

Biblical Canon of Scripture is the Basis for Authentic Christian Belief & Doctrine

By Larry Wessels

Bible Text: Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27

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Christian Answers of Austin, Texas

9009 Martha's Drive

Austin, TX 78717

Website: www.biblequery.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/christiananswers

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CAnswersTV (Christian Answers Television)

Conference Call:

The Canon of Scripture

with host:

Larry Wessels

special guest:

John M. Johnson, Jr.

Larry Wessels. Greetings everybody and welcome to Christian Answers Presents. I'm Larry Wessels, your host, and I want to thank you for being with us today.

Well, we've got a very special broadcast for a lot of reasons. We're doing an interstate broadcast. My special guest, John Johnson, is in Idaho at this moment, I'm here in Austin, Texas, and anyone that's watched our broadcast for all these years since 1985 when we started doing cable access video in Austin, Texas through Austin Public Access Television, we got to use the big multimillion dollar television studio and Time Warner Cable for, I don't know, it must've been 12 years at least. I got to follow back then, back in the '80s and early '90s, I got to follow the world's leading atheist in the world, Madalyn Murray O'Hair. She had the studio for four hours before I got it once a month on Saturdays, so I would always come in after the atheists and I used to love just taking all her stuff off of the generators, just removing all that information and putting Christian stuff in its place. Of course, all I had to do to endure that, well, I had to endure the dirty looks of the atheists as they left each month and I would come in right behind them, but over all those years in 1985 as we broadcast right now, it's like 32 years later and so for 32 years we've been broadcasting, but in all those years we were always in a set studio where everyone involved in the broadcast was all in the same room, but here in this broadcast, John Johnson, my special guest, is in Idaho and I'm here in Austin so we're

doing something totally different. We had to set up all new technology. It took a week or so and some new equipment we had to put in to do a broadcast like this and, of course, as we started to get ready to do this, there was a delay there just because of all these new glitches and things and getting the kinks ironed out, but we're finally to where by God's grace hopefully we can do our maiden voyage here with our technology so in the future we'll be able to do a lot more shows like this. But to me, it's incredible because, you know, having done television broadcasts for 32 years and never having done a broadcast like this, now I have to admit, we did one on YouTube hang-out but this is totally different than that. So I don't even really count that here, so this is exciting to me.

Well, anyway with that long tangent off what we're really supposed to be here about which is we're going to do a show today on the canon of Scripture. I just happen to have a subscription right here, my Bible that people have known for 32 years. In fact, my video man says when I die he gets this, so I'm putting it in my will that Dan R., and I'm also putting it on video that Dan R., gets my Walter Martin Cults Reference Bible. I've done several videos with, well, actually about this Bible and all these other ones going over 30 years. But there's a lot of groups and cults out there that use a King James Bible, so this is what this is, but it was mainly just to eliminate some problem with people that, well, the only Bible they'll use is the King James Bible. So anyway, to eliminate that problem, I got one of these things and you can talk to about anybody with one of these things.

But anyway, getting back to this, the canon of the Scripture. Where did our Bible come from? I've got a special guest with me today, John Johnson. He's a good Christian brother. Until now, I've basically seen him on YouTube. In fact, when we edit this video, I'll probably pop some clips of him from some of his different YouTube shows just to give people a little feel of how his shows go.

Video:

John Johnson. Rule of faith, Sola Scriptura, by Scripture alone, and then there's also the doctrine of the ekklesia. Ekklesia is a Greek word that references the church. It's the word that's usually translated as church in the New Testament if you're reading an English translation. There's a little bit more to that and we'll get into that at that point. Then there's also the final doctrine which is a very important one and it is the affirmation of the Dulemi(ph), a version of Scripture other than what is basically found in the King James, because the King James is based on the Hebrew for its Old Testament, it's not based on the Greek. The Septuagint is the Greek version. And so if you have the apostles using something other than the Hebrew version, using something other than the King James essentially for their quotes of the Old Testament, well then, guess what? They weren't KJV onlyists and we're going to talk about a little bit of the history of the manuscript, it's form, what it actually looks like there, the errata, the errors that are in it, and then also its overall significance.

When you look through the ancient biblical manuscripts, a lot of them were written in Greek through and through and not just the New

Testament but a lot of the ancient Christians used the Old Testament in Greek as well because that was the common language of the time.

Larry. When I think of John Johnson, I think of Joseph in Genesis where God kept giving him favor with everybody. He had favor with, you know, Potiphar, with Pharaoh, and the jailer, and God just gave him favor with different people to where he could move right along into what he was ordained to do. And when I would see John Johnson on his different videos and he'd leave a lot of comments on a lot of my CAnswersTV videos, I always liked what he had to say and I liked his links and I would check it out. So God granted favor to John Johnson with me and then it just came about that he had a lot of good information, good material, and an opportunity like this came about and I said, "Yeah, let's do it. Let's just do this thing." And hopefully this video will help out a lot of people when it concerns the canon of Scripture, the word of God, where did we get it and things of that nature.

So as an introduction, now I want John here to take the microphone for a little bit and just give a little resume material, a little background, Christian experience and things of that nature, your own ministry, and then we'll get into the meat of this broadcast. So go ahead, John.

John Johnson. Thank you very much, Larry. It has been my honor to be invited to do a broadcast with you. I'm very very very honored to do that and as far as my personal background, I'm kind of a nobody in a lot of respects but that has a lot of advantages when it comes to [unintelligible]. One of the greatest ones is perhaps, this actually kind of started a while back when I was going to college. I had come from a Christian background, my parents were Christians, actually ministers in a local church, and I went off to college and in college I really got a very strong burden for apologetics just because so many of my friends in college had absolutely no idea who the God of the Bible was and they were young, like I was. They were going to college so they thought they were smart, like I did, and you know, people always have these blinders on as to what is really going on in life and so I started investigating things all the harder and I started getting into apologetics more and more and more, and most people probably know me from my YouTube channel "Relationship and Truth," and on it I talk about a lot, a wide range of things. I talk about Scripture a lot, that's my primary emphasis, but I also talk about Islam, I talk about Mormonism, I talk about Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism a little bit. I [unintelligible] a range of things, pretty much anything that has to deal with the reliability of the Bible because this is one of the biggest areas of attack today. You look at a lot of, say things that are happening on the History Channel, for example, they will publish shows that are, you know, entitled, you know, things like "Problems with the Bible. Secrets of the Bible. Lost Books of the Bible." Everything to tell you that the Bible is wrong essentially and it gets put on the History Channel and, hey, people think it's history, okay, it must be true, and what I do is I basically come along and I say, "No, that's not true."

Granted my area of expertise is actually mathematics education, that's what I did for a couple of years after I got out of college and college was a lot of fun that way and I

discovered a couple of relationships that no one had before. For example, there's a connection between Euler's Triangle and Pascal's Triangle. No, sorry. Was it Euler's Triangle and some of the inverted algorithms, but that's a whole other issue. But I used to do a lot of that kind of stuff. I don't do that anymore. These days I actually do a lot of traveling business work with a company that sells metal buildings. I'll probably get a little bit of free advertisement out of this, I don't know. But my main passion in being here is making sure that people understand that the truth about God's word because there's a whole lot of misinformation out there and I want people to know the truth. The truth is sometimes a gritty thing and for those of us who are Christians, it sometimes makes us feel uncomfortable to question the Bible, and I'm not saying question it in a negative way, but we just simply don't ask the question where did it come from, why do we believe it, why don't we believe these other things, and because we don't take the time to answer, ask those questions, other groups come alongside us and they take advantage of our ignorance.

Take Mormonism, for example. It is founded on the general Christian ignorance that you see in America today because for most of American Christians, history is this giant black box in which they have no idea what happened in it, you know? We know that there was Christ, you know, way at the beginning, then there's Martin Luther somewhere, Billy Graham, and then there are Christians now and that's about as much Christian history as the average American Christian knows unfortunately, and so it's easy for groups like the Mormons to come along and say, "Well, it was originally corrupted and some books were put in the Bible that shouldn't have been, others were taken out, yada, yada, yada." And most Christians don't know enough about the history to, well, they wind up going along with it.

They don't know, and it sounds kinda convincing, they see something on the History Channel, "Books that were Banned from the Bible," and things like that, all kinds of things that have to do with the reliability of the Bible and I'm here along with Brother Larry and a good host of other Christian apologists, including people like Dr. White, Dr. Daniel Walsh, all these people who are sitting here saying, "No. Know our own history. The Bible is reliable. It is God's word and I want to share with you a historically true and certain faith."

Larry. Amen to that. Yeah, in fact, it's funny you mentioned Dr. White because today [unintelligible] I worked on that at my secular job, you know, a lot of people think all us preachers, people that teach and do apologetics, we just sit around and, you know, in ivory towers reading books all day and people pay us for that. But, no, we're just working stiffs trying to do just like Paul. Even Paul, the Apostle Paul was a tent-maker. He tried to lessen the burden on other people and that's what I do. I try to not beg for money. My heart is where your heart is in getting the truth, the word of God out and trying to do like Jude says, snatching a few people out of the fire because there's all these lies and deceptions everywhere and it just irritates the tar out of me, more like an Old Testament prophet, you know, where you're blasting all the people for not following God and going after idols and the whole bit. It's just here you've got the word of God, it's just the truth that's verified by archaeology, history, prophetic, you know, thousands of prophecies, all

this stuff, plus it's confirmed by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to those of us who have been called by God.

So you don't have to sit in an ivory tower and read books all day, you can be a working stiff but have a love for God and do the study, the research time, put the effort into it and share that with those in your sphere of influence. Or like Walter Martin once said, you know, God's given each one of us our own vineyard to work in and so God's people are all over the world and each one of us is called to, you know, share the faith. You know, what did Jesus say in Matthew 28:19? "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

So that's what we do, we just try to reach others for Christ with the love of Christ and to give every man an answer for the hope that lies within us, 1 Peter 3:15. And it's just funny, as I mentioned before I went on that tangent, you mentioned Dr. James White. I just put up another YouTube video on our channel today. I think that was video like 704. I'm starting to lose track after all these years, having done video work since 1985. But the one we did today was on Black Hebrew Israelites and, of course, I put a lot of clips in there from Dr. White along with the Vocab Malone, who I think is the best Christian apologist dealing with that particular group. You know, when you're looking for someone who's the best as a Christian apologist dealing with a particular subject, I'm always amazed in my case how many people tell me in the comment section under our YouTube videos how they love it when I talk about Seventh-Day Adventism and Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance. It's like I'm the go-to guy on the subjects, you know. But I'm sitting there going, "Wait a minute, I've got all these other videos on other topics." But they concentrate on that but in this case, Vocab Malone is the best, I think, on that particular group, the Black Hebrew Israelites.

So I saw a lot of James White today, in fact, to prepare for this broadcast with you, John, I was listening to James White's material on SermonAudio while I was at my night job. You always hear about James White bicycling. He's always talking about where he does all his research, right, he goes on these 150 mile bike rides and he sets stuff up on his Kindle and he's sitting there doing this, all this listening and research while he's bike riding. Well, I do all my research while I'm on my night job. I'm sitting there on whatever subject I'm getting ready to do for a video or something, I concentrate listening to, you know, all kinds of material by scholars and apologists on a particular subject while I'm at my night job and it's great because I don't have to go riding on a bike for 150 miles. So I'd rather do it the way I do it rather than the way he does it. I don't have a, there's really not a chance I'm gonna get run over by an 18 wheeler, you know, like I keep him in prayer. I really do, Dr. White, I keep him in prayer. I don't want him to get hit by some, because he'll mention that sometimes, some truck almost got him. But praise God he'll still with us.

But anyway, getting back to this subject, it's so critical what you're mentioning, John, about the word of God and the truth of it because there's something that God said that was always extraordinary to me in the word of God. It was Psalm 138:2b, the second half of that verse. You know, I've got my Bible right here and I'm just reading it right out of a

King James version. David said of God, he said in Psalm 138:2, "for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Now when you think of all the names of God and the importance of God, the Almighty God, Yahweh, and how you're to not use his name in vain and all these types of things and how God's name should be magnified throughout the word, here you have that God has magnified his word above his very name. Now I understand there are other translations that don't, you know, they put it on an equal plane but the key is the word of God itself, it's magnified to the same level as God's name itself. That's how important it is.

Alright, and there's just a multitude of verses. In fact, we did a video not too long ago that I really liked because I was able to put some footage of my own father in the video. I had sent him a DVD of it. He couldn't, he's one of those old-timers that doesn't have internet access so I sent him a DVD of it so I could say, "Hey, dad, I put you in my Christian Answers video on the inspiration of Scripture and how important Scripture is particularly in the eyes of Jesus." And during this broadcast, maybe we'll bring some more of that up, but I'm just gonna play a little quick clip here from that video for folks at home to see how important the word of God is to Jesus, and then I'll come right back and then we'll get back into this.

Video.

Larry. Facts and Evidences.

1. Genesis 1 states, "God said..." Nine times. It's interesting in Genesis 3 where the serpent, the devil, actually questions, "Hath God said?"

Point 2. Malachi says, "Thus says the Lord..." 23 times. God speaks from Genesis to Malchi.

Point 3. "The Lord spoke..." appears 560 times in the first five books of the Bible alone.

Point 4. Isaiah claimed "His message came directly from God" 40 times. Ezekiel claimed that his message came from God 60 times. Jeremiah claims his message came from God 100 times. At least 3,800 times in the Old Testament, "The Lord spoke" appears.

Point 5. Jesus quoted from 24 Old Testament books alone. The quotes are still the same today. They have not been lost in transmission. Examples, Jesus believed Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, Matthew 19:8-9; John 7:19; Mark 12:29-31. Jesus believed Isaiah was a prophet. That's found in Luke 4:17-21, cross reference that with Isaiah 61:1-2; Matthew 15:7-9, cross reference that with Isaiah 6:9. Jesus believed Daniel to be a prophet, Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14. Jesus believed in the Adam and Eve account, Matthew 19:1-6. Jesus believed the great flood and Noah accounts, Matthew 24:37; Luke 17:26. Jesus believed the Sodom and Gomorrah accounts, Matthew 11:24; Luke 17:28-29. Jesus

believed the accounts concerning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Luke 20:37; Matthew 22:32. Jesus believed in the Jonah and the great fish account, Matthew 12:39 and following. Jesus believed the Old Testament was the word of God, authoritative and without error, Matthew 23:35; Luke 24:27 and 44; Matthew 26:54; Luke 16:17; Luke 18:31; Luke 11:51; Luke 17:29 and also 32; Matthew 24:15, 34 and 18; Mark 12:26; John 6:31, 31; also John 3:14. Jesus passed the same authority of the Old Testament to the New Testament, John 14:26; John 15:26-27; John 16:12-15. Jesus believed the Psalms were inspired by God, Luke 20:21-44; John 10:34, cross reference that with Psalm 82:6. To summarize, Jesus simply believed the Bible was the word of God, Old Testament, New Testament, and anyone that doesn't believe in the Bible as the word of God, the inspired word of God, doesn't believe Jesus, and if they don't believe in Jesus, they cannot be saved.

Remember, the way to shoot the head off the devil and his multitude of lies is with the sure word of God. In Matthew 4 and Luke 4, Jesus defeated the devil three separate times by rebuking the devil with the word of God. Jesus said, "It is written," in Matthew 4:4, Jesus said, "And he answered, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"" Jesus responded to the devil's second temptation, Jesus responded, "Again it is written," Matthew 4:7, "Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" And on the devil's final temptation in this section of Scripture, Jesus rebuked the devil a third time in Matthew 4:10 saying, "Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" That's a reference from Deuteronomy 6:13.

Larry. Okay, so when we're talking about the word of God, you know, you've got places like 2 Timothy 3:15-17, you know, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which will make you wise unto salvation," and all that kind of stuff, and it's everywhere, Old Testament, New Testament. You can't get away from it so once again, I'd encourage people to watch that entire video on the inspiration of Scripture plus, of course, this one with John going into detail on what we're about to mention here about the canon of Scripture, the Scripture themselves, and what John wants to talk about here and is gonna bring up to our audience are three things: canon closure, canon extent, and also canon content.

Now, John, I'm gonna give the floor to you for a while here to talk about these three things and then we'll go into relevant detail as we go. But for our audience at this moment, explain what canon closure is, what canon extent is, and the canon content. Go ahead.

John. Alright, thank you, Larry. Like I mentioned before, Christians usually don't give a whole lot of thought to this and it allows us to be caught off-guard, to say the least.

Canon closure is probably one of the biggest issues that we deal with apologetically. There's lots of groups that argue against closure of the canon, groups that are saying, "Well, you know, we have prophets today that are providing us Scripture. Or there was a prophet who came after Jesus and he gave us Scripture that told us basically that what you guys have is wrong." The issue of canon closure deals with why we don't accept Scripture that comes after a certain time period. Why don't we keep adding books to the Bible, that's the issue of canon closure.

The second one is canon extent. Okay, we've decided this is why it's closed, the second question becomes, well, okay, if it's closed up to a certain time, well, there's lots of books that would still be written up to that time, why not include some of them? How do we know that we got the right books? It's a valid question, at least to a certain extent, and so the issue becomes that of being able to explain from a biblical perspective what makes a book valid and what doesn't make a book valid, and this is somewhere where we disagree with other groups that would call themselves Christian, like say the Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox. They have a different canon than we do. They have different books. The issue of extent deals with that. Why these books, why not other ones?

Then finally canon content or canon texts, there's actually a few other names for it too, but basically is the composition of those books. So we figured out the canon's closed, it only goes up to a certain period of time, there are particular books that are written in those time periods that are right, and then we deal with the issue of version, that's the content, what form of the text are we going to use, what are our standards, and what are our standards. How can we then know that the Bible has been reliably translated? How do we know that, you know, the versions of the Bible that BBC likes to put forward isn't actually the version of the Bible that's accurate? How do we know that some of the frankly kind of liberal translations that are out there aren't exactly accurate? How do we judge and evaluate translations like, say, anything from the Good News version down to the New World translation? So those are the main areas that we're going to be dealing with: closure, extent, and content or text, whatever you want to call it.

Larry. Oh, by the way, just for our audience, it just hit me, one thing you learn to do in television broadcasting over all these decades is sometimes you assume the audience knows what you're talking about when really you might need to define it. I made one of those classic mistakes of mentioning canon of Scripture but I never explained what the word "canon" means. Could you go ahead and help the audience out on that?

John. Yeah, no problem. Sorry, I made the same mistake. Canon is a word that has actually lots of different meanings throughout history. If you look back in the earliest periods used by Christians, they used it in the Greek form canon and it meant literally a measuring rod, a ruler, some kind of a standard, and so when we apply that to Scripture we're saying that it is our standard, it is our rule, it is what guides everything else. So when we're talking about the canon, we're talking about the rule of Christian life in conduct, and when we say that the Scripture is canonical, we mean it is authoritative, that it guides us, that it's the standard, that it is superior to everything else.

Larry. Excellent. I think of Psalm 119:160 states that the entirety of God's word is truth. Starting with that premise, we can compare writings outside of the accepted canon of Scripture to see if they meet the test. As an example, the Bible claims that Jesus Christ is God. You get things like Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1, 2, 14; John 20:28; Acts 16:31, 34; Philippians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1. Yet many extra-biblical texts claiming to be Scripture argue that Jesus is not God. When clear contradictions exist, the established Bible is to be trusted, leaving the others outside the sphere of Scripture.

Now this goes back to what you were saying about people who claim to be modern day prophets or people are saying things that are outside this rule or canon as you were just talking about, and so what we want to establish here because just doctrines like Jesus is God and then other doctrines like the Trinity, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. I mentioned earlier Matthew 28:19. If you have contradictions between books, I mean, that starts to tell you that this isn't consistent. You need a consistency there, a rule of consistency where those doctrines taught on different issues, salvation by faith alone, things of that nature, it has to be consistent throughout the different books because God is not the author of confusion. God's not gonna say one thing here and something totally different and opposite somewhere else. It's gonna be a natural flow as you go from the canon of Scripture from Genesis all the way to the book of Revelation at the end where there's a consistency throughout as if one person wrote the entire Bible, even though it was written actually by almost 40 different authors on three different continents over almost a 1,500 year period of time. And throughout that, you've got like 2,000 prophecies in there that so many of them fulfilled, you start to see a supernatural aspect.

By the way, I mentioned that because CAnswersTV does have quite a few videos in reference to that if anyone wants to check into all those prophecies. In fact, that's how I ended up, by God's grace, becoming a Christian is just analyzing and studying the supernatural aspects of the prophetic word of God as to predicting, you know, there's almost 456 prophecies and their references about the coming of the Messiah in the Old Testament fulfilled in the New Testament, and the consistency is there. I went as an unbeliever while I was raised in a Lutheran church as a child but I was pretty nominal, I went to college and it was like that was it. I didn't even go to, I only went to church, I think, once a year during my college years and that was usually on Christmas, although I think I went to Easter and Christmas one time during all those years I was getting my degree at the University of Texas in advertising. Of course, I got saved right at the end of that and so I used my advertising degree to advertise Jesus, so it worked out kind of nicely in that fact, but I was a total heathen throughout college because I didn't get saved until two weeks after I graduated. So at that time, religion was no big deal to me. It was just something I had a nominal because of my upbringing in, but it wasn't a saving faith or any of that stuff. I had a supernatural born again experience on May 16, 1981 through studying Bible prophecies. So basically when I was growing up, I had an interest in Nostradamus because he was supposed to be able to predict the future but then I found out he was a fraud, but then I found that I couldn't prove this stuff was a fraud. God used that to confirm the word of God to me.

So anyway, I'm still on the show here. I need to get back to you and your presentation material for our audience before they all fall asleep before we even get to that point in this video. And folks out there watching this, if the show is getting too long for you, just remember you can come back to it. I've learned something about YouTube videos. You know, one of James White's shows was like 2 hours and 23 minutes long the other day. He was going after William Lane Craig and evidential apologetics and all that stuff, by anyway the video went on for like, but you know, you can stop somewhere along the line and then come back later, cue in that same video and it picks up where you left off. So that was kinda nice. So if anyone watching this, if you can't make it, just stop it wherever you need to stop, then come back later and pick up where you left off, and in my case I'm finding that YouTube actually does that. You can come back to a video you only watched maybe a third of the way through or halfway through, but if you come back to it later, it'll start right where you left off, and I thought, "Hey, that's kinda cool. I didn't know that before." So anyway, I'm giving people an excuse to come back later if they can't make it through the whole broadcast.

Okay, with that said, let's get into this canon of Scripture and deal with some of the basic information that you've amassed for your presentation and I'll basically let you, you know, I myself would think that people would like to know, well, why do we have these certain books or something, but you may have a different way you want to present your material so I'll let you start where you'd like to start and we'll go from there. Go ahead, brother.

John. One of the major differences that we need to handle right off of the bat is actually, in my opinion, there's actually different ways you can start it, but in my opinion I would like to start with the issue of canon closure first and that's because the issue of canon closure actually ties in very nicely with why we have the books that we do and that kind of thing. And you ask people, your average everyday Christian, "Okay, so why do you believe that the canon is closed?" First of all, if you ask them that question, they'll just look at you and stare and they'll say, "Well, the back end of the canon needs to be closed so that the ball can fire out the other end," you see, the next thing that they say until they realize what we're talking about and we're talking about Scripture, "Why do you believe that we can't add any more books to Scripture?" And then it becomes a little bit harder for them and they start coming up with all that's usually never historically accurate or biblically accurate, and that is because most Christians are not taught why we got Scripture in the first place and so when people ask me, whether they be Christians who just simply haven't been informed about this yet, but more often Mormons or Muslims or atheists and they're asking, "You know, why don't you guys keep having Scripture because it was obvious, you know, in biblical times that you kept adding more books, why don't you do that anymore?" I like to take them back to basically the beginning of the Bible. The first five books of the Bible is called the Pentateuch, the Torah. It's from Moses. And I like to take them all the way back there and I like to introduce them to how all of this started.

You have Moses leading the people out of Egypt, of course, and Moses is a unique guy in a lot of ways, not that he in and of himself was anything special but that God chose to do

very special things through him, and it is with Moses that we have the first time that it is recorded in Scripture that God actually tells anyone that they're going to write Scripture on his behalf, not just that he was giving his word through them and giving him his promises like he did with Abraham and those kinds of things, but where he actually says, "Write this down," like we have, say, in Exodus 34:27-28 where God specifically says to Moses, "This is what you're gonna write down," and he has Moses write and, you know, he's on the mountain there with the 40 days and 40 nights and he actually records the word of the Lord and it starts with Moses. That's where Scripture starts, with Moses, and so when we want to know why we have Scripture the way we do and also why it closed, we go back to Moses and we see what he had to say about the matter.

One of the most important passages that come from this not only the ones that talk about Moses being the first to actually start the writing process but also ones that start talking about when is this going to end, and for that we would look specifically to Deuteronomy 18 and, Larry, I know that you have been invested in apologetics for a long time and you've probably dealt with Mormonism a time or two, so I would expect that you probably would be pretty familiar with Deuteronomy 18.

Larry. Yes, yes. If you're a Christian apologist dealing with Mormonism, that's a must right there. But go ahead.

John. Absolutely, and it also turns out that this is also one of the key passages for understanding why the Bible is closed. We start back at little bit, we'll go back to verse 15, 18:15. When we're doing Mormon apologetics, we usually focus a little bit more towards the end like verses 22 around that time frame, but for the canon issue it starts a little bit further back at 15 and I'll just read from my Bible here, it's an ESV, King James, of course, would be pretty similar and most other mainline translations that are made by conservative translators would be similar. It says, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me," this is Moses speaking on behalf of God, he says, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers--it is to him you shall listen-- just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.'" This answers the fundamental question of why we have Scripture continuing to be written after the time of Moses and the simple reason for it is that the Israelites realized that they had a problem when they came into God's presence. They realized when it came to the mountain of God where they saw the fire of God literally burning the mountain, having the animals being forbidden to come anywhere close to it, they realized that this God was a separate, holy, righteous God and they were not, and that realization scared them, it terrified them, the holiness of God compared to the sinfulness of mankind, and they cried out, "Let's have a mediator," and this is where what we would call covenant prophets basically kind of got their start. The ones that we see later on in the Bible throughout the rest of the Bible, in fact, that are giving God's word and having it written down, these are people who are standing in the gap between men and God saying, "This

is what God is saying to you," and this started because the Israelites realized that there was a fundamental separation between men and God.

The interesting thing, though, is that when Moses says that this is gonna be the case that you're going to have people standing in for you, he doesn't say it in the plural. It's understood in the plural that many prophets are gonna come and you have that throughout the Bible, they understand it that way, but he doesn't put it in the plural. He says that there is going to be a prophet who is going to stand in the gap for you, a prophet, wonderful relationship that Moses had with God where he talked with God face-to-face and he was able to intercede for the Israelites, and the idea being that this would be the capstone, this would be the completion, and this is what the Israelite people were looking for. Yes, they had many prophets after Moses but they were looking for a time when this would come to its fullness.

Alright, so anyone who's interested in further details about this stuff, I would recommend a couple of videos that I did. There's also a lot of other good ones on the net but one video that I did that's fairly succinct for people would be three Bible questions that most Christians cannot answer, that's what it's called. That one's only like 17 minutes long, it goes through a lot of this material pretty quick. If you're interested in getting into more detail on it and you really want to know more about the history and things like that, there's a playlist that I have that's called "So About the Bible." It's in four parts and it goes into this in a whole lot more detail for people who want to know details. I know some people are really detail-oriented, some people are like, just give me the snapshot. Between those two you should be able to get most of it.

Now as far as issues with people asking me, you know, why do you believe that the canon is closed? And you know, a lot of times in conversations with people, you don't have time to sit down and actually explain things to him, so I try to make sure that I have answers that are less than 200 words, something that I can give people to get them to start thinking about what God's word is actually about. So people ask me, "Why do you believe that the canon is closed? Why can't we keep adding more books to the Scripture?" I'll tell them this, I'll start off by saying the first covenantal prophet, that's the first Scripture producing prophet was Moses and it is from Moses that we learn, first, that all subsequent covenantal prophets were sent because of man's sin-caused separation from an altogether holy God and that a specific prophet would come to fulfill God's promise to Moses. We find this being talked about in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and we see the fulfillment of this when we start talking about someone called Jesus Christ in the New Testament. One of the people who came before Jesus called John the Baptist, spoke of him in John 1:21 and people were asking him, "Are you the prophet, the one that Moses spoke about who would fulfill God's purpose?" And John the Baptist said, "No, he's coming after me." And we also see this mentioned again in John 7:40. People were thinking in these terms, they knew what Moses said back in Deuteronomy 18 and they were looking for this coming Messiah. Therefore once this final prophet, and by the way, Christians do believe in a final prophet, his name is Jesus Christ, the God-man who stepped into earth to act as the Mediator between a holy righteous God and a sinful mankind, and he made possible our reunion with God by atoning for our sin, Matthew

5:17; Mark 10:45; Romans 5:1; 1 Peter 2:24. And since Jesus did that, there is no longer a need for covenantal prophets. This is what it's talking about in Hebrews 1:1-4 when it says long ago in previous days, God spoke by his prophets but now in this day, he has spoken by his Son. He has fulfilled the purpose of the prophets. They stood in the gap, but Christ stood in the gap perfectly to reconcile God to mankind.

And this we actually see being lived out in the New Testament, this understanding that starts with Moses and ends with Christ. Lots of people don't pick up on this, actually, but it is really really cool. You see, Jesus Christ because he did this, because he died for us, he's called the sacrificial lamb in Scripture. John 1:29, for example, that's how John the Baptist describes Jesus, and in Revelation, which was also written by the Apostle John, in Revelation 15:2-4 it specifically they sing the same, they are singing and they're singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Why the song of Moses and the Lamb? Why the song about Moses and the one who was our sacrifice? Because that's the bookends of Scripture. This is where it started, God gives his law. The Israelites realized that before that holy God who has a perfect and just law, that they are unrighteous. They recognize that they need a mediator and so there's a series of mediators that come but Moses says there's gonna be one, he puts it in the singular, and that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ who stands in the gap perfectly and that's even what Jesus said, "I come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it, to make that perfect reconciliation that's necessary between a righteous God and an unholy mankind." He stood in our place bearing the wrath that was due us.

So when it comes to the end of all things as we see in Revelation, what song are they singing? It's the song of Moses and the Lamb, beginning and the end. That's where Scripture comes for us. That's why we believe in a closed canon, because Jesus is the fulfillment. He is our final prophet. So if somebody asks me about the closure of the canon, that's basically what I say. I might say a little bit more tightly than that, maybe a little more detailed depending on the situation, but that's what I would say about the issue of closure.

After I talk about closure with people, the next question that comes up is, "Well, if we know that it ended with Christ, then the question becomes, well, from Moses to Christ is a really big time period and there's lots of writings that are produced in this time period, how do we know which of these writings belong in the canon and which ones don't?" And this is where it's very important to recognize a distinction between Protestants and, say, Catholics or Eastern Orthodox. For us, works are self-authoritative. That is, we don't sit around, get together in a group and say, "Okay, what have we been using? Let's just kinda keep using that. I mean, obviously God inspired it, that's the one that God allowed us to use so we'll just keep on doing that." Well, that's what the Eastern Orthodox do, that's what the Catholics do, but that's not what Protestants do. Instead, Protestants instead of saying, "Well, whatever the church has come to use must be right," they say, "No, God picked particular people to reveal Scripture and it was based on that choosing of God, that inspiration of God, that makes them authoritative." So it's not us that determines what the canon is, it's God who determines what the canon is in choosing these particular prophets.

So as R. C. Sproul put it, for the Protestant, the canon is a fallible list of infallible books. That is, we don't claim to be the authority like the Roman Catholic Church does or Eastern Orthodoxy does, instead we look at it and say, "These works have their own authority and that own authority is something that we can verify with Scripture itself." Like I said, all those back to Moses, and Moses was actually really specific as to who was it that we could trust to deliver God's word and who couldn't be and there are different ways of systematizing it but it basically comes down to three things that Moses left us with when it comes to the canon and I used to be a teacher so I like to do things with alliteration. I put forward three "A's": authority, agreement and authenticity.

What do we mean by authority? Well, it comes from covenant prophets. It comes from these people that Moses said was going to come after him. Now when we say it comes from them, we don't necessarily mean it's directly by them and this is something that's a little hard for most people to realize because in Jewish law, you can look it up, Leviticus 5:1 for example, in order for something to be authoritative, it didn't necessarily have to be directly from someone, and so it shouldn't surprise us as Christians that in the Old Testament and the New Testament we have works that are not from the prophets directly but are rather through people that those prophets specifically chose and said, "You guys are gonna be the ones to carry what I'm writing. You guys are gonna be the ones to record it."

One of the famous examples from the Old Testament is Jeremiah and Baruch. Baruch was basically the scribe of Jeremiah. Jeremiah would say, "Hey, write this down." Baruch would do that. He was someone who was specifically hand-picked by the prophet for that task. In the New Testament time, the final prophet, in this sense the covenant prophet, was giving us Scripture of course was Jesus Christ, but as most people know, Jesus chose 12 people to be his legal representatives, we call apostles. These representatives are the ones who had the authority to proclaim his message and so the New Testament isn't written by Jesus directly, instead it's written by the people who had the legal right to represent him, and that's an Old Testament principle going all the way back to Leviticus 5:1, and this is why in the New Testament it talks about the church being founded on the prophets and the apostles, the legal representatives that they chose. For example, 2 Peter 3:1-2 talks about that. Ephesians 2:19-21 talks about that. Jesus himself in describing what had happened up to his time talks about the fact that prophets and apostles were sent. Luke 11:49, for example on that one.

And in the Old Testament we'll read through passages that the Mormons just absolutely love. They look at it and say, "Well, look, there's pieces that are missing from the Bible." Well, you don't really understand if you think that's the case. Here's an example of what I mean. 2 Chronicles 9:29 talks about works that are not mentioned in the Bible itself. It talks about things like the prophecy of Ahijah and things like that, and most, and a lot of people will sit there and they look at it and say, "Well, there's no book of the Old Testament that's called the prophecy of Ahijah," and they're right and that is because the Old Testament as we have it was made by prophets and apostles through a process of compilation and consolidation as had been the case throughout history. They're taking

this through their legal representatives and they are giving us what was necessary and sufficient from that.

So it has to come from the right people or from the people that they chose essentially. That's the issue of authority and then we also have next the issue of agreement. Again, going back to Moses, Deuteronomy 13:1-5 talks about the issue of a prophet not leading the people astray; not teaching them to follow things that they haven't followed before. And like you were talking about at the beginning of this broadcast, Larry, you said we believe in a God who is consistent. We believe in a God who can get it right, and that is exactly what, of course, Moses was talking about in Deuteronomy 13. He is going to be a consistent God and if someone comes along teaching another God, it's forbidden.

So we look for that standard of agreement, and then last but not least, we have the standard of authenticity. We look for writings that cannot be proven to be untruthful or spurious and are reasonably well supported in the historical record. This has to do with what we talk about, say, in Deuteronomy 17:2-7 or 19:15-21 where it talks about the criteria of investigation when it comes to legal matters. As something comes up and we're not sure about it, we are to investigate it and search it out and if it doesn't hold up, then we reject it, and the same thing applies in the case of Scripture.

There's lots of Scriptures that people try to put forward but upon further investigation it becomes really obvious that there just isn't anything to back it up. I think especially of the Book of Mormon, for example. It has no history before 1820. There is not a single record in history that can verify that the Book of Mormon existed either by title or by a direct quote. It just simply isn't there so it would fail the standard of authenticity.

And these are the standards that we go through with all of the books that people could propose. The Koran, for example, it claims to be authoritative, it claims to be from a prophet of God, so we have the A, but is it in agreement? No. It fails that standard. It's not in our Bible because of that.

We could look at other ones that are a little bit less known like, say, the Gospel of Thomas. It claims to be written by an apostle of Jesus Christ. It has that standard but, again, is it in agreement? No. It, in fact, claims things that are completely contrary to what the rest of Scripture up until that time claimed. Then, of course, there's also the issue of authenticity. It's a second century writing. Second century writing cannot come from Christ because it's too late and some people don't know this. They don't know what the timeline is. But all of these standards are there so that we can figure out what it is.

We are not infallible. We're not the Catholic Church saying, "This is what it is." But what we do have is the standards that Moses left us saying, "Anyone who comes after me who is going to claim to be from God, hold their feet to the fire on this. Make sure that they are who they say they are." And it's okay if it's indirect. We are perfectly fine with that. That was an ancient standard, it could be indirect. It still had to be in agreement, it still had to be historically authentic and so forth.

After the issue of extent, we have the issue of content and, again, we have this issue of the simple fact that, you know, we look through history, we look through the biblical history and it's really clear that, you know, there were scribes who made mistakes as to what the content should be. There are mistakes that happened and people look at that and they say, "Well, since mistakes happened, that means that we cannot possibly know." And you say, "Hold on. You know, our fallibility does not nullify God's revelation any more than the fallibility of humankind in general prevents us from learning anything." I mean, look at what you learn in school. I was a math teacher, am I infallible? No, but does that mean that my students couldn't learn math because I was fallible? No, the subject itself is capable of being taught.

Capacity for error and actual presence of error are two very different things but people often conflate them, but at the same time we still need to be aware of the fact that, yes, humans do make mistakes when it comes to copying these things and that kind of thing, so we do need to account for it and again, the Old Testament gives us standards as to this. There is the standard of the multiple witnesses that we have in Deuteronomy specifically 19:15-21, and this is the standard of multiple witnesses, of course, is a legal thing but it's held throughout Scripture. For example, the book of Deuteronomy itself which is part of the Torah, part of the books of Moses, itself is a basically second telling of the law. It allows us to take the first books and it gives us another view of them so that we can further understand them. It allows us to analyze them. And this is also, this idea of multifocality, or multiple sources, multiple witnesses, is the same reason that we have both the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles and we also have the books from 1 Samuel through 2 Kings. It covers a lot of the same material but we have multiple views of it so we can get a better understanding of the whole. There's a reason why we have four Gospels instead of just one, because we believe in multifocality, looking at multiple things, and the same thing happens when we're talking about versions of Scripture, that is, we have different versions of Scripture that are out there but as long as they substantially teach the same message that is found in the best reconstruction of the originals, we [unintelligible] suitable versions, but if they don't, then we call them perversions and this, of course, causes problems for some people. A lot of people would like to have one exact version but, frankly, Christians really haven't had one exact version of Scripture but we have had versions of Scripture that substantially teach the same thing.

Unfortunately, a lot of Christians kinda become a little bit Islamic when it comes to certain things. If you're a Muslim, you believe that the Koran is the divine record, that it is something that in and of itself is perfect, it's the very language of God. For Christians, though, we don't believe in a divine record, we believe in a record of the divine which is a little bit different. Instead of believing that it has to be this one exact form, we believe that Scripture is communicable, that it can be translated into different languages, that the message can go out to everyone, and because of that, the emphasis for us isn't on exact verbiage, it's on the content of the message, and that is something that is historically traceable par excellence, and I've gone into this in much more detail on other videos, but the amount of manuscript support that we have for the Bible is nominal and it's early and it's very vast at the same time. It gives us a very good idea of what they were saying and what they meant. Now does that mean that we're going to have the exact verbal form that

this person or that person had? Not necessarily, but at the same time that is never what the emphasis was in Scripture.

And you can even take Jesus as an example. Lots of people don't know this but when Jesus quoted the Old Testament, for example, he actually quoted multiple versions. For example, in Luke 7:27, Jesus, I believe that one's a quotation of Malachi, if I'm not mistaken. He's quoting it and he actually quotes it from what is called the proto-Masoretic text. It's one of the early Hebrew versions. But later on in Luke 24:22-43, Jesus quotes one of the Psalms and there he uses the Septuagint form, or I should say proto-Septuagint form, one of the early Greek versions of the text. And they're not exactly the same but substantially as far as the core message, the fundamental truths, the fundamental doctrines, and even a lot of very tertiary issues. I mean, Jesus even talks about things as minute in our modern way of thinking as verb tenses. You know, he's asked, you know, "What do," no, he's asked about the resurrection, for example, and he says that God is the God of the living, you know, it's a present tense and I think he goes through that. And Paul also gets into verb tenses a little and, well, not verb tenses, there he gets into the plurality that the promises given concerning Abraham's seed, not seeds, Paul goes into that and he dives into that a little bit.

These people were obviously believing that it has been sufficiently preserved to talk about impertinent material but at the same time, they freely use multiple versions. Jesus himself uses multiple versions and throughout the New Testament you have multiple versions being used. In fact, about 25% of the New Testament quotations of the Old Testament are from the Greek version of the Old Testament instead of the Hebrew version, and the New Testament authors are just fine with that as long as it has all those core essentials, they are perfectly fine because for Christians Scripture is a record of the divine, not a divine record. Why? So that it can be communicable. If the emphasis was on the exact form and it was only in that exact form that we could have Scripture, then guess what? We'd all be like basically the Muslims, we'd have to have this one perfect record that you'd have to go and for them, you know, if you really want to read and understand the Koran, it has to be in Arabic and if you have anything else, you don't really have a Koran, you have basically a commentary on the Koran in their opinion but you don't have a Koran. For Christians, though, we can translate the Bible into any language and as long as it holds to that original standard of actually reconstructing the original as best as possible using multifocality and the multiple sources that we have, we're fine with it.

The problem that we have with different versions of Scripture like the New World translation and things like that, is where people actually go against what the historical evidence says; where people go against what the manuscript evidence says, and then we say, "No, you're going with something that has absolutely no evidence whatsoever and you are wrong." And there are places where the New World translation, frankly, does mistranslate Scripture. It's very literal in a lot of places but there's places usually whenever it has to do with the deity of Jesus, that it kinda goes off into la-la-land and then there are also modern paraphrases that are meant for Christians but they also do the same thing, they kind of go off into la-la-land and you look at what they're saying and you look at any reconstruction of the original text in the original languages and it's not

even close, and we look at those and we say, "Yeah, we're not going to use that." But our emphasis is on the concepts of their communicability, not on that exact verbal form that would limit people to having to use one particular translation like, say, the Muslims do.

That's a lot to take in, I know, but hopefully that gives people at least a platform for thinking about these things. Larry, I'm sure that you've been listening to this and you've probably got a few thoughts and interjections and maybe questions so take it, I'll throw it back to you. Thank you very much for letting me get that in.

Larry. Oh, it was fantastic. I was just sitting here enjoying everything, particularly the points you brought up about Jesus used different versions. You know you're gonna get a lot of King James Onlyites mad at you on stuff like that, you know? It doesn't fit with their narrative and so.... But that was very useful to me. I've been a Christian since 1981 and I hadn't heard that argument before, so you were unique and always light up a little, you know, when you've been doing Christian apologetics since that long ago, there's not a whole lot you haven't heard before, but I hadn't heard that one before and I loved it. So it was like, "Oh!" So I always kind of perk up, especially the fact that as I mentioned earlier in this program, that I use my night job which in most, in fact, I thought that was kinda of cool that you actually put that video on YouTube and you mentioned it on Facebook, that's how I found out that you said something like you put on YouTube as, "Larry Wessels quicksilver," you know, and I didn't even know what that meant because I didn't know what quicksilver was until I watched your video and it's, "Oh, that's what he's talking about." But the fact is I use my jobs that I work, you know, as you mentioned in that video, I guess I'll let my viewers here know, a lot of them already know it but I work on that at the post office usually six nights a week through most of the year. Right now as we're doing this show, it's the middle of the summer and so the mail volume is not that bad during the summer. Everybody is on vacation, you know. So I can actually get both my days off and that's what we're doing tonight. I'm off tonight so I can hang out here with you instead.

So anyway, the use of that night job to listen to Christian apologetics all night long, and I've done that in that particular job for 32 years. Back in the old days, the young folks don't know what I'm talking about when I used to walk around there with a Sony Walkman. You know, a lot of people don't know what a Sony Walkman is but that's what I listened to for decades just listening to old audio cassettes of some of my favorite Christian preachers and teachers. You mentioned one of them a minute ago, a while ago when you were talking on R. C. Sproul. I think I've got every old audio cassette he ever made in my library, along with Walter Martin. I've got all of Walter Martin's tapes and I would sit there particularly in some of my debates and encounters with Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, you know, I used to go to Christian Science Reading Rooms and things like that to give theological discussions with these little old ladies that inhabit those places. And of course, yoga meditation centers, you know, Mormon Wards, in fact, I've also gone to two Mormon Temple openings, one in Dallas and one in San Antonio. Recently I went to the Seventh-Day Adventist conference, their global conference in San Antonio in 2015. It was close enough to where I could drive over there and deal with that.

So I do enjoy going and hanging out with them but it goes back to what you were saying, you've gotta know, you know, you've gotta know your stuff. You've got to do your study and since I use my night job to study basically, a whole lot of audio cassettes. Of course, nowadays I use my cellphone. I even did a video not too long ago with a Christian brother who is also working there at the Post Office. We said the video, we basically just sat around in that show talking about all the great preachers and teachers, apologists you can listen to while you're at work, and giving people ideas how they can utilize their work time to study the word of God. And I'm not just saying listening to preachers and teachers like on SermonAudio and that, which I do a lot anyway, but you can listen to the Bible on your cellphone. You can set it up to almost any version you want and listen to the Bible all night long.

I was with a fellow Christian postal worker the other night and she was studying the book of Matthew all night long while she was doing her postal work. She's just listening to Matthew and I told her the best way to do things is like Walter Martin said, you may not get everything the first time around, just go through it again and again until you've got it soaked into your head, and that's what she was doing. She would go all the way through the Gospel of Matthew, then she'd start back at chapter 1, work all the way through 28 and back again, all through an eight hour shift. I mean, that's a great way to get in your head, you know, and if you do this kind of stuff for this many years, it stays with you.

But like I said, listening to you and, of course, I think people realize and I think in our edited version people already know it but I'll just mention it again. We were having a lot of technical difficulties particularly to get this show started, because of your location you're using wifi and we were having constant interruptions in the transmission feed, so I just said, "Well, just go for it. Go fast, get as much as you get in there before we lose the feed again," and by God's grace you were able to get through that whole monologue you gave very quickly without interruption. It was wonderful. God protected us there. I remember Walter Martin used to complain about a lot of his stuff. He said, "Well, the devil's messing up my recording equipment." I kept thinking, "The devil is tuned in to us tonight," you know. But you made it through some key stuff there and we've got it on tape without any trouble, so I love that point.

So I guess, is there anything else you would like to say along this whole subject? Is there any material you'd like to present? You're very articulate, I'm loving it. What else would you like to share before we run out of time and before the equipment goes out again? Go ahead.

John. Hopefully you guys who are watching this out on the internet web will realize our heart in this and what we're trying to be. We're trying to give people a foundation for talking about one of the most essential subjects in Christianity. The very bedrock, the very foundation of what we believe is the Bible and if we don't know why we don't add new books, if we can't articulate in some way why we have these books and not others, if we can't walk into issues of textual criticism and dealing with variants in the different versions of the Bible that are out there in an understanding way where we show that we

have wisdom and knowledge concerning these things, we're going to be eaten alive by a rabidly skeptical, and I don't want that to happen. I want you guys who are out there who are interacting with your friends, loved one, whatever the case happens to be, I want you guys to be able to stand firm in the faith. I want you guys to be that light in the darkness and there is a reason why, you know, Peter tells us to be prepared to give an answer for the faith that we have for us, a reason for the faith that we have within us but, of course, with gentleness and respect.

The biblical expectation is that we would be people of understanding and knowledge; that we would be people who are not simply emotional. Yes, it's amazing to be a Christian and all of us have had that emotional experience but we also recognize the value of maturity and coming to a deeper understanding of things and being able to defend the faith on every level. Am I expecting everyone to go into the detail that I do, all the detail that maybe Dr. White does or even Larry does? No, but that's not an excuse for saying that ignorance is okay. That indictment that Peter gave in 1 Peter 3:15 is an indictment for the church as a whole. The defense that we give isn't always gonna be at the same level for every Christian but we all should have a defense.

These issues are something that we all need to be thinking about and that's why we're presenting this so that you guys can start thinking about this and you guys can start asking the critical questions and start interacting in the realm of, that realm of ideas that exist out there in the world where everything is judged not always correctly, but where everybody is out there and they're interacting with each other and we want you guys to do that. We want you guys to be active soldiers of the kingdom of God and understanding your primary weapon, the word of God, is the first step in becoming a good soldier.

That's basically my point of view on it, and so thank you, guys, for listening. Thank you, Larry, for having me, and I'll turn it back over to you and if you have any questions for me, anything that you want to clarify, go ahead and ask it and we'll get whatever we can get in there.

Larry. Alright, outstanding, brother. I truly wish we could've done a full length broadcast that I was planning on. I just didn't realize we were going to have all these technical difficulties which we've had tonight. It's been amazing. I don't even know how long you're gonna be there in the next minute or so but it was great to get those concluding comments. We were kind of taking a shot otherwise this show would've been a lot longer, you know. But obviously the wifi or whatever wifi you've got there is just not working out too good but at least we were able to get something, you know, that's a start.

But like I said, you had a wonderful presentation on how to do these things and it really does all go back to the word of God. The word of God is the foundation. When I got born again and saved way back there in ancient times, the first, the one thing I realized, it was the same night I got saved, I realized that, "Well, if there's a God, there's also a devil." And that was very frightening for me to realize that, well, you know, if God exists and the Bible's true, then the devil exists. I mean, you can't have one without the other because they're both in the word of God. And I then realized that the only thing I could

trust was the word of God because if there's a devil out there and the Lord is allowing him, as we found from Deuteronomy 13, he allows false prophets to be out there all over the place as a test to prove whether we really love the Lord our God or not. Those false prophets, those Mormons, those Jehovah's Witnesses, those Muslims, Seventh-Day Adventists, all the rest of them, those are tests for us as true children of God to stand for God, to stand in faith against the false prophets, the tide that's all around us.

I always find it interesting that, you know, Jesus said that when he comes back, will the Son of Man find faith on the earth? You almost think, no, he's not gonna find...and we look around, in Revelation there's the devil and all his hordes surround that like small flock that's there at the end of time before Jesus comes back in Revelation 19. But then, you know, one word from God, boom, you know, around the judgment day, Revelation 20. It reminds me of an old movie way back, I'm so dated, there was a movie called "Time Bandits," I always kinda liked. It was a sci-fi type thing, but I thought it was a cute movie because it had someone that was symbolic of the devil and had, of course, someone symbolic of God, and there's all this trouble through this two hour movie for these people because the devil's, you know, that was symbolizing this fantasy movie, causing all this trouble, but right at the end of the movie, God just shows up and he kinda flips, you know, clicks his fingers and the devil just explodes, he's gone. You know, just like... Oh, you now, that's how easy it is for God to get rid of the devil, I mean, as we see in Revelation.

But our task here in this part as God has ordained is to deal with the devil and all his lies and the only way to do that is through the word of God and that's why, that's the major point of attack that the devil uses against people believing in God. He attacks the very thing that shows us who God is, what salvation is, who Jesus Christ is. That's the point of attack. That's why something like you're presenting tonight is so essential for Christians to know about and know why they believe what they believe.

I've often thought of Matthew 4, Luke 4, you've got the temptation in the wilderness with the devil and Jesus, and Jesus particularly in Matthew 4:4, Matthew 4:7 and 10, he reiterates three times to the devil, "It is written. It is written." And that's really the key to everything and so I realized that night I was saved that, "Man, this is a dangerous world. It's scary out there. I gotta just stick with the God, with God's word. That's it. Nothing else. I can't trust anything else." And even then, there's good Bible preachers because the Bible does say, I think it's in Ephesians 4 if my memory serves me correctly, that God's given pastors, evangelists, teachers, things of that nature, you know, but the problem is you've gotta find the good ones, you've gotta learn who the good teachers are because there are so many false ones out there. So over time, you know, you start to figure out, "Okay, R. C. Sproul, he looks pretty good. James White, yeah, he looks pretty good." You know, things of that nature. "Walter Martin? Yeah, he's okay." Stuff like that.

So based on all this, it really does come down to the word of God and knowing how to defend your faith and we're commanded to defend our faith and Jude 3, for instance...

John. Delivered to the saints.

Larry. There you go. You got it. You got it. So, see, you're in your prime, you're a young guy. You know, I don't even see any gray hair in your head yet, you know, so....

John. No, I have it, it's just this lighting makes me look younger.

Larry. Oh, okay. Hey, that's a good way to do it, you know. I've got all this, I've got so much lighting on me right now I think I need sunglasses, but anyway.

Well, basically that's about all I basically wanted to say on this is we know from the word of God that it keeps proclaiming, in fact, here's something, I'll finish with this and then you can say any final words you want, John, after I do this thing. But I always loved this. In my Bible when I go out on a college campus or through the neighborhoods, or, you know, when the Jehovah's Witnesses come through the neighborhood, you know, I'd always, I've got a little briefcase and I'd pull it out and it's got 100 year old Jehovah's Witness books in it. That's why I'd take it with me because I could open it up and show how they've used the ancient Egyptian pyramids to predict the end of the world. That's where they came up with 1914, you know, the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt and you open up one of those old Jehovah's Witness books and it's got these fold-out maps that show you the pyramid and how you calculate the years so you know exactly when he's coming back, despite what Jesus said in Matthew where he said, "No man knows the day or the hour," but of course, they thought they did.

But anyway, these facts and evidences, in my Walter Martin Cults Reference Bible, I always had this on me when I was out preaching or teaching somewhere on college campuses or whatever, but I always liked this little bit of information. Genesis 1 states, "God said" nine times. That's just in the first chapter, "God said," you know? And then you go on to Malachi says, "Thus says the Lord," 23 times. "The Lord spoke," appears 560 times in the first five books of the Bible alone.

So it really does, if you're gonna be a believer in Christ, if you're gonna be a disciple of Christ, you should believe what Christ believed and taught. Does that make sense, John? Am I missing something with that? I mean, you've got all these people that, "Oh, well, it's evolution. There was no Noah's Flood and we just came from monkeys. We evolved over billions of years and blah, blah, blah." But when you read Jesus, he's talking about Adam and Eve. He's talking about, "From the beginning, God made them male and female." I mean, so am I gonna believe Darwin or am I gonna believe Jesus? And I'm amazed that there are so many people, I want you to talk to this for just a moment and then we'll get ready to sign off, there are so many people that claim to be Christians. In fact, they did a survey, I think it was Pew, the Pew Research poll, they said that 74% of the American population is 330 million people or so of the surveys they were taking for that population, they said that 74% of the population of the United States claimed to be Christians. And you know, like Hillary Clinton claims to be Christian, Barack Obama claims to be a Christian, all these politicians claim to be Christians and then all these other people, yet at the same time they don't believe all the things Jesus believed like that list I just went

through. So just give me some of your brief understanding of how can you be a Christian yet not believe what the Bible says? Go ahead.

John. Thanks for setting me up to fail, how can you be a Christian and not believe what the Bible says? That's a little bit like asking how can you be a doctor and know nothing about human anatomy. But this is one of the great issues of the day, that "Christian" has been applied in so many ways that has become an essentially meaningless term. You know, there's a few different ways that people look at Christianity, they look at Christianity, to use a political analogy because this seems to be the season for that, you can look at it as what is Christianity, is it allegiance to an [unintelligible] platform or is it allegiance to the party that derived from that platform? For a lot of people today, it's the derivation. "Well, way back was a Christian, and you know, we've kind of associated with them and these are kind of Christian ideas and Christian values and, you know, we believe in being nice to people and that's Christian," and it just kinda sneaks through history and winds up morphing and becoming whatever.

Then there are the really annoying originalists, the people that believe that if you want to claim to be that thing, you should actually believe what was originally believed and that's where biblical, historical, reformed, I'm going to offend a lot of people with saying that one, Christianity comes in where you sit there and you say, "I want to believe what the original believers believed. If I don't believe what those first Christians believed, if I'm not following Christ, then I am a Christian [unintelligible] in name only." And we stand self-condemned based on Jesus' own testimony. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will follow my word, you will keep my commandments." That's one of the things he said and it's something that Christians don't like to hear. We like to piecemeal it out in this modern age, but what Jesus said is, "If you love me, you will obey my word, you will keep my commandment." You are going to believe [unintelligible] you should believe and, frankly, there's no higher authority. If Jesus was even close to being who he claimed to be which was God Incarnate, then there is no higher authority that you could talk to. We're talking about the authority of God and if he says this is what it should be and this is what it is, that should be the end of the story. The fact of the matter, though, is that most people that call themselves Christians today, they have a party that they belong to but that party had nothing to do with what was originally set up. Now it's become what they want it to be, essentially they've taken the place of Jesus Christ, there is no authority external to them, it's what they want it to be. "This is what Christianity means to me." I have that all the time with my generation and those coming after me. "Well, this is what I believe. This is how it makes me feel. In my opinion...."

The world has a plenitude of opinions, they don't have a whole lot of respect for what was originally given, though, and our task as people who do believe that what was original was set forward as correct, is to take the biblical, historical, reformed worldview and present it to the world. Are we necessarily going to change anyone? No, ultimately that's in God's hands. He is the one who elects and calls, but our job is to give that defense. It is to present the truth to people and confront that worldview and say, "No, what God originally said is this, and that's important because what God originally said is a message of grace and what you've done is you taking Christianity and made it a flavor

of the day: there is no grace, there is no salvation in popularity and fashion and emotionalism. The only salvation that you can rely on is something that is actually true, that is actually real, and if you don't have that, then you don't have anything."

Larry. Amen. Amen. Well, it looks like based on what you just said that apparently you're not gonna fail a test of Deuteronomy 13. I guess you're okay. You'll be alright.

This reminds me also of a video I want to bring to the attention of everyone watching this here, is a video I've got called "87% of Evangelical Christians don't know what the Gospel is or what justification is." 87% of Evangelical Christians do not know what the Gospel is or what justification is, and so that's pretty scary because that means something's greatly greatly wrong.

Okay, with that said, John, one last time as we get ready to sign off here, tell us about your YouTube channel one more time.

John. Okay. My YouTube channel is called "Relationship and Truth," and the primary emphasis is the defense of Scripture. Yes, I talk about Mormonism. Yes, I talk about Islam. Yes, I talk about Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy and even Armenianism a little bit because I have annoying Armenian friends who don't let go. But my primary emphasis is the word of God. That is the foundation on which everything else stands and I want people to know the truth.

Larry. Amen. Amen. Well, thank you so much for being on this broadcast. It was wonderful. I just wish we hadn't had so many technical difficulties but we slugged it out somehow and I'm looking forward to doing some more broadcasts with you down the line as time permits. You know from my busy schedule, it's rough doing things but I just do what I can when I can, and hopefully we'll have a better connection next time we do a broadcast on whatever topic it might be. But I really enjoyed, I mean, there's a reason why you've been given favor with me, at least, because you're very articulate, you're heart's in it for the Lord Jesus Christ and the word of God, and that's really where I'm at. I mean, we're on the same page which is basically the pages of Scripture. That's where we need to be, in the word of God, trusting that and nothing else, because the world is a big, I mean, it's in the kingdom of darkness, the lies of false prophets are everywhere, and the only way is through God's word which he has placed above all his name, Psalm 138:2, the second half of the verse.

Alright, well, brother, thanks again for being with us. God bless you. You have a good night. After we sign off, I'm heading down the road. God bless. You take care and we'll talk to you next time.

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