begins with Genesis and it ends with Chronicles. It has 24 books, but the content of those 24 books is identical to the 39 books in our in English Old Testament. Now, some of you may be asking what about the Apocrypha? And other people are now asking what's an Apocrypha? Okay. The Apocrypha, there's 15 Jewish books that were written in between the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament. In that era, those several hundred years, right? In between

the Old and New Testament, there were 15 books that were recognized by the Jews as books that were written and they're written, they're books, somebody actually wrote them down.

The Catholic Bible today include the Apocrypha, those 15 books in the Old Testament. And the reason they do... That's nice background music right there, that's nice. Some of the popes in the Catholic church quoted from them as did some of the forefathers, the church fathers. The Protestant Bible, when I say the Protestant Bible, the one that I have right here and probably one that you have with you, it does not include the Apocrypha. It doesn't recognize them. And so we have to ask the question, well, why? Why doesn't it recognize them?

And there's really two reasons. First is because Jesus did not recognize the Apocrypha as authoritative. Jesus affirmed the three part division of the Old Testament. When Jesus rose from the dead, he met two people on a road. In Luke chapter 24, he says everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. Now, it doesn't say writings, it says Psalms. So why is that? Well, the Psalms, because it's the first book of the writings and the longest book of the writings, it became synonymous with the word writings. So Jesus, what he's doing here is he's affirming the three part division of the Old Testament. And then in another place, he even affirms secondarily, right? The scope of the Old Testament.

Let me this, in Luke chapter 11, he says, look, I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah. Now some of us, because we just didn't know, were like, maybe he used to say, from A to Z, everybody, that's not what he means. You see, Abel is the very first person who is killed in the book of Genesis that is the first book in the Hebrew cannon. Zachariah is the last person killed in Chronicles that is the last book of the Hebrew cannon. In other words, what Jesus is doing is, is by affirming the first and last martyr in the Hebrew can, he's authentic the scope of the Old Testament, it begins here and it ends here.

Furthermore, the New Testament writers, they quote the Old Testament as authoritative, nearly 300 times, meaning while they're writing, they're like, this is what it said in the Old Testament. They granted authority and then they write on the basis of that authority. And yet never one time, does it attribute authority to the Apocrypha. Jude does quote from first Enoch one time, but not in a way that affirms its authority, rather as a known modern cultural source like I would today, if there was a cultural source, like a newspaper and I'd say, hey, did you hear?

And I would quote something from the newspaper. I wouldn't be saying it's authoritative, I'm using it as reference of common material. And therefore the people in the New Testament assumed that the canon of the scripture was absolutely complete. And therefore, for the church to begin to govern its life in doctrine by more than the Old Testament, you have to understand something supernatural and even invasive had to happen. And what was super natural and invasive? Christmas, right? The incarnation of Jesus Christ, when the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory. When the son of God became as the

fulfillment of all the promises of the Christ and he came to the earth, born as a baby, grew up as a man, lived without sin, died for our sin, rose from the dead, after Jesus rose from the dead, by his authority, he called the apostles to write what they saw and heard.

Ephesians chapter two says that the church today is built on the foundation, the writings of the apostles. In other words, after his resurrection, Jesus authorized them to write. And what remained then for the church to do is to recognize which writings were the fulfillment of Jesus promise to add to the canon of the scripture, the inclusion of the New Testament through the apostles. So what were the criteria that they used? Well, if Jesus said, if the apostles write it, then it becomes important. I'm going to build my church on the writings of the apostles. Well, the first test of criteria was, was it written by an apostle or by someone who was close to apostle?

So when you look at the writings of the New Testament, we have the gospel of Matthew that was written by the apostle Matthew. We have the gospel of Mark written by Mark, an assistant of the apostle Peter. We have Luke and Acts written by Luke, an assistant of the apostle Paul. We have John, first, second, third John, Revelation written by the apostle John. We have Romans, first and second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, first and second Thessalonians, first and second Timothy, Titus and Philemon, they were all written by the apostle Paul. Hebrews, we don't know, it was either written by the apostle Paul or by somebody who had close proximity to the apostle Paul because in Hebrews 13, he talks about Paul's friends and partners in missionary work, including Timothy.

James and Jude, they were both written by one of Jesus' half brothers, and they both had proximity and working relationship in the church with the apostles. And first and second Peter was written by the apostle Peter. The second test of criteria to be included into the New Testament was antiquity. That simply means that for a book to have the apostle's authority, it would had to been dated to the first century when they were living. In other words, anything that was written beyond then was excluded. And both of these really are attested by the fact that from the second to the sixth century, there were people who tried to write accounts of Jesus.

And because they knew that it wouldn't be affirmed by the church because it was written by an apostle and it wasn't burying the witness of antiquity as they lied and they simply signed it off as one of the apostles. The third test was that it had to bear a lot of full consistency, right? Basically, a book had to agree with what Jesus taught, a book had to be internally consistent, which meant that Paul, his explanation of Jesus couldn't contradict what Matthew wrote.

There was internal consistency, but also external consistency, meaning that extra biblical sources like history that affirm that Pontius Pilate was the governor, well, the New Testament would need to be consistent with other sources that were bearing witness about the events that were taking place outside of the Bible. And this leads to the fourth part of this chain. And that is that God preserved the Bible over time. The question that we should ask on this fourth part of the chain is can we be sure that the original text to the Bible was transmitted

or copied accurately through the centuries? In other words, when you read Luke, as we just did, the question we should ask, is this, is that what Luke wrote?

Because we don't have Luke, there's no gospel of Luke today, there's no museum today where there's a leaf or a papyrus or a sheet of paper where it's the one that Luke actually wrote on. And so how do we make sure or how do we assume that what we have today is precisely what he wrote? Is there credibility in that process? Well, it's very, very clear that God's people wanted to reproduce and share the scriptures. And so before the invention of the Xerox machine or the first one in the 1400s, people had to copy everything by hand. Scribes would do this. They would get in a room and they would take pieces of what was first written and they would hand copy them.

Now, today there's not a single original manuscript that was written by a biblical author that is known to exist. But the number of ancient copies that we do possess allow us to reconstruct with a huge degree of confidence, what the original said. And so for the sake of comparison, so you understand what I'm saying, let's consider just a few non-biblical ancient works that historians today considered to be credible that were written in the same time to life of Jesus. Caesar wrote Gallic Wars in 50BC. And today there was only 10 known copies of the manuscript, meaning we don't have what he wrote, we simply have 10 copies where scribes sat down and wrote out what he wrote.

Livy wrote this amazing history in the first century and there's only 20 known copies that exist. And then this third one, Tacitus, he wrote this amazing history about Rome and there's today only two copies that are known to exist. Now, in spite of the small numbers that we currently have, we trust these ancient works and even form conclusions about the Roman empire specifically on what they say, they are the authority that we teach. Now compare those numbers with the Bible. The Bible, just the New Testament alone has over 5,800 ancient great manuscripts of the New Testament. And combined with an additional 15,000 other ancient manuscripts that are written in other languages and then compare this fact, and this is a pretty remarkable thing.

That the earliest preserved copy of Caesar's Gallic war, meaning so he wrote it and then people over time, they copied it and they copied it and they copied it. The earliest copy we have was copied 900 years after Caesar wrote it. Compare that to the New Testament where the earliest preserved copies of the New Testament are dated 45 to 75 years after the originals were written. And furthermore, the scripture that's quoted in the writings and sermons of pastors and theologians before 8150 are so extensive that with the exception of 11 verses, the entire new Testament can be constructed from quotations alone.

What that means is that if you took my sermon notes and you simply say, hey, all the places where he's actually written out, typed out an actual verse from scripture, and you combine that with all the pastors and theologians, they were working and writing on the basis of these manuscripts before 8150, you can reconstruct the entire New Testament with the exception of 11 verses. This wealth of preservation, however, creates problems

and solutions.

You see, the more handwritten copies that we have, the more variance or scribble errors that we find, but also the more control that we have to know which words mirror the original manuscripts. So for example, if we only had two copies of Luke and one of them included the first four verse introduction and one of them didn't, we wouldn't know if Luke wrote it or not. But if you have 5,800 copies in Greek to compare, there is more to compare to know what Luke originally wrote. So keep in mind that the vast majority of the variants are copying mistakes, such as spellings, adding an S for plural, accidental duplications, like writing the word "the" two times in a row.

If we did this today, if I ripped out a page of my Bible and I said, copy it exactly and I gave every one of us one sheet to do, we would make errors. And so keep in mind when you think about the amazing preservation that the vast majority of these variants, even though they're small, that 99% of the original manuscript can be reconstructed today beyond any reasonable doubt. And there's not one single Christian doctrine that is built on any disputed passage. And to be above reproach, every variant, every scribble error is marked in our modern Bibles, either by putting a double bracket around the text or by putting a footnote at the bottom of our page.

Nobody's hiding anything and this kind of transparency is designed to build credibility. There's one last part of the chain because you and I, most of us don't read Greek and Hebrew, and that is that God protects the translation of scripture into other languages. Can we be sure that what we just read means the same that Luke wrote in Greek? We can, and the reason we can is because linguistic scholars have been studying these languages for centuries, including our own. And the fact is, is there's so many linguistic scholars who are examining each other's work, that it provides a necessary accountability and credibility to what they're doing.

It is true that some words can be so difficult to translate, that translation teams, they don't know how it should be translated. But this should not shake our confidence because disagreement exists with only a small number of words and phrases. When there is disagreement of translation, a footnote is added to the bottom of our page, and there is not a single major doctrine of Christianity that rests on a disputed translation. Every couple decades, translation teams develop a new version in order to adjust to changes in modern vocabulary, grammar.

And these versions typically fit into one of these categories. So if you go to a bookstore or you can't do that anymore, if you go to Amazon and you say, I want a Bible, you're going to see all kinds of Bibles. And these translation teams, what they do is they have a goal before they start. Some translation teams, they start with a goal of word for word, it's the most accurate. King James, New king James, the NAS, ESV is the one that I use, right? What this team of linguistic scholars, they begin with the earliest manuscripts in Greek, in Hebrew, Aramaic, they translate it into English. And their primary goal is accuracy even more than readability, which means sometimes when we read an ESV, we're like, that's not really how we would talk today.

It's a little wooden, but their goal is accuracy. There's a second kind, right? And that's thought for thought. And so if you have an NIV, I grew up with an NIV translation. This is not a word for word translation, it's a thought for thought translation. It's still exceptionally accurate. They begin with the earliest manuscripts in Greek and Hebrew and they translate it. And then what they do is they say, now, how would people say it today? Thought for thought. A third kind is a paraphrase, the Good News translation or the message, you may have heard the message, right?

Now, these are more devotional than a translation. What they do is they consider an accurate translation, but then write the most readable version that they could possibly imagine. The message was written by a pastor written to his kids. One guy, he said, how would I write this that my little kids could understand? Okay. So it's very devotional, it's just not very accurate, accurate in the sense of the exact word that was used. And then there's another kind, right? And so you go and you're like, oh, it's the athlete's Bible and the soldier's Bible and the men's Bible and the women's Bible. We got so many Bibles, what are they?

What they do is they include one real translation of the Bible all often times NIV, ESV, King James, something, right? And then there's a line on the page and somebody, some writer, they looked up there and they said, that verse right there would be really great for men or for women or soldiers or whoever it is. And then they write a little devotion under a line. So what's over the line is scripture and what's under line is a devotion. And so what's so special about the Bible? Well, the Bible contains 66 credible books that were written over 1500 years by 40 different people and three different continents, most of whom did not know each other.

And yet they tell one coherent story of redemption that culminates in the death and resurrection to Jesus Christ. The Old Testament anticipates this event, the gospels describe it and the rest of the New Testament heralds it. The resurrection of Jesus means that his claims about being the son of God or verified, confirmed, it means that Jesus has all authority and with that authority, he's told us to read believe and obey the Bible. So let me encourage you with a couple things. First, let me encourage you to read the Bible. How could we not? Right?

A treasure this rich cannot remain closed on a shelf. I've said this many times and I genuinely believe it, that a person who believes the Bible and doesn't read it is no better off than somebody who doesn't believe the Bible. Who cares if you believe it, if you won't read it? We must read it. It's so sweet. It's so practical. So I encourage you to read your Bible. Second, I would encourage you to put your trust in the hero of the Bible. The Bible says that God sent Christ to this earth to live without sin, die for our sin and rise from the dead. Everything is pointing to Jesus in the Bible.

Roman says, if you confess with your mouth, that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you'll be saved. You'll be saved. And last, let's lean on Jesus' affirmation of the Bible. Just love how the Bible points us to Jesus and then Jesus points us to the Bible. And one of the things that Jesus did the night before he was betrayed, was he inaugurated a supper, the Lord's Supper that we're going to take now,

for people who did believe, who do see the Bible as credible, who did recognize that Jesus was the promised messiah, that he did come, that he did die for our sins.

He took bread and he took a cup and they became symbols of his body and his blood. And he tells us very specifically, if you do not trust me as your savior, then do not take these elements. But if you do, oh, you're welcome. You're welcome to the table. Before we do this though, before we remember and proclaim our own faith in Jesus Christ, as testified in the scriptures himself, he tells us to confess our sin. So before we do anything else, let me give you a and of silence for you to be able to pray, talk to the Lord and confess your sin.



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.