

JOHN 12:9-11
DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!
THE BIBLE
PART 2

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 12 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

Last time in our study we dealt with *OUR NATION* in part 1 of our study – ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

And we clearly saw how the things that this nation was built upon, what it was about, is being taken away as they are destroying the evidence that we were a Christian nation!

And we spent a lot of time looking at what our Founding Father's said in regard to their faith. We saw how the Ivy League Schools were Christian Schools to train men to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

If that is true, and we saw that it was, what happened?

They destroyed the evidence or more accurately, they ignored the evidence and they spoke loudly and boldly and got people to believe that this was never a Christian nation.

This morning we are going to continue to look at how they are trying to destroy the evidence but this time we are going to look at how they are trying to destroy – ***THE BIBLE!***

If you remember from our previous studies here in John, we have seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. That was back in John chapter 11.

Now, as we come to John chapter 12 we see that we are six days before the Passover, the final Passover that Jesus would share with His men before He went to the cross to be crucified.

And there, at the home of Simon, the ex-leper, he has a meal for Jesus. And Mary, Martha and Lazarus are also at this meal.

And it is here that we see Mary anoint the head of Jesus with oil as well as His feet and then she wiped His feet with her hair.

It is out of that we will be picking up our study this morning as we are in Part 2 of our study – ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

And, as we looked at last time and we will review this time, the two main points here are as follows.

LAZARUS – THE EVIDENCE – JOHN 12:9

DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE – JOHN 12:10-11

OUR NATION

THE BIBLE

CHRISTIANS

Before we get to our text this morning, let me share this with you and I am sure it will stir up a boatload of emotions. This is what this article said about the Bible being relevant in our day. We are told,

Everyone knows that our society caters to the whim of our younger generations who have the innate intellectual ability and astute discernment to announce to the rest of the world what is ‘cool’.

But why is it that the same people who tell us the Bible is irrelevant are the same people who tell us our clothes are out of style?

It must be because everyone also knows that every eighteen-year-old knows everything.

Yet after I set my pious hat and holier-than-thou necktie aside, I would have to agree with the children. The Bible is not relevant.

It is totally irrelevant to starting a garage band. It provides no input on how low to wear your pants and is void of butchered English.

It doesn't understand the carbon footprint, does not have an rss feed, and is not in movie form. It could not be very important if it does not come through a screen of some kind.

Young people are not the only people who think the Bible is irrelevant. Sometimes their parents and grandparents also think so.

And if I think twice about it, I would agree with them too. After all, how many recipes can you find in the Bible?

It must be outdated if it thinks men and women should submit to anything except a prenuptial agreement (Eph 5:21).

The only horsepower it contains are the four horsemen of the apocalypse, which I suppose are relevant to Notre Dame.

Yet not one time does it mention Jesus spending quality time tossing the pigskin back and forth with his disciples. Even though in Jewish circles they would most likely have tossed a sheepskin no doubt.

By now you know the Bible is useless at providing good jokes unless you're talking about the one with the rabbi and the priest.

All in all, the Bible is pretty much totally out of touch with what is deemed important today.

All it contains are divine answers to age old questions such as: “what is our purpose?”; “why are we here?”; “who is God?”; “how do I know right and wrong?”; “why do bad things happen?”

Unless you want the truth about facing your Maker in judgement of right and wrong then the Bible is no help (Rom 2:16).

Unless your faced with family strife, guilt, hopelessness, sin, injustice, or death then the Bible is of no relief (Rom 3:23, 6:23).

But, of course, that is all irrelevant especially to eighteen-year-olds.

- <https://bit.ly/3n5jT9K>

Of course the Bible is relevant for the past, the present and for the future. And we will see this morning, even though many are trying to ***DESTROY THE EVIDENCE FOR THE BIBLE***, we can trust it from cover to cover!

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in John chapter 12, beginning in verse 9 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic –

DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!

JOHN 12

VERSE 9

As we saw last time, word gets out that Lazarus is at Simon the ex-leper’s house, and many want to see this man who was raised from the dead.

You see, he was an example of what God can do. He can take someone who is not only physically dead, like Lazarus and bring Him back to life. But He can take someone who is spiritually dead and make Him alive again in Christ.

So we see here – ***LAZARUS – THE EVIDENCE!***

What is interesting to me is that we have no words from Lazarus that John has written down for us. I am sure he spoke, but that is not the issue here and I think the Holy Spirit is showing us the importance of our witness before people.

Yes, “**... faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**” (Romans 10:17)
But it does not end there. If our walk, if our witness of the things we do does not match up with the things we are saying, then people won't listen!

So Lazarus was a problem for the Jewish religious leaders because his life showed that Jesus is Almighty God and they refused to accept that.

So what do they do to try and stop this growing following of Jesus? It is what people do today – ***DESTROY THE EVIDENCE!***

VERSES 10-11

Isn't it amazing at the number of Christians that have been put to death by very religious people who were thinking they were doing what was right by destroying the evidence or the witness of Christians! We will talk more about that next time.

But that is what we see here. For these Jewish religious leaders, having Lazarus around was too much and thus, to get rid of the evidence they want him dead. Sounds like the Mafia and in a sense, by what they were doing, they were no different.

Both ***DESTROYED THE EVIDENCE*** that could have proved them wrong or could have gotten them in trouble with the law!

This morning I want to focus on an area of our faith that has been attacked so much and that is the Bible.

Why is there such an attack against the Bible?

Because, if you show that the Bible is wrong then you show that Christianity has no legs to stand upon. You see, our faith is built upon the Word of God. Yes, it is upon Jesus our Savior but the information we have about our condition, sinners, and who God is and what He has done to set us free from the bondage of sin is in the Bible. But if the Bible is wrong or we can't trust it, then why do we believe in a Savior to save us from our sins?

Make no mistake folks, they are ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE*** and making Christians disbelieve what the Bible has to say!

How are they accomplishing this?

First, by disinformation. They will tell you that there was never this person in the Bible or that person and it will be in a magazine on the front cover. And then, when they find the evidence, the correction is made in a tiny part of the magazine, no big headlines, and not front page.

They will tell you that because you don't accept the LGBTQ and whatever else they want to put in there, that you hate them, and didn't Jesus say we are to love people?

Just because I don't agree with what you are saying doesn't mean I hate you. And for those involved in the LGBTQ lifestyle, I don't hate them.

The thing that differentiates me from those who accept this lifestyle is that I do love them and that is why I am sharing Jesus with them. You see, He wants to set them free from the bondage of sin that they are in!

If you truly love someone you will speak forth the truth to them. And if you hate them or don't love them you will ignore what they are doing or even encourage them in what they are doing, even though it may hurt them.

We also have pastors and leaders who are putting down the Bible, saying it is just a bunch of stories that have a spiritual meaning, but they never really happened, and we have to interpret what it means to us today in the twenty-first century!

And I am sure that there is much more out there but keep in mind, this attack on the Word of God hasn't changed from the beginning and it does not need to change.

Why is that?

Because it worked in the Garden of Eden, and it continues to work today, so why does Satan have to change? He doesn't and he really hasn't!

Remember what Satan said to Eve, “**... Has God indeed said ...**” Genesis 3:1.

Satan challenged the Word of God and like I have said, he continues to do that today and he has many workers who are saying those same words, “**... Has God indeed said ...**”

Let me show you what I mean in an article from 2020, just a few years back.

We are told,

Many skeptics have challenged that the Scriptures merely provide modern readers with myths and literary fictions from the ancient world.

Upon this basis, they deny the Bible's truth claims and reject the need for personal faith. Often these attacks against the Bible's historical reliability are published just before major Jewish or Christian holidays. So much for multi-cultural sensitivity!

One front-page story in the *Los Angeles Times* was titled "***Doubting the Story of Exodus.***" It featured the modern Conservative rabbi, David Wolpe of Sinai Temple in Westwood, California, as he shared his skepticism about the Bible's historical claims in his pre-Passover sermon. "***The truth is that virtually every modern archeologist who has investigated the story of Exodus agrees that the way the Bible describes the Exodus is not the way it happened, if it happened at all.***" What a strange way to say, "***Happy Passover!***"

Unsurprisingly, *Newsweek*, notorious for its hypercritical views of evangelical faith, greeted the season with a less than faith-inspiring cover story. "***Rethinking the Resurrection***" favorably cited German New Testament scholar Gerd Ludemann, who called the historical claims to Jesus' bodily resurrection "***'an empty formula' that must be rejected by anyone holding a 'scientific world view.'***" The author of the article readily included the scholar's opinion that "***Jesus' body 'rotted away' in the tomb.***" ***Happy Easter!***

These attacks against the Bible's historical value are nothing new, and they won't be going away anytime soon. We can expect similar seasons' greetings from the History Channel, the Public Broadcasting System, and other "educational" outlets.

But the real problem is that most of these ***historical*** claims are aimed at eliminating the more important ***religious*** truth claims made in the Scriptures. If the Bible's historical claims are not true, it would be right to doubt its religious ones.

Paul, the first-century rabbi and apostle, cautioned believers at Corinth, *“If the Messiah has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, and your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised the Messiah, whom He did not raise,”* (1 Corinthians 15:14-15).

One could similarly say that if the Exodus did not occur, our Passover-informed faith in the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is in vain.

Or, as George Ramsey similarly questioned regarding the biblical account of Joshua’s conquest, *“If Jericho be not razed, is our faith in vain?”*

Obviously, the implications for our faith are enormous if we concede to popular detractions from the Bible’s historical reliability.

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Exactly. Here’s the thing. Jesus believed the Word of God and He took it all the way back to the story of Genesis as He spoke to the Jewish religious leaders. Do you remember what He said to them?

He said, **“... ‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” ...”** Matthew 19:4. He believed in Adam and Eve, and He should, He created them!

So if Jesus believed that the Bible is the Word of God, from Genesis onward, who am I to say it is not true? I would be a fool!

I want to take some time and look at the evidence that we have to show you that the Bible is the Word of God, and we can trust it from Genesis through the book of Revelation.

Think about the Bible and what we have before us. You see, *“No other book is like the Bible. It was written by 40 men from all walks of life - kings, priests, prophets, fishermen, and farmers - over a period of 1,600 years (1500 BC to AD 100). Some writers were highly educated, like Moses and the apostle Paul, while others had no formal education. Yet, more than 3,000 times these men claimed what they wrote came directly from God.”*

In fact, in the Old Testament they spoke of what they wrote as being the very words of God over 3800 times!

And the New Testament quotes the Old Testament that it is the word of God some 320 times, and it refers to it at least 1,000 times!

But what about the accuracy of the Old Testament? It was written a long time ago and can we really trust it? I mean, think about it. How those events were written down and then given from one person to another, they can't be accurate, can they?

You bet the Bible is accurate, and I hope you can clearly see, that in spite of those who are trying to get us to reject that authority of the Bible, we can trust it 100%!

Ever since Darwin and his theory, not fact, of evolution, the accounts of Genesis have been in question and many have come to believe that they are just stories, they were not real.

So let's start our investigation with the book of Genesis and listen to what Professor Albright has to say regarding the table of nations found in Genesis chapter 10.

He says that, *“It stands absolutely alone in ancient literature without a remote parallel even among the Greeks. . . . ‘The Table of Nations’ remains an astonishingly accurate document. . . (it) shows such remarkably ‘modern’ understanding of the ethnic and linguistic situation in the modern world, in spite of all its complexity, that scholars never fail to be impressed with the author’s knowledge of the subject.”*

We should not be surprised; the author is God!

Now we have the so-called Higher Critics, and they tell us that Genesis could not have been written by Moses, for writing was not yet established yet. Thus, this information, especially the first 11 chapters of Genesis, was derived from myths and the ancient Babylonians.

But, Ralph Linton, an evolutionary anthropologist admits, “*Writing appears almost simultaneously some 5000 - 6000 years ago in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus Valley.*”

Notice, he is not trying to support the Bible, he is an evolutionist and thus does not believe in the six literal days of Creation and yet, he is substantiating for us that there was writing during the time of Moses. That means that Moses could have easily written the book of Genesis, as well as the rest of the Pentateuch.

Now I like to go to an even higher source to substantiate that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. You see, Jesus tells us that Moses not only wrote Genesis, but the Law of Moses, the Torah in the Hebrew, which consisted of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, which we call the Pentateuch.

In Luke chapter 24, Jesus said, “**And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. . . . These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.**” Luke 24:27, 44.

In regard to evidence disproving the Bible, I like the way that Nelson Gluek puts it. He wrote, ***“As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”***

There are those who believe the oldest parts of the Bible were written during Israel’s captivity in Babylon, I have some bad news for you, that is wrong!

Back in 1979 Israeli archaeologist Gabriel Barkay found two tiny silver scrolls inside a tomb in Jerusalem. They were dated around 600 B. C., shortly before the destruction of Solomon’s Temple and the deportation of the Southern Kingdom of Judah to Babylon. As they carefully unrolled the scrolls at a museum in Israel, they found a benediction from the book of Numbers etched into their surface. Thus, parts of the Old Testament were written and copied long before their exile in Babylon. And you don’t hear that because they are – ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

In 1990 Frank Yurco, an Egyptologist at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, discovered these writings on a stele, which is an upright stone slab or pillar engraved with an inscription or design.

On this stele there is a description of a military victory by the Pharaoh Merneptah. It reads, ***“Israel is laid waste.”***

This stele is dated 1207 B. C. and it tells us that the Israelites were a distinct population more than 3,000 years ago, and not just because the Bible tells us so!

And also note that it is not the land of Palestine, but Israel. How sad it is to see maps in our Bible speak of the land of Israel as Palestine and even many commentators speak of the land being Palestine. It is Israel!

And you don't hear that because they are – ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

In 1993 Avraham Biran of Hebrew College - Jewish Institute of Religion and Joseph Naveh of the Hebrew University, announced they had found an inscription bearing the phrases ***“House of David” and “King of Israel.”***

Interestingly enough the writing was dated to the 9th century B. C., only a century after David's reign. Thus, it is hard to defend the skeptic's claim that King David never existed, for here is proof! And you don't hear that because they are – ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

Again, I understand those who say that there has to be errors over thousands of years of transmission.

But we also have to understand how meticulous the writers were in copying the various Old Testament Scriptures.

Listen to what the First-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus recorded regarding the reverence they had for the Scriptures. He said, ***“We have given practical proof of our reverence of our own Scriptures. For, although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable; and it is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and if need be, cheerfully die for them. Time and time again ere (before) now the sight has been witnessed of prisoners enduring tortures and death in every form in the theaters, rather than utter a single word against the laws and the allied (associated) documents.”***

Thus, throughout the centuries the Jewish scribes took great care in copying the Scriptures, for they believed they were copying God's Word.

Because of that, William F. Albright, dean of American archaeologists, said, *“We may rest assured that the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible . . . has been preserved with an accuracy perhaps unparalleled in any other New Eastern literature.”*

Now the oldest complete manuscript of the Old Testament we had came from 916 A. D. That is some 1400 years after it was written, and many argued that it had to be unreliable since all that time has passed from the original writings to the manuscript of 916 A. D.

That was until 1947 when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.

The Dead Sea Scrolls is the term that is used of the manuscripts that were discovered in 1947 in caves some 500 yards from the Dead Sea, in the area known as Qumran, along the Northwestern shore of the Dead Sea.

The story goes that back in 1947 a shepherd boy was herding his goats when one of them got lost in this area. And this Arab shepherd boy named Mohammed was looking for this stray goat in the Judean wilderness when he tossed a rock into the air. When the rock landed it fell into a cave and broke some pottery that was in this cave. In hearing the breaking of the pottery, it raised his curiosity, and he went into this cave, which is now called cave number 1, and to his surprise he found jars filled with ancient scrolls, which lead to the search for other caves that nearly lasted a decade, once word got out.

And during that time, they found 11 caves producing over 800 scrolls and scroll fragments written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, covering a time period of almost 1000 years.

They found all the books of the Bible, the Old Testamen, except one. The only book that was not found was the book of Esther.

Now as they analyzed these scrolls, by using carbon dating methods, it showed that most of them were written between 100 B. C. and 68 A. D.

And the reason that the Dead Sea Scrolls are so important to us is what was discovered in cave number 1.

In this cave where two scrolls of Isaiah. One damaged, but the other one was complete, along with other scrolls.

This 24-foot leather scroll of Isaiah could tell us the accuracy of the text transmission over a 1000-year period. You see, this scroll of Isaiah dates back to 100 years before Christ and the next closest text we have dates all the way back to 916 A. D.!

The fascinating thing about this is you can go to Israel today, and visit the museum called the Shrine of the Book, which holds this priceless Biblical manuscript, and if you were able to read Hebrew, you would discover your New King James Bible's reading of Isaiah is almost identical to this text that is over 2000 years old! There is no major difference between the two.

Imagine that. The book of Isaiah has 66 chapters, 1292 verses, 37,044 words, and the integrity of the text has held up all these years for over 1000 years between those two manuscripts.

According to Norman Geisler and William Nix, in their book **A General Introduction to the Bible**, they said, **“Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there are only seventeen letters in question. Ten of those letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions. The remaining three letters comprise the word ‘light’ which is added in verse 11, and does not affect the meaning greatly . . . Thus, in one chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission - and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage.”**

After comparing the entire Isaiah manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls with the present Hebrew text of Isaiah, Old Testament scholar Gleason L. Archer concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls ***“Prove to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”***

Not bad when you consider they did not have computers, spell-checking, and-so-on, as we have today.

If you had any doubt of the accuracy of the Old Testament, then the Dead Sea Scrolls should help clear that matter up right away, as we have seen. Yes, we don't have any of the original manuscripts of the Old or the New Testament but looking at the various texts it shows how accurately they were copied and passed on.

As the renowned archaeologist William F. Albright has said, ***“There can be no doubt that Archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition.”***

And, archaeologist John Elder, offers a fitting conclusion to the issue of the Old Testament's reliability. He said, **“It is not too much to say that it was the rise of the science of archeology that broke the deadlock between historians and the orthodox Christian. Little by little, one city after another, one civilization after another, one culture after another, whose memories were enshrined only in the Bible, were restored to their proper places in ancient history by the studies of archaeologists. . . . The over-all result is indisputable. Forgotten cities have been found, the handiwork of vanished peoples has reappeared, contemporary records of Biblical events have been unearthed and the uniqueness of Biblical revelation has been emphasized by contrast and comparison to the newly understood religions of ancient peoples. *Nowhere has archaeological discovery refuted the Bible as history.*”**

And we can spend more time looking at the accuracy of the Old Testament, but if this is not enough for you, then nothing will be enough.

Let me move on to the New Testament because, once again, that is being challenged – **“Has God indeed said.”**

Let me ask you a question.

Why are so many people against the Bible and what it has to say? Why do they try to negate the Bible as being accurate in what it says?

Because, as I have said, man wants to sin and he does not want a Savior he wants to indulge in all kinds of evil things because he thinks it will satisfy the longing in his heart, but only God can do that.

Let me show you what I mean.

Peter Gomes, who is a gay minister, wrote a book called, *“The Good Book.”*

From the title you think that this would be good, in support for what the Bible says but again, he is a gay minister and that should be a red flag right there where he is going.

You see, in a short paraphrase of this book we read, *“After tracing the Scriptures’ history and addressing basic questions (‘What can be believed about the Bible?’), this eloquent preacher tells us what the good book really says about racial equality, women’s rights, and homosexuality, too often, he observes, ‘The battle for the Bible . . . is really the battle for the prevailing culture.’”*

The writer says that *“Gomes helps us reconcile this holy text with what we know of ourselves and our world, interpreting its parables for a new generation and reclaiming its wisdom for those who would use it as a ‘moral thesaurus.’”*

If you listen to what is being said you can clearly see that God did not get it completely right and so we must interpret what God is saying, what He means to fit the culture we are living in today.

Make no mistake about it, he is telling us that each generation must interpret the Bible according to what is taking place in a society of that time.

Adultery, homosexuality, which was seen as a sin against God some 60 years ago and yet today, it is accepted as a normal lifestyle. Thus, we must update our interpretation of the Bible to fit in with the morals of our time.

No, we don’t need to update what the Bible is saying or reinterpret it to fit what we want to do. We need to repent and get right with God! But again – ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

Another writer and ex-pastor, Rob Bell, an Emerging Church leader also downplays what God's Word has to say. He makes people question what they believe by using slick videos and manipulating words. This is from Rob Bell's book, *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith*.

He wrote,

"[The Bible] has to be interpreted. And if it isn't interpreted, then it can't be put into action. So if we are serious about following God, then we have to interpret the Bible. It is not possible to simply do what the Bible says. We must first make decisions about what it means at this time, in this place, for these people."

- Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith*

There is the danger. When we begin to make decisions on what the Bible means instead of accepting it, believing it and applying it to our lives, we are headed for disaster!

When Jesus said, "... 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" (John 14:6) what does that mean?

It is very simple. He is the only way to the Father, there is no other way except through Him. Now you can reinterpret that any way you want, but it doesn't change the facts.

I can believe $2 + 2 = 8$ but it is not true!

The Bible is our guidebook through life and if we are wise, we will listen and follow our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ!

If we reject what God has said in His Word, if we alter what God has said in His Word, if we redefine what God has said in His Word, then we are going to be off course. And isn't that what we see in America today, a ship that has lost its direction and is drifting all over the place and going nowhere fast!

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

A ship's mate once challenged a chaplain with the question, ***"How is it that you are always talking to my men about Jesus Christ? Did you ever see Him?"***

"No, I never did."

"Then how can you tell a man to trust in someone you have never seen? I can't see any sense in that."

"Well," replied the chaplain, ***"when you head for a place of refuge in a storm, what sense is there in telling your men to let go the anchor when they cannot see the ground? On what principle do you trust your ship and your life to ground you have never seen and never can see?"***

"Oh," said the mate, ***"we go by our chart."***

"Exactly," replied the chaplain, holding up his Bible, ***"and I, too, go by a chart, and it is an infallible one, while yours is not. It tells me of the only sure ground of my salvation - the atoning work of Christ upon the cross. My faith, like your anchor, takes hold of this unseen but real ground, and so rides out the storm of life in peace and safety."***

- Source Unknown

Amen to that! I use my GPS in my car a lot because I get lost, as you all know. But there are times that I don't trust my GPS and I go in the direction that I think is the right one. Guess what? I was wrong and my GPS was right!

We have a God Positioning System, and it is called the Word of God. And we may not always agree what God has said, but if we follow Him, we will find out He knew what He was talking about and the direction He was leading us!

Make no mistake about it, the New Testament Text is reliable.

Turn to Psalm 119:137-144 and let's see what the Scriptures have to say. We are told, **“Righteous are You, O Lord, And upright are Your judgments. Your testimonies, which You have commanded, Are righteous and very faithful. My zeal has consumed me, Because my enemies have forgotten Your words. Your word is very pure; Therefore Your servant loves it. I am small and despised, Yet I do not forget Your precepts. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth. Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, Yet Your commandments are my delights. The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; Give me understanding, and I shall live.”**

Let me ask you this question. Who were the enemies of David?

Those who have forgotten the Words of God!

And this is interesting to me.

You see, the Hebrew word for **“have forgotten”** is SHAKACH, (shaw-kakh') and it speaks of mislaying something, to be oblivious to it, and that is exactly what we are seeing in the church today. Leaders who **“have forgotten”** the Word of God! They have become oblivious to it, ignorant to it; they have become unconscious to what God is saying. And those that are the leaders today who are teaching this, they are our enemies.

We do not befriend them and let them speak from our pulpits or school rooms!

Why is that? Isn't that unloving?

Absolutely not, it would be unloving to the sheep that God has entrusted to you; to the people God has placed in your hands to lead and then let false doctrine be preached from the pulpit or classroom!

Because we stand up for the truth and don't let heresy in, we expose it and those who are teaching it, and that truly shows that we love our sheep!

Again, some may be wondering this, ***“How reliable is the New Testament since we don't have any of the original manuscripts?”***

That is a great question, and I will try to answer that for you.

Did you know that we have over 24,000 manuscript copies of the New Testament in existence today?

We have 5,300 known Greek manuscripts.

There are over 10,000 Latin Vulgate manuscripts.

We have over 9,300 other early versions of manuscripts of the New Testament.

Now let's put that into perspective for a minute! No other document of antiquity even comes close.

Caesar, who lived 100-44 B. C, we have only 10 manuscripts of his writings with the earliest copy from 900 A. D. Do you see that there is a time span of 1,000 years from when he wrote it to the earliest copy we have!

Then there is The Iliad, by Homer, which is the closest in number of manuscripts to the New Testament in regard to documents of antiquity.

The Iliad was written around 900 B. C., and we have 643 manuscripts in which the earliest copy is from 400 B. C. or a 500-year time difference.

Compare that to the New Testament manuscripts and we have over 24,000 copies, The Iliad manuscripts are not even close!

I bet you have not heard of that before. Why is that? Because they are – ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

Again, let's put this into perspective in regard to what we have.

The New Testament has about 20,000 lines of text. Of that only 40 lines (or 400 words) of the New Testament are in doubt.

Of that, only about one-sixtieth can be called "***substantial variations.***"

Think about that for a minute. That would give us a text that is approximately 98% perfect, pure!

And think about this for a minute. The New Testament is not based upon one Scripture, but the totality of the Scriptures.

Thus, if something is in question, we can check in other Scriptures to see if it is right or not!

Again, only 40 lines or 400 words of the New Testament's 20,000 lines of text are in doubt!

Let me share this with you from Dockery, Mathews and Sloan who wrote regarding the Scriptures and why we can trust them.

This is what they wrote, *“It must be said that the amount of time between the original composition and the next surviving manuscript is far less for the New Testament than for any other work in Greek literature. . . . Although there are certainly differences in many of the New Testament manuscripts, not one fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading.”* (Dockery, Mathews, Sloan; Foundations for Biblical Interpretation, p. 182).

How many of you have heard of that before?

Probably not too many! Why is that? Because they are - ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

And make no mistake about it. There are plenty of manuscripts that testify of the authenticity of the Scriptures.

Listen carefully to what J. Harold Greenlee said as he was speaking on the early church writers in regard to their quoting of Scripture.

He wrote that they *“Are so extensive that the New Testament could virtually be reconstructed from them without the use of New Testament manuscripts.”*

You see, you could destroy every Bible, every manuscript, and you could still reconstruct all but 11 verses of the New Testament.

Again, how many of you knew that? I am sure not many and yet that is the evidence that is out there and is not being taught!

Why?

Because they are - ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

Again, any variation does not change any doctrine that we hold on to. New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce put it this way.

He said, *“The variant readings about which any doubt remains . . . affect no material question of historical fact or of Christian faith and practice.”*

Again, did you know that? I doubt if most of you have heard that before and the reason being is people want to negate the Word of God, but the evidence speaks for itself!

You see, they are - ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

Sir Frederic Kenyon, one of the great authorities in the field of New Testament textual criticism, had this to say regarding the New Testament manuscripts, *“One warning already referred to, must be emphasized in conclusion. No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading. . . . It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain: especially in the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writing of the church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book.”*

Let me get down to specifics and this is from the Dead Sea Scrolls and what was found in cave number 7, fragment number 5.

This is important because it shows us how close from the event to the writing occurred.

On this fragment were the Greek letters *“nu, nu, eta, sigma”*, and it was thought that this was the common Greek version of the form *“egennesen,”* which means to *“beget”* or *“be father of.”*

The root of this word appears in our English word *“generate”* or *“generation.”*

There was a scholar by the name of Jose O’Callaghan who tried to match these words with a Biblical passage from the Old Testament, but nothing seemed to fit.

As he pondered this over and over in his mind, over a period of time, he thought of a word that may fit, *Gennesaret*.

But the only problem was that this was a New Testament word.

How could fragment number 5 be from the New Testament when this was supposed to be a Jewish separatist sect that lived in the area of Qumran, by the Dead Sea?

You see, the word “*Gennesaret*” is an Aramaic place name brought into the vocabulary of the early Greek-speaking Christians because of its role in the ministry of Christ.

So O’Callaghan opened his Bible to Mark 6:53, which reads, “**When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there.**”

To his shock, fragment 5 fit perfectly into the text!

On March 18, 1972, as the news media heard what he discovered, that fragment number 5 was part of the Gospel of Mark, and was part of the Dead Sea Scrolls, newspapers begin to print this remarkable story.

The New York Times reported, “*If O’Callaghan’s theory is accepted, it would prove that at least one of the Gospels, that of St. Mark, was written only a few years after the death of Jesus.*”

Well, it didn’t take long for the critics of the Bible to rise up and try to refute O’Callaghan’s claims.

The problem with their complaining is that this document was dated before his revelation, and it was not dated by him.

And we do know one thing for certain, that the people living in the Qumran community were destroyed before the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

That means if the crucifixion of Christ occurred in A. D. 32, the Gospel of Mark was not written long after that.

Thus, within a 20-30-year time frame, we have a document from Mark's Gospel! It was not written 100's of years after the events, like some would have you believe.

Again, we don't hear much about this because they are - ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

Not only that but we also see that the Gospel of Matthew has an early date to it. On December 24, 1994, the *Times* of London ran a front-page story entitled "***Oxford papyrus is 'eyewitness record of the life of Christ.'***"

The article reported the claim that three papyrus fragments of Matthew's Gospel in Magdalen College, Oxford, date to the mid-first century A. D.

Instead of having been written a generation or more after Jesus' death, as is - or was - the scholarly consensus, Matthew's Gospel was written within a decade or so of the crucifixion by someone who was there at the time, so the article said.

This, of course, would indeed be astounding and worthy of the treatment the *Times* gave it.

Now they don't want to say that it was Matthew, why? Because then it would be an eyewitness account of what took place!

Again, keep things silent, ignore the evidence because they are - ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

Not only were the Gospel's of Matthew and Mark written early, but the book of Acts was written before the death of Paul, for the book of Acts ends with Paul still alive.

And good evidence shows that Paul died in the Neronian persecution about 67 A. D.

Thus, since Acts was the second half of a treatise written by Luke to Theophilus, Luke must have been written around 60 A. D.

Also, all of Paul's letters would have to be written before his death, obviously, and he died in 67 A. D.

Thus, we see only a 30-year time span from the death and resurrection of Christ to all of Paul's letters being completed.

Not only that, but in *Bible and Archaeology*, Sir Frederic G. Kenyon makes these very interesting comments.

He states, *"The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant [existing] evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."*

And listen to these words, not from a Christian publication, nor from Christian writers, but from Time magazine, dated December 30, 1974.

We read, *"After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible has survived - and is perhaps better for the siege. Even on the critics' own terms - historical fact - Scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack."*

What has happened in the almost fifty years since that Time magazine article?

Man has rejected God over and over again, and God has given man over to a debased mind with all kinds of immoral activity and thus, to justify what they are doing, they are -

DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!

We have seen how they have destroyed the evidence that we were a Christian nation, the evidence is overwhelming but again, they are - ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

And we have looked at this morning how we can trust the Bible, that it is the Word of God and has been transmitted over thousands of years intact!

Think about this. From the time of Adam until his death, Adam lived all the way to the time of Lamech, some 126 years before the birth of Noah. So the story of creation was passed down from an eyewitness to the events – Adam!

And yet, they are trying to tell us that we can't trust the Bible and thus, they are ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE!***

We will finish up our study next time looking at how they are ***DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE IN REGARD TO CHRISTIANS!***

In other words, we are a witness to the world that there is a God, that the Bible is true, that sin has separated us from God and Jesus came to pay in full the penalty for our sins so we can live with Him, and that judgment is coming. Thus, to get rid of the evidence they must get rid of Christians, and we see that happening all over the world!

Let me close this morning with these words from Sir Frederic Kenyon.

He wrote, ***“The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.”***

Do you believe that? I hope so!

I pray that you have a love for God and His Word and that you have a hunger to know Him more and more through His Word!

That you don't listen to those who try to discredit the Word of God, but you believe that, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** II Timothy 3:16-17.