

The Bible part 2

by Chris Famisaran

All right, well, good morning, everybody. How are you all doing? Awesome. Well, let's go ahead and continue part two in our series on the Bible. Let's pray. Father, we thank You, Lord, for Your goodness, be with us now as we continue our journey, about the importance of Lord also how the Bible was formed and, and what it means to us and some of the challenges that may maybe we sometimes experience or come across as we read it in Jesus name. Amen.

All right, well, earlier this year, when a certain country decided to invade another country, it led to some tensions not just in Europe, but more specifically, in our neighbor, Canada. You see, as Russia invaded Ukraine, as it dragged on, everywhere realized, Hey, this is not cool. We said bad Russia bad. And unfortunately, for a certain set of Canadians, the anti Putin sentiment added some unacceptable insult to Ukrainian injury. And, you know, people were somehow blaming the French in Canada. Why? Well, you see, the French is spelling of a certain Russian president, his name, Putin, somehow similar to a very famous Canadian dish called poutine. It's diner staple in Canada. It's fried potatoes topped with gravy and cheese curds. That sounds amazing, doesn't it? And that's why one particular French restaurant Maidstone de la poutine was subjected to great rude harassment insulting phone calls throughout February and March. Because their signature dish, everybody thought they were trying to, let's just say maybe give support to President Putin. And so the restaurant had to issue a clarification they were forced to, and they said poutine was created by a passionate cooks who wanted to bring joy and comfort to their customers. Love my son de la poutine has worked since its first day to carry on these values. And today, it brings its most sincere support to the Ukrainian people who are courageously fighting for their freedom against the tyrannical Russian regime. Another popular French Canadian restaurant, les Roy Jucep went another further step further renaming the popular dish la frite fromage, which literally means the cheesy potato so as to avoid any affiliation with President Putin. Now, when we think about this, okay, those of you who know what poutine is, obviously no, it's just cheese and potatoes and cheese curds. And, yes, it sounds amazing. But oftentimes, when we assume things right off the bat, it tends to go sideways. Amen. All right. So let us not assume anything, especially when we, we look at the Bible.

Now, the Bible as we talked about, how did the Bible start? Well, of course, we looked in the Bible. And the scripture says that the Bible writers were anywhere from the apostles and the prophets, all of them were inspired by who? God, Holy Spirit, right. And over a period of roughly 1500 years, these 66 books, they were written, and they were solidified roughly about the late fourth century, I think, around 393, there was a number of what would you call it councils where they got together they decide, well, should the Gospel of John be included? Yes, was written most likely by the apostle John. Should we include this particular book? This gospels like Oh, it does not align with what the rest of the Gospels the other four gospels none of the stories fit or are similar. Is it inspired? Probably not, and questionable on the authorship.

But really, when you think about the Bible, it's amazing. Cuz it wasn't written number one, they didn't have copier machines like they have today. Can you imagine having to write one Bible out by hand on papyrus? Papyrus was a plant that the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans that they use to make paper. And over time, they had to try to preserve these documents. Now, where the Bible came from, is it nice and cool? Year round? No, it can be super hot, and can probably also be sometimes very humid. The Bible has its survived crude reproductions. People have tried to sabotage the Bible. People have tried to ban the Bible. Wars have been fought over the Bible. And as languages evolve, there has also been challenges even as we translate. But you know, God still made sure that God's word prevail. Amen. It was preserved. So much. So today that we have this beautiful book that God is able to share who God is, and also what God wants for our lives.

You can't just look at it as a book, I should say that someone wrote the Bible, as we talked about, the Bible should move us Amen. It shouldn't just be like, Oh, if I'm just reading it, it should affect me. It should convict me, it should help me to move forward. And in fact, they were people who were so committed to the Bible. For instance, the Essenes. It was this community that they dedicated their lives to making sure that they could copy and preserve the Bible, just so that it would continue. Now, there are several editors who formed the Bible. What are some of the things that kind of were I guess he would say the requirements? Well, number one, most of the books were written by the apostles, okay. John, Luke, and you didn't necessarily have to be one of the 12 to be considered an apostle, because who else was an apostle? Paul, right. But you also had James and, and so the apostles, they spoke with, they spoke with influence, they spoke with authority. Now imagine, though, having to write all of that out, and it wasn't until later when the printing press created by who? Gutenberg, right. And the Bible was translated into Latin. But that was the first time that printing press began to evolve books to start with, they started with the Bible.

And you have to look at the fact that the Bible has it influenced humanity. Literally, the most influential book of all time, probably, right. But one of the other things that you have to take into context is did the message that was being collated and put together? Did it for instance, in the New Testament, reflect Christ? Did it reflect Jesus teachings? What are some of the teachings of Jesus that are in all four Gospels? Think about it. What are some of the stories or teachings of Jesus that are in all of the Gospels?

Last Supper, okay. Did Jesus feed anybody? All of those are in there. What else? The crucifixion. So stories like these from authors. And not only that, you know, the, as they were, as they were, as they were collating as they were putting these documents, the gospels were written out of what necessity because when Jesus was going around, nobody was probably really just writing everything down or recording everything. How did they pass on the stories? Word of mouth. That's all they really had. And then eventually they realized, man, a lot of our peers are starting to die off those who especially walked with Jesus. Let's take those stories and so they wrote them down to preserve. When you look at the Gospels, Matthew and Luke, model their gospels after Mark. And John also includes some of the stories. But his is also different types of gospel written for a specific group of the second and third generation believers, his was probably written less. In fact, most of the Gospels probably were not written maybe 30-40 years after Jesus died. Paul's letters were probably actually first they say that Thessalonians is potentially one of the first if not the first written document in the New Testament.

And so, all of these stories are important, and they help us to understand who God is, and ultimately what is the Bible. It is a story of salvation. When you look through the Bible, and especially at the very

beginning, it shows God creates the world, Adam and Eve. And unfortunately, the serpent tricks Adam and Eve, but the very beginning the instance of salvation is found in Genesis three, verse 15, culminates in the cross, amen. So you have all of these stories. And ultimately, when you look at the book of Revelation, what is the last image of Revelation? God been with who? God's people, God's love, God's story, wanting to be with God's people and ultimately, redeeming them because he loved them. Amen. So, there are many things that we could, we could look at, you know, you could look at that Daniel, where it says, In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood from the scriptures according to the Word of God, or Lord given to Jeremiah, the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last 70 years. There are things in the Bible such as prophecies that are inspired by God, there is a prophetic message. But also, we can find as we read, All Scripture is inspired by God for the purpose of guiding us through this life, to eternity with God. The Bible is God's letter to mankind and is filled with hope, okay, on how to live a good life and not just live it but to live it well. And the Bible is also an experience. Jesus in Matthew 22, says, Jesus replied, You are an error, because you do not know the Scriptures, or the power of God, who is he talking to? One of the Pharisees, right, or the scribes or the Sadducees.

It's important that as we study that we have to ask God to help us understand it. So when we read our Bible, what should we do before we even read our Bible, we should pray. Every time we read our Bible, God helped me to better understand the scriptures today, what you want me to learn. John 5, Jesus says, you study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them, you have eternal life. These are the various Scriptures that testify about Me. We don't just read the scriptures, but because we just want to have knowledge we know. We want to read the scriptures so that we can know who God is that we can understand better who God is, and what God wants for us. So ultimately, the Bible can give us hope, Amen.

Now, a common question that many of people have asked me as, Pastor, what is the best Bible translation? Well, how many Bible translations are there? A lot. Right? Yeah, the King James Version, you have the New King James Version, you have the NIV. What else do you have NLT, the Message, the Clear Word, the Hebrew Bible, the NRSV, the NCV and CEV, I could keep on going, right. But when we look at the Bible translations, there are three different types of translations that are three different categories, you could kind of break it down, you could have which is the the first one, which is the most literal, okay? That would include maybe the King James version, the NASB, or the New American Standard Bible, the English standard version, the New Revised Standard Version. And then you also have a second group, which they call it the dynamic equivalence. And these are translations that are like thought for thought and approach to try to convey what what is the essential meaning of this passage of the original authors? And so sometimes you'll find that some of the concepts and the metaphors, they're a little less widely known to modern day readers, and they have to in a way, they have to be rephrased. And finally, the third group is that of the paraphrase the free paraphrase. Some of those translations are the Clear Word, the Living Bible, or what's become prominent pretty recently is the Message. Okay? So pastor, which which one is the best? Well, all have their place, but you have to understand the context of how they're written. So, as a pastor, am I going to preach from the message, which is a paraphrase? No, because I want to understand best the passage, especially when I'm trying to study and I'm trying to read the context and understanding, I want to try to use a passage, read something that is best, close to the literal. And I'm just kind of maybe I'll share with you like my thought process, like when I preach a sermon, I'll try to listen to maybe five or six different translations, just to try to understand I'll try to take all understand and hear the most literal, and then kind of in the middle,

like the NIV. And then, maybe just because sometimes some passages can be hard, maybe just to kind of help my mind open up all read the message just to have a better, maybe not better understanding, but to think bigger about it. But when it comes to especially studying, not everybody can read Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. And I understand that. And so sometimes maybe going to a passage, a translation, that's a little more literal. For instance, the NASB, the ESV, NRSV, and even the King James Version, personally, folks, I love the King James Version. But here's what's the challenge with the King James Version. Language, when was it put together? For I should know this, my mind is blank, you know, I think 1600s has English evolved since then. Just a little bit, right? It might even be easier to to understand Shakespeare, right? And so as I'm trying to read or better yet, when I'm trying to share the gospel with somebody else, let's say somebody from Poland comes to Downey, California, and they want to do Bible studies, and they barely know English. Should the King James Version be the best option? Probably not, we'll probably want to use something a little more easier to understand, right? I'm not saying it's bad. But yeah, we have to think about how do we understand the Bible, especially when we're trying to share Jesus with others? Of course, you know, there's so many. There's so many quotes that we can take from the King James Version. But there are other options. Because ultimately, every Bible is based on the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic translations. And those who have put the Bible together, they've tried to go to the past, and try to find the most original transcripts. And so you want to have a Bible that can be best as possible, not necessarily so literal. Because if you read the literal, it's going to be kind of like, you got to scratch your head.

So actually, let's take an exercise Romans 8:8, let's go to Romans 8:8. Okay, now this is the Greek translation laws, literal translation, Romans 8:8, and it says, And the ones in the flesh being God, to please cannot. I'll say it again. And the ones in the flesh, being God to please cannot. Is that easily understandable? No, so we got to translate it let's bring it to 2022 Now let's say we go to the ESV those who are in the flesh cannot please God much more understanding right? Or if we go to the King James Version, it says so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Which one's easier to understand? The first one, okay, now let's go to the second group, the dynamic equivalence, those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God, Oh, okay. And then the New Living Translation that's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. Let's finally go to the free paraphrase. This is the Message. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing and God isn't pleased at being ignored. That was a bit of a mouthful compared to the first, right? So you have to understand these different translations. Now also, these translations, some of them were written at a certain grade level, like the NIV. I think it was written at a high school reading level. And you know, the translations as it goes, there are certain versions where a five year old could read it, and understand it. And then there are some that are just so very literal, whether it's the original or the NASB. You have to take time to study. So should every Bible be read? Is every Bible valid? Well, yes, the Bible is valid, but to understand it, there are these these different layers. So what am I trying to say, I hope I have not confused you, what I would say is, especially for the practice of, of trying to study in depth, try to find something like, you know, if you want to go deep, and try to be as close as literal as possible, New American Standard Version, the ESV, the NEC, or if you want to have some a little easier to understand NIV, the new also the NET, the New English Translation, take time to read.

But when you also read, remember, we talked about some principles of the who, what, where, when, why and how, right. We should apply that to every passage. And as we read, but when you look at the

Bible, how do we handle passages that appear confusing or contradictory? Because let's just be honest, some of the things that Jesus said, You have to scratch your head, why did Jesus say that? Or there are passages where it seems like God does not sound loving or kind or that's not what you know, something that may be written in James sounds confusing, or it doesn't sound graceful. It sounds legalistic. Again, we have to look at the context. For instance, let's go to let's just go to Matthew, Matthew 5 real quick, okay, there there are, boy, ready that so I'm there. This is the Sermon on the Mount. And a lot of times, Jesus will say something that may sound different. Maybe it's provocative. Maybe he's challenging somebody. Or maybe they're thinking, Oh, he's taking something and he's taking it to a deeper level, for instance. Let's see. Where is it? Where is it? Where is it? Okay. You have heard it was set an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I tell you do not resist what an evil person if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them to that other cheek also. Now, now, today, anybody walking on the street? How would they take that? Jesus, you're crazy? I'm gonna punch him back. Right? Or if you're, as it says, if your eye causes you to what sin? What should you do with it? pluck it out? Is Jesus being literal? No. So you have to also look at some of the things that Jesus says, sometimes it can be literal, it can be symbolic, he could be using hyperbole. He could be using story. There are different ways of sharing a message. And oftentimes, especially with the parables, he didn't intentionally make them easy to understand right off the bat because he wanted them to be stuck in their minds so that they could chew on it. And eventually they would get it especially after he died. And in the book of Acts, the disciples, their heads must have been popping off because they realize, oh, that's what Jesus meant.

Now, Romans 15:4, okay, Romans 15:4 says that for everything that is written in the past was written to teach us so that through the endurance, taught in the Scriptures need encouragement they might provide, that they provide we might have hope. What is the Bible? It is God's message to us. And it is a story of hope. Amen. Amen.

Now a couple of quick things just because I I accidentally glossed over when you look at other Bibles, you'll find that there are other may be books in the Bible, such as what's called the Apocrypha, the Apocrypha was written in between the time of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Why do we not have that in the Bible? Well, we don't consider it be. It was it we don't necessarily consider it inspired by God. There are other passages like the one that we talked about last week where there was a woman who was caught in adultery. Now the earliest, earliest, earliest manuscripts of the Greek do not have that. But when you look at the story of the lesson that's being drawn, is that message congruent with the rest of what Jesus taught. It is. But there are also some times in the Bible, for instance, when Jesus is on the cross, and he tells the guy to his right, surely you will be with Me in Heaven, when immediately whatever that's that's the context when you look at it. But more than likely a well meaning editor a transcriber, put that comma there. And or actually, they didn't even have commas back then. But if you look at the context, no, we have to understand that though. This is God's inspired message. Human Hands also wrote it. So we have to be mindful of the fact that God's message has been preserved. But we have to look at the context. Who, what, where, when, why, and how. And maybe that also might mean going into a commentary or concordance, some of you are thinking, Pastor, what is that? Commentaries help our people who are way smarter than me and the past have written and they looked at, they basically done all the homework for you. Now, you have to understand, also, that you got to read it, and think, pray and help ask God to help us to understand what the passage is saying. And the commentaries helped provide commentary to help us better understand, especially the difficult passages.

So as we move forward. Know this sometimes, when in doubt, it's okay to say, I don't know. Sometimes the Bible can be challenging. And sometimes we just have to say, I don't know. And the next step is, Well, where can I get some help? We can go to a commentary, a concordance. There are tools online that I'm going to show in a second, that can help provide that. Ask a pastor ask billers as somebody that you know, is better versed in the Bible, great opportunity to develop a relationship. Amen. So when in doubt, it's okay to say, I don't know.

Now, what passages of the Bible are you challenged by? Don't throw them all at once. But think about what are some of the passages that you are challenged by. And what I want you to do, the challenge for this week is choose a passage of the Bible. Apply the who, what, where, when, why and how, and use the resources that are listed on your notes below. And they're all online. Okay, so if you have a phone, a smartphone, you can easily go online and look up commentaries, look up passages, and that you will be able to be better equipped to understand and learn more about the Bible and God's message of salvation for you. Amen. So, okay, right here, Bible students Biblestudytools.com, and Biblehub.com. And if you want there is an Adventist commentary set that if you're very interested, let me know, I'll be it's not cheap. Unfortunately, we do have a commentary set here. So maybe if you're really dying, we can also get you to that as well. I know that was a lot that's trying to put three sermons thrown into one.

But my friends, I encourage you, take time to study the Word. wrestle with it. When there's things that you don't understand, do not give up. And where you don't know don't be afraid to ask for help. I'm always available. I want to encourage you, and I want to make sure that you best understand and also have a deeper understanding for God's Word, to be impacted in your life. Amen.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, Lord, You have given us a document, an ancient texts, written 1000s of years ago at some points. And Lord you have you desired to share with us who you are. But also you want your what you want for us in our lives. Help us Lord to not take these things for granted the fact that God we have this Bible where in other parts of the world, it's banned. We it's so easily accessible for us here in Downey, California. They will not take this book for granted. Help us Lord, as we read it, as we sometimes maybe will wrestle wrestle with it, but God may it also impact our lives that We might be better equipped to know who you are and also shape us, mold us to be the ambassadors and disciples you've called us to be. And with that, Lord, help us to be your faithful ambassadors bless this group. Thank you, Lord, You love us. And with that, we will say, everybody said, Amen. Thank you, Lord.

Grace and peace, everybody. Have a great week.