

# This We Teach: The Holy Scriptures (Part 1)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 17 July 2016

Preacher: Don Coleman

[ 0 : 00 ] We have, though, come this morning to the second of our five doctrinal statements.

We pleaded that part of it. Second, what we teach about the Holy Scriptures. That will be our focus this morning.

Third, what we teach about man. Fourth, what we teach about salvation, a very key doctrine. And then finally, what we teach about the church. So we're going to work our way through these step by step and so that we can hopefully understand these statements and understand these very key doctrines.

All right, so this morning we're ready for what we teach about the Holy Scriptures. And I would say to you that this is a key doctrine. Now, all of these are key. All these are important in that sense of the word key.

But this is a key doctrine and so key that I would even be tempted to say, and really not just tempted, I really believe this. So key is this doctrine, the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, that perhaps it should be listed first.

[ 1 : 38 ] And I say that because, not because the Bible is more important than God himself. You know, those liberals and moderates over the years have accused conservatives of worshiping the Bible rather than God.

They're not the truth. And so I'm not trying to elevate the printed word somehow above the importance of God himself. Though I might make the case that God and his word are equal.

But I say that perhaps we should have started with this one because what you believe about the Bible really is key to everything.

Key to everything you believe. And thinking about the other four doctrines of Scripture other than this one. What you believe about God.

What you believe about the Scripture is key, of course, to what you believe about God. What you believe about man. What you believe about salvation. What you believe about the church.

[ 2 : 43 ] Really everything depends upon your view of this book. What you believe about this book. As one man said, without the word of God, all we really have are holy hunches.

But we have more than that, don't we? We have the printed word of God. So the Bible is more than just a book, right? Book among many other good books. It's not even the best among all books.

It's more than a book. Because the Bible is God's word to us. It's his word. And so the Bible is God's word on everything that you and I need to know about those things that are the most important.

In fact, even beyond that. Even things that are of lesser importance. The Bible is an important book. It's God's word on these things. Actually, someone has kind of reduced the message of the Bible down to two primary things.

And though it's much more than this. I would agree. These two basic messages are in the Bible. Come and go.

[ 3 : 54 ] That's really about it. That is, come to God. Come to him through his son Jesus. And then go to the world with his message. Come and go.

And everything else, really, you could argue, serves to support these two messages to mankind.

Come and go. So, to get us started this morning, I want us to look at a passage of Scripture.

In fact, if you have your Bibles there with you, if you would turn to John chapter 17. John 17 and find verse 14. John 17 is a prayer.

A very long prayer. A lengthy prayer. A very famous prayer in the New Testament. It is the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have called it his high priestly prayer.

And I would agree with that. And I just want to read a portion of it to you this morning. And to get us started. Jesus is praying for his disciples in this prayer.

[ 5 : 00 ] Specifically, his apostles and their close associates, the disciples. But also, by extension, he is praying for all believers who will come after them.

He said, I pray not only for these you've given me, but all those who will believe because of their word. And their word, of course, is printed right here in our Scriptures.

So, he's really praying for us here today. All of us. All born-again believers. And I want you to listen, starting with verse 14. I have given them your word.

And the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by your truth.

[ 6 : 05 ] Your word is truth. Truth is what God's word is. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

And for their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, that is, these apostles alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

Their word. I'll just stop right there, though it would be good to go on. But you get the idea here.

What Jesus is praying. And that key phrase, and I'll bring it up again as we go along here.

Your word is truth. Your word is truth. You know, we're a Southern Baptist church. I shouldn't have to remind you of that.

Though I think in our day, there is kind of a, oh, I don't know, maybe if not an all-out anti-denominational kind of mindset. But also just maybe, you know, just not important.

[ 7 : 19 ] And maybe you've forgotten, some of you. We're a Southern Baptist church. We're part of the Southern Baptist convention. And that's good. But standing for the truth of God's word.

Standing for this book, God's holy word, has always been one of the main things among Southern Baptists. And not the main thing.

Though you can't really have anything else without standing upon the word of God. And so traditionally, as Southern Baptists, that's what we have done.

We've not focused so much on creeds as we've focused upon the word of God. And we have fought over the years tooth and nail to preserve the word of God.

And so, you know, some of you are old enough, I think, maybe to remember the battle for the Bible that waged in the SBC some years back. Quite a few years back.

[ 8 : 19 ] In fact, it really began all the way back to the early 1960s when Broadman Press, Broadman Press was the SBC publishing house.

Today it's called Holman. But Broadman Press, back in 1960s, early 1960s, they published a book by a professor by the name of Ralph Elliott.

You don't probably know his name. But at the time, he was a professor at a seminary very near here, Kansas City, Missouri. One of the six seminaries in our denomination, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

So they published the book of Ralph Elliott. And in his book, he wrote, among other things, that Adam and Eve were not real people. That is, they weren't historical people.

He wrote in his book that the flood in Genesis was only local and not worldwide. He also wrote in his book that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by natural causes.

[ 9 : 28 ] This came out in the early 1960s. Here's a professor who's a Southern Baptist, teaching at a Southern Baptist-funded seminary. And here is a publishing house owned by Southern Baptists publishing this book.

So it created a firestorm. And it just really kind of got started when in the later 1960s, in 1969, Broadman Press, again, the SBC publishing house, published the first volume, Genesis and Exodus, the first volume of the Broadman Bible Commentary.

You know, they still have those around somewhere. Kind of old. They've been replaced by the New American Commentary now. But this was a series of commentaries published by Southern Baptist, Southern Baptist Publishing House.

But in the Genesis Exodus volume, the author, G. Hinton Davis, denied the literal historical interpretation of the book of Genesis.

Basically, the first 11 chapters of the book of Genesis, he wrote was myth. It wasn't real.

[10:47] It didn't really happen. Spiritual value in those chapters in Genesis, but not historical. Not to be taken literally.

And he even denied that God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. And he wrote, would God, in fact, have made such a demand upon Abraham or anybody else?

My first answer is, well, that's what the Bible says. That's what the Bible says. But G. Hinton Davis, writing for Southern Baptists.

In a Southern Baptist commentary, his answer was, no. Indeed, what Christian or humane conscience could regard such a command as coming from God?

I don't deny that, you know, we have kind of a problem when we read about God commanding Abraham to sacrifice his only son.

[11:51] But I don't deny that he made that command. I just seek to understand his purpose for it. That's quite another thing to say that, well, this is what the Bible says, but God didn't really say that.

God didn't really do that. And so these two things really did ignite a firestorm among Southern Baptists. And it opened our eyes to the liberalism, theological liberalism, that had infiltrated our denomination.

But more egregiously, our seminaries, where pastors are trained. Young pastors are trained and then sent out to pastor Southern Baptist churches and so forth.

And so liberalism had infiltrated not only the seminaries, but also the boards of trustees for these seminaries, those who select the teachers, as well as some of the SBC leadership, and some of the larger churches and some of the larger cities within our denomination.

And so to make a lengthy story short, a method was devised, devised by conservatives, conservative leadership within our convention, a method devised by Paige Patterson, then president of Criswell Baptist College, Criswell College in Dallas, and a judge by the name of Paul Pressler.

[13:20] Maybe you remember those two names, Paige and Pressler. And so it was a very simple method, a method that focused on the power of the presidency of our denomination.

You know, every time the Southern Baptists meet each year, usually in July, the SBC convention, the messengers that are sent there from the churches will elect a president to serve for one year. And then traditionally, that president would serve a second year, second term. And so the presidency is important.

And this method identified that fact, that it is the presidency, the SBC president, who appoints people to the most powerful committee in our denomination, called the Committee on Committees, who in turn will name the members of the other powerful committees within the denomination, who in turn nominate trustees for all of our SBC seminaries, as well as other SBC institutions.

And so they discovered, they identified the fact that it all begins with the president of the convention. And so the strategy of the conservatives was to somehow get conservative presidents elected, and the goal was to elect conservative, Bible-believing presidents for at least ten consecutive years.

[14:51] Thinking that this, of course, would, you know, because that would begin to turn the tide. And so the strategy of the convention, as well as trustees of our seminaries, who would in turn put conservative, Bible-believing professors in our seminaries.

So this was the strategy. And so at the 1972 convention, held appropriately in the city where the Declaration of Independence was signed, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, messengers elected, probably at the time, for many years after, most popular pastor in our convention, Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church.

They elected him to be president of the SBC. And every year since, conservative, Bible-believing men have been elected to the SBC presidency, so far exceeding the ten-year goal that they had.

Now, on the side of the conservatives, that's my side, I hope that's your side, on the side of the conservatives, this all has been called the conservative resurgence.

You know, the desire to bring the SBC back to its historical roots, its conservative roots. Now, on the side of the liberals, it has been called the fundamentalist takeover.

[16:29] You see, quite a difference in terminology there. It depends on your perspective. But regardless, make no mistake about it, it was a battle over the Bible.

A battle over the Bible. A battle that, by the way, we won, though the war is still raging, okay? Battle is not the war.

Won that battle, but the battle, the war is still raging. And so at that landmark convention in 1972, when Adrian Rogers was elected president, he stood before the convention because he was asked the question if he would compromise in order to bring peace to the Southern Baptist Convention. Would he compromise, kind of take a middle road? And so he stood before the messengers at that convention, and he spoke these words. Adrian Rogers said, I'm willing to compromise about many things, but not the Word of God.

So far as getting together is concerned, we don't have to get together. The Southern Baptist Convention, as it is, does not have to survive.

[ 17 : 47 ] I don't have to be the pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church. I don't have to be loved by everyone. I don't even have to live. But I will not compromise on the Word of God.

Now that's history. And I would stand before you as your pastor, and I hope you already know this, you should know this, that I will not compromise on the Word of God.

And so what does your pastor believe about the Holy Scriptures? Well, the same as what we teach about the Holy Scriptures in our five doctrinal statements.

And so I want us to get to that this morning. Now I wish I could show it to you up here, but again, you can read these, read the statement online on our website, as well as, I think we still have some copies out here that you can look at.

But here's how it begins. Here's our statement on the Holy Scriptures. We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the full, inspired, and authoritative Word of God.

[ 19 : 14 ] That's how the statement begins. Now what are we saying? Well, some of this we've already covered when we were looking at the basic Christian beliefs, but the full, we teach the full.

It is the full Word of God. That is, it's complete. All 66 books constitute the full Word of God, down to every word.

And I say 66 books, no more, no less, okay? So if you happen to have one of those Bibles that has the Apocrypha in it, those are not part of the inspired text, okay?

Regardless of what our Catholic friends may say. The full, it's the full Word of God, the complete Word of God. Everything that we need is right here in this book.

Full Word of God. And it is the inspired Word of God. We've covered that ground too. That is, it is inspired, literally. God breathed, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore authoritative.

[ 20 : 26 ] So these three words. Full, it's the full. We believe that the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the full, inspired, and authoritative.

Now that's something we should not leave off. It's authoritative. I mean, if it is the full Word of God, if it is inspired by God, therefore being His Word, then it is a given, isn't it?

That it is authoritative for us. Authoritative. Next, we teach that the Word of God is an objective.

Now I want to take this slowly since I don't have it up here on the screen. Because each of these words are important and need explanation.

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation. Objective, propositional revelation.

[ 21 : 34 ] We'll come back to that here in a moment. Verbally inspired in every word. Absolutely inerrant. I mean, there's no errors.

In the original documents, we talked a little bit about that back when I was covering the essentials, the basic Christian beliefs.

Infallible and God-breathed. All right? Those are all very important words, very important concepts. Objective, propositional revelation.

Verbally inspired in every word. Absolutely inerrant. Infallible. God-breathed. Now let me just highlight a few of these. We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation.

Now what in the world does all that mean? Objective. The Word of God is objective truth. As opposed to, what would be the opposite of that?

[ 22 : 42 ] Subjective. Objective as opposed to subjective revelation or truth. Meaning what? That any given passage of Scripture does not mean what we say it means based upon any given situation.

Situations that are changing. Or based upon changing culture. Or based upon a mood. Or a state of feeling.

It's not subjective truth. That it can just mean what you want it to mean. And you can say, well this is what I, this is the truth for me.

And that might be the truth for you. And this might be the truth to you. It's not subjective based upon my own evaluation, the way I feel about it, or my own set of circumstances, or again, the changing of culture.

It is objective. God's Word is as objective as two plus two equals four. It always equals four.

[ 23 : 54 ] It can't just mean what you want it to mean. The answer can't be what you want it to be. Well I think I'd rather it be five. I like the number five. And it makes me feel better.

Now two plus two is always four. It's unalterable. It's objective truth. There's nothing subjective about mathematics. And therefore then, the Word of God is propositional.

These two go together. We have to understand these together. It's objective revelation. And therefore, the Word of God is propositional. As opposed to, and the term that's often used is relational.

I need to explain this. The Word of God is propositional as opposed to relational revelation. Some teach that the term revelation refers only to God speaking at any given moment.

God speaking to me today. Or in the present tense. So that is, in this view, revelation is a present event.

[ 25 : 16 ] Now follow me here. Because as I say these words, you're going to think, well, that sounds okay to me. But we have to consider the implication of this.

So in this view that Scripture is not propositional, rather it is personal or communal or relational, then revelation is simply defined as a present thing, a present event.

So revelation occurs then when God reveals Himself to a person in the present and calling upon that person to respond to Him.

That's when the Bible becomes revelation. You say, well, that kind of, sort of, sounds okay to me. But wait.

In this view, the Bible is nothing more, really, than simply a written record of others in ancient times who have had an experience with God.

[ 26 : 23 ] And they just simply wrote down their experience. That is, if revelation occurs when God speaks to a person at that time, then He spoke to the Bible authors at their time and they just wrote down their experience and so it was simply their experience, their relationship with God that constitutes the revelation.

Do you follow me there? And so the Bible can have errors in it. The Bible can be a fallible record because it's simply I'm the Apostle Paul and God has revealed Himself to me and I'm just simply writing down my experience.

And so there can be errors in it because it's, that doesn't matter, it's just the relationship that I have with God is the important thing. how God speaks to me at the time.

And so the Bible is a fallible record of God speaking to people in ancient times and then those people simply writing down the accounts of God's personal presence in their lives.

As one liberal theologian put it, he said, God does not give us information by communication, He gives us Himself in communion.

[ 27 : 51 ] Now think about this. God does not give us information about Himself, about His desires, about His plan, about anything. He does not give us information by communication through the written word.

He gives us Himself in communion. communion. And so, this theologian went on to write, so what is fundamentally revealed in the Bible is God Himself, not propositions about God or truth about God. This is the view that God's Word is relational revelation, that the Bible only becomes divine revelation when it speaks to me personally.

That's when God's Word is revealed, when God reveals Himself, when He speaks to me. And, obviously, that would be highly subjective, wouldn't it?

Well, I don't know about you, but this is what God said to me here in this passage. And so, you might say, well, I don't see that at all. Well, God spoke to you in a different way because revelation is subjective.

[ 29 : 04 ] Revelation is personal. It's relational. It's whatever God just simply speaks to you about at the time. That's so the Bible can have errors and it doesn't really matter, does it?

It doesn't really matter because it only becomes the Word of God when it speaks to me personally, relationally. That's not what we teach, not what I believe.

We teach that the Word of God is propositional revelation. It is God's absolute truth whether or not it speaks to me, whether or not I understand it, whether or not even I believe it.

It's God's Word regardless of what you believe or how you believe or how you interpret or whether it speaks to you, whether you get anyone fuzzy about it. It's God's Word if you never read it.

It is propositional truth. That's what we mean by propositional truth because it is God's revealed truth. It is God's speaking. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 13.

[ 30 : 19 ] I wish I could put it up there for you. You can write it down and look at it later but here's what Paul wrote. He said, when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, and this by the way before it was actually written down, when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the Word of men but as it is in truth the Word of God which also effectively works in you who believe.

So you see, the words of Scripture are the very words of God given by God to men written down by those men and it is propositional.

Romans 3.23 All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That's propositional. Whether you want to apply that to you, whether that even strikes you in the heart or whether you have any kind of feeling whatever about it, whether God even speaks to you through that is not the issue.

The truth is all have sinned. That's propositional. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Ezekiel chapter 18 verse 20, the soul who sins shall die. That's propositional. Objective truth, not subjective.

[ 31 : 49 ] You can't go to that passage and say, well, you know, that doesn't really mean anything to me, so that's not God speaking to me. You can't say that. Romans 6.23, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is these things. It is these things. God is love. God created all things. God did this. God is this. God wants this. God planned for this.

God sent Jesus. All of this is propositional truth. Objective proposition. These are propositional truths and really they are only relational, by the way, when you believe them.

Okay? I mean, relationship is part of it. It's the outcome, the ultimate desired outcome of God's propositional truth, that you would believe it as God's truth and obey it.

Then comes the relational, see? Understand. You know, what we're talking about here is really just one of the many ways that liberal scholars have tried to destroy the Word of God, the written Word of God, the Bible.

[ 33 : 08 ] I like what Adrian Rogers used to say. I really liked about most everything he said, but he used to say, for years, liberal theologians have tried to preach the Bible's funeral, but the corpse has outlived the pallbearers.

I love that. I love that. Well, there's something else. We teach that the Word of God is verbally inspired, meaning down to the individual words.

We've talked about that already. That's why I focus so much on the words in my preaching. Not only in my study of Scripture, but in my proclamation of the meaning of a certain passage, we get down to the very words because they are inspired.

And therefore, absolutely inerrant, inerrant in the original documents. Okay? As one preacher put it, every now and then, science will disagree with some part of the biblical record.

We know that's true, don't we? But he said, just give them time and maybe they'll catch up. I like that too. And also, it's infallible. So all of these things, objective, propositional revelation, verbally inspired, down to the very words, absolutely inerrant, without error, and infallible.

[ 34 : 37 ] Infallible sounds very much like inerrant, but it means more than just without error. It means it never fails in its purpose, never fails in that, never fails in what it says, never fails in its promises to us.

You can trust it. It's infallible. It really, apart from God himself and God and his word are the same, it is the only infallible thing we have in this world.

None of us are infallible. I'm not infallible. No preacher is. That's why it's so important we preach God's word. It's the only infallible thing.

And it is God breathed, which is really the same thing as we would say inspired. God breathed.

Let me just throw out a few passages of Scripture here. 2 Timothy 3.16, which we keep going back to, and you can't talk about the word of God and the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures without referring to 2 Timothy 3.16 somewhere along the way, but Paul wrote all Scripture, all written word, is given by inspiration of God.

[ 35 : 53 ] That is, it's God breathed and is profitable. Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Proverbs 30 and verse 5.

Every word of God is pure, meaning flawless. Every word, how more plain could it be put? Psalm 119 verse 89. Forever, O Lord, your word is settled. That is, it's firmly fixed in heaven. So it ought to be firmly fixed with us here on this earth, shouldn't it be? Matthew 24.35, heaven and earth will pass away.

That is, everything that's been created is going to one day pass away, but my words will not pass away. John 10.35, the Scripture cannot be broken.

[ 36 : 57 ] I don't mean physically broken, like if I could just somehow tear this, which I can't. That means the truth of it can't be broken.

It can't be broken down. It can't be proved incorrect. It can't be broken. John 17.17, I read this at the outset. Your word is true.

That, by the way, is propositional. Certainly it's objective. There's nothing subjective about that. He didn't say your word might be truth here and there in certain places.

No, Jesus said your word is truth. That means both sides are equal. Word, truth, truth, word. Word is truth.

Truth is word, your word. It is what it is. It's truth. Romans 3.4, let God be true and every man a liar. Hebrews 6.18, it is impossible for God to lie.

[ 38 : 01 ] And we could go on and on and on with passages in the Bible that teach the nature, the character of the Holy Scriptures.

So, if as I believe and as we teach, the word of God, the Bible, all of it, is objective, propositional revelation, verbally inspired, down to every word, absolutely inerrant, infallible, completely trustworthy, and all of it God breathed, if that's true, and it is true, then what is the only right method of interpreting its meaning?

How do we interpret its meaning? I mean, is it just however it grabs you at the time? With some people, that's just about as far as their method of Bible study and Bible interpretation goes.

You know, they just read a little snippet here, snippet there, and, you know, whatever brings warm fuzzy, you know. And if it doesn't, then they go on.

I mean, is that the right method? Obviously not. It's not just how it grabs you or whatever comes to your mind when you read it. Kind of like the illustration of the man who was going through a really difficult time in his life, needed some answers, and he was struggling, and so he decided that he would turn to the Bible for the answer, but he had never really been much of a Bible studier, and so he decided, well, I'll just take the Bible, put it in my hand, hold it out here, and then I'll close my eyes and just let it open wherever it opens, and then without looking, just take my finger and touch the passage, and that'll be the passage God wants me to read, and this will be God speaking to me to tell me what I need to do.

[ 39 : 57 ] I don't know some of you have heard this before. And so he decided, that's what I'll do, and here's how it turned out. So he put the Bible out there and let it just open up, and he put his finger on the passage, and he looked at the passage, and it was Matthew 27, verse 5, then Judas threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and went out and hanged himself.

And so because, you know, obviously he's thinking, I don't really want to do that, and how can I be sure that I got it right the first time? So he tried it again. Put it out there, let it open up, put his finger down on the page, and he looked at it, and it was at John chapter 13, verse 27, then Jesus said unto him, what thou doest, do quickly.

Yeah, it's crazy, isn't it? I mean, absolutely nuts. I mean, surely no one in their right mind would use that kind of approach or that kind of method to discovering God's will in his word.

Right? Any of you ever tried that before? I bet you there's someone in here who did. Yet, I would say to you, even though, obviously, that's a crazy method.

The way many people approach the study of God's word is just about as ridiculous and dangerous and even leading to the point of blasphemy and heresy.

[ 41 : 36 ] prophecy. So, what is the right approach to discovering the meaning of Scripture? Well, this is contained in our doctrinal statement. We teach the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture.

That sounds like something out of a seminary course. In fact, it is. I had this in seminary, these terms. Literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture.

Now, what exactly is that? Literal, grammatical, historical. What is that? Well, think of it this way.

Literal means the plain, ordinary meaning of the words or phrases of Scripture.

So, you're reading a passage of Scripture Scripture. And what does it plainly say? You know, sometimes we think we've got to look underneath there and find some hidden meaning.

In fact, that's been a tradition by many really since the first century of the church. There have been two schools of thought, you know, that have evolved among the church, in the church, in the first several centuries.

[ 42 : 57 ] One approach was this kind of figurative, symbolic approach, that really we look at Scripture and know that there's some hidden meaning behind it. The only problem is only the preachers could tell you what the hidden meaning was.

The other approach was to take a literal approach, and that actually, the literal, to take the Bible, to interpret it literally is, when it comes to Bible interpretation, that's rule number one.

What does it plainly say? And so, unless otherwise stated, and sometimes the Bible clearly states otherwise, unless otherwise stated, we're to take it as literal.

What the Bible says, we're to take it literally, as opposed to symbolic, or figurative, or metaphorical, or hyperbole. I mean, those things do exist in Scripture.

Figures of speech, symbols that represent something else. But, in Scripture, when it means to be figurative and symbolic, you can tell from the text.

[ 44 : 10 ] You know from the text. But, unless otherwise stated, here's rule number one. Interpret the Bible literally. The plain, obvious, on the front, meaning of the passage.

Literal. grammatical is the second term. And that just simply means following the laws of grammar. This is getting down to the very words.

Just follow the laws of grammar. And we can do that even if you don't know Greek and Hebrew.

Okay? I would say to you, it'd be important for you to make sure you do your studying from a Bible that is a literal translation.

There are many versions of the Bible that we know that the Bible translators have taken this literal, grammatical, historical approach.

And so, the grammar of the Greek word comes out in the English translation. So, you can trust that.

[ 45 : 21 ] So, if a word is clearly future tense, you can tell that from reading. You don't have to be a grammarian to know that. But it's important to pay attention to the grammar.

So, we take the literal grammatical approach. You can also use good commentaries. And by the way, if you are looking for a translation, a version of the Bible that is perhaps more literal than others, then actually King James would be listed with the literal translations.

New King James, of course, as well. New American Standard, English Standard, ESV. I know some of you have the NIV, and I have been critical of the NIV over the years.

It's not a literal translation. It's what's called a dynamic equivalent. That is, where a literal translation, the translators wanted to translate word for word, word from the Hebrew to the English, word from Greek to the English, word for word translation, the dynamical equivalent versions are thought for thought, concept for concept.

So they take the thought, the concept in Scripture, and they make sure they, you know, do justice in the English translation. So that's not a literal translation. NIV would be one of those, the living translation, and paraphrases like that.

[ 46 : 58 ] So nothing wrong with having some of those Bibles, but when it comes to Bible study, I recommend that you get a version that's a more literal translation. And you can use word studies and commentaries, if they're good theologically conservative, commentaries to discover these things.

So we're talking about literal, grammatical, and then historical. You say, well, do I have to be a student of history? Well, in a sense, yes.

Who's history? The Bible's history. We're to understand Scripture, interpret Scripture based upon the history, historical context in which it was written. Because we discover meaning by

understanding the historical context in which the Scripture was written.

And so the meaning of the author's words at the time that he wrote them helps us understand the meaning. Not words as they mean today. I mean, just look what we've done with the word gay. Words change. Meanings change. Language is living. And so what it meant in ancient times might be different from what it means in our current culture.

[ 48 : 14 ] So we need to understand the meaning of words when they were written. And not only what the author thought they meant, but also what he knew his readers would understand when they read those words and read those Scriptures.

So the historical and also understanding the historical times of the author and those of the original readers. You know, their circumstances of life, their culture, their worldview, view, and so forth. What they would have understood it to mean when they first read it. This is the historical approach. John Stotts wrote a book a number of years ago, *Between Two Worlds*, and it's really a must-read for those who are teachers of God's Word and preachers, because he makes the point that really, as preachers and teachers, we have to live in two worlds.

The world of the Bible, the world of our day, current culture. And we have to be true to the Bible and not change its meaning to fit our world today, but we do have to find ways to apply the world of the Bible to the world of our day.

So it's quite a job to do that. But we don't change Scripture in order to make it relevant for our day today, in our culture today. It's not, you know, it's not that we make the Bible relevant.

[ 49 : 41 ] The Bible makes us relevant. But we have to understand it in its historical context. Here's an example that we put in our doctrinal statement, which affirms the belief, that is this literal, grammatical, historical approach, affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days.

Part of our statement. Some of you may not agree with that. And yet, if we take this approach to Scripture, that's the only conclusion we can come to. That God created the heavens and the earth in six literal 24-hour days.

Genesis 1.31, so the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Not the sixth age. age, as in some undefinable time period, but the sixth day.

That's what Scripture says. Nobody can deny that. Exodus 31.17, in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth. All right, so let's just apply this.

Literal, God completed the creation on the sixth day. Are we to take that literally or to take it figuratively? Well, in the absence of any statement to the contrary in Scripture, and there is no statement to the contrary, we're to take that literally.

[ 51 : 12 ] Six days. Whether we can explain that or whether that lines up with our view of science or whatever, it doesn't make any difference. It's what God's Word said. Do we believe it or do we not? God created everything in six days.

That's what Exodus 31.17 says, in six days. Nothing in the passage suggests anything to the contrary. How about grammatical?

Well, the word day, what does it mean? Well, what did it mean when the author wrote it? It meant a 24 hour period of time.

That's what the original readers would have understood. But, you know, what we do and scholars today do, we kind of want to put our thinking and our science and all those things back into the ancient record and make it mean what we want it to mean today.

But it meant what it meant when it was written and to take it grammatically, day means day. And the prepositional phrase that's there in Exodus 31.17, in six days, in six days refers to an activity that is accomplished within a set amount of time.

[ 52 : 30 ] That's just looking at it grammatically. And then how about historically? Well, again, to the Hebrew reader, evening and morning, that's an odd way to put it.

We wouldn't put it that way today. That's not how we would state the fact. But this is how the author of Genesis, Moses, wrote it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, evening and morning, that constituted the day.

And the Hebrew reader would have understood that. Evening and morning, evening, a period of darkness, morning, a period of light, commencing of a period of light, a period of dark, a period of light, that makes 24 hours.

Every 24-hour day is made up of a period of darkness, a period of light. And, in fact, all throughout the creation account in Genesis 1, evening and morning were the first day, verse 5, evening and morning were the second day, verse 8, evening and morning were the third day, verse 13, and so forth, and so forth, though you get to verse 31, evening and morning were the sixth day. Six 24-hour periods of time, if you're going to interpret the Bible according to the literal, grammatical, historical approach, which I think is the right way, because it's God's Word. [ 53 : 49 ] Word. It's God's Word. So you can't just make the Bible say and mean whatever you want it to say and mean, right?

You can't do that. You know, to fit with your philosophy, or to reconcile with your science, what you've been taught in school.

Or you can't just make it say what you want it to say to line up with your own personal conclusions, and so you just approach the Scripture by your own set conclusion about things and make it line up with your ideas and your thoughts and the thoughts of others.

It means what God intended for it to mean, not what you want it to mean. And you can't just read it and read it until you start to understand it the way you want to understand it.

You can't just twist it and bend it to conform to your own desires and so forth. Kind of like the hobo I heard about. Some guy asked me, he said, you know, you just walk around and travel around, you don't have any home, and how do you know where you're going?

[ 55 : 15 ] Which way, how do you decide which way you're going? He said, well, I have a special stick that I carry with me in my backpack. And he said, so when I get to a fork in the road, I've got to decide which way to go, so I throw the stick up in the air, and when it lands on the ground, whichever way it's pointing, that's the way I go.

And he said, sometimes I have to throw it up a dozen times before it points the right way. That's how some people approach Scripture. You know, if they don't like what it says, then they either go on and forget about it, or they keep reading it, and rereading it, and taking it out of its context, until it lines up with what they wanted to say.

And that is no good. It means what it means, period. That's what we teach.

That's what I believe. The Holy Scriptures. I love this poem, and I'll close with it.

Though the cover is worn, and the pages are torn, and though places bear traces of tears, yet more precious than gold, is the book worn and old, that can shatter and scatter my fears.

[ 56 : 45 ] When I prayerfully look in this precious old book, many pleasures and treasures I see, many tokens of love from the Father above, who is nearest and dearest to me.

This old book is my guide, tis a friend by my side. It will lighten and brighten my way. And each promise I find soothes and gladdens my mind as I read it and heed it today.

Thank you.