

MAN IN THE MIRROR BIBLE STUDY

Series: A Mans Guide to the Bible

Reliability

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Good Morning, Men!

Open your Bible to Genesis 11.

We are doing the series a Mans guide to the Bible.

Before we get into it we have been doing a shout out to someone somewhere that is doing the Bible study along with us online. Today we are giving a shout out to the teachers and staff at Schofield Middle School. This is a group of guys that meet Friday morning at 6 at a McDonalds in South Carolina. Michael Wilson we want to thank you for putting that together.

Sometimes you go in a series and you don't know where it will go but it becomes clearer when you get into it. I think I have a rough outline of where we are going to go in this 12 week series.

We are going to do three different parts to the series.

The first part - Knowing about the Bible and that will last three weeks. Subtitled: Making sure we really have the Bible. We did Bible Basics, Bible Difficulty and today we will talk about Reliability; the more formal issue is first week we did formation of the Canon, last week we did the transmission of the Canon and this week will be the translation of the Canon.

The second part - Knowing the Bible itself and that might last about six weeks. Subtitled: What the Bible is about from 30,000 feet (the helicopter view).

Then part three - Using the Bible. Subtitled: Applying the Bible to change our lives. We will spend about three weeks there. Talking about how you interpret the Bible for yourself.

This series is set up to give you more confidence in your Bible. The assumption that I have used is that you already believe the Bible but don't understand all the reasons you already believe it. This is not an apologetics course. We are beginning with the assumption that you believe the Bible.

I did read a book, for those of you that question if this is the Bible, on the subject so far this week. If you are looking for proof or evidence then there is a book by Harold Sala, Why you can have confidence in the Bible.

Today we are going to talk about the reliability of the Bible. Do we hold the actual words of God in our hands? I believe we do, but the greater confidence that you have that these are God's words.

Let's review: the big idea for the first two weeks was- In the Bible we find the flawless record of exactly what God wanted to say exactly the way He wanted to say it.

We are doing a perspective each week:

Week 1- the Bible is the autobiography of God and the story of His creation including mankind, our fall and God's gracious plan to redeem and perfect us. Organically assembled to say exactly what He wanted to say, exactly the way He wanted to say it.

The key words here are 'organically assembled'. The first week we talked about the formation of the Canon.

Week 2- the Bible is the most scrutinized and authenticated, scientifically and academically studied, carefully documented and transmitted piece of literature in History by an exponential factor which happens to make the internal claim that it is the written word of God.

The key word here is 'transmitted'. We focused on the transmission of the Canon.

Today we are going to talk about the idea of translation. The idea basically is that there is an unbroken chain from the original manuscripts to the Bible you hold in your hands.

There are many translations but here are a few of the important ones: The first translation of the Bible that we know about is called the Septuagint; it takes the Hebrew Bible and translates it into Greek. Why was that done? Greek was the spoken language of the people in that day. In the third to second century B.C. some scholars congregated in Alexandria and translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek.

This is very important because this translation is the first Bible that Jesus and the disciples used. The Septuagint is the Bible of Jesus and the disciples. How do we know that? Most of the references to the Old Testament in the New Testament come from the Septuagint not from the original Hebrew.

The other translations, Jerome's Latin Vulgate: Latin became the new language so around 382 A.D. Jerome one of the church fathers translated that text into Latin and it became the Bible of the middle ages. All through the middle ages they used Latin Vulgate.

Then a guy named Erasmus in 1516 produced the first printed Greek New Testament. Erasmus was kind of the bridge between the Catholic and the Reformers. Very important man; he cleaned up many of the translation errors. Then Luther went on and did his German Bible of 1622 and translated the Greek into the Vernacular German Language. People were very upset because it was common for the church to believe at that time that we can't let the laymen read the Bible for themselves because they may misinterpret it. Well guess what? They were right! Lots of misinterpretation goes on. But it released the power of God into the vernacular language and brought about the reformation.

You are here today largely because of this translation and all the things that followed.

In 1611, King James the First, commissioned the King James Version.

Then a proliferation of modern translations; all the modern translations are based, basically, on the Masoretic text. For the New Testament most people are using the New Greek Testament Fourth Edition. Metzger is one of the leading translators. It is about a hundred years old and is a profoundly accurate Greek New Testament.

If you were here last week I had talked about the idea of a corrected copy of the New Testament. Or you might want to call it a recovered copy. One scholar, I was reading this week, said that at

this point we have 99.9% confidence that we have recovered all the words of the original manuscripts. Another scholar said if you took all the remaining concerns that we have about the Bible would amount to about a half a page from a 500 page Bible. Everything else is settled and there is no doctrinal issue that is in any dispute. These two texts are the foundation for any new translations that have come about.

Why do we need so many translations? Turn to Genesis 11:5, this is the story of the Tower of Babel. The whole world had one language and a common speech. Then these men got the idea to build a great tower to prove how great they were.

5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. 6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." 8 So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 9 That is why it was called Babel--because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

How many of you have heard of the term 'diaspora' before? Thirty percent of you have. 'Diaspora' is a word that literally means scatter or disperse. The most famous diaspora is when the Israelites were sent off to Babylon for 70 years of captivity. There was another diaspora, when the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and the Jews again were scattered. The original diaspora is right here in the story of the Tower of Babel. Only one language was spoken so there was no need for multiple translations; but now that we live post diaspora we have multiple languages and therefore need multiple translations.

Turn to Acts 8:1. Now in Act 1:8 Jesus said

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

So it is interesting that is the great commission. There has been a diaspora of the lost and Jesus commands that the believers diaspora and take the word of God with them to be where the lost are, but they don't.

So Stephen is stoned and in Acts 8:1

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Don't you just love the sovereignty of God? God is sovereignly orchestrating all human events to bring people to right relationship with Him and each other. No better example than right here.

God sovereignly orchestrates through the stoning of Stephen this scattering of the believers.

The lost are diaspora and now the believers are diaspora, so what is left? The word of God is left and we need to get it diaspora. Why do we have so many translations?

Here is the big idea: for there to be a great commission, there must also be a great translation.

Isaiah 55:11

11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

It is the word of God that is powerful!

Here is the perspective for this week: in the Bible we find a completely reliable, authoritative, and inerrant guide for all matters in faith and life increasingly, sovereignly and graciously translated into the native tongue of all mankind, because that is what the great commission requires.

There are a lot of things we are not going to talk about, so if there is anything that comes to your mind during this series let me know.

The big idea again: for there to be a great commission, there must also be a great translation.

Matthew 24:35 says

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Translation: this is one of the ways God makes sure His words never pass away.

Isaiah 40:8

8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

Translation: this is one of the ways God makes sure His word stands forever.

I heard about a man in Kansas City who was badly disfigured from an explosion. His face was deformed, he lost both his hands, and he was left blind and had just become a Christian and misses reading his Bible. Many times you don't know how much you appreciate something until you don't have it. He heard about a woman in England who was blind and didn't have the use of her hands and she learned how to read brail with her lips. He became excited, ordered a brail Bible and opened it up and with great anticipation pressed his lips to the brail, but was desponded because his lips had lost their sensitivity and he couldn't read the brail. He kept trying and one day he accidentally touched the brail with his tongue and he could feel the brail letters. He learned how to read the Bible with his tongue. At the time the story was written, he had read the Bible cover to cover four times with his tongue.

word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11

But you can't do it if you don't have the language translated into your vernacular. That is why we have translations.

Secondly, do you have the translation that is right for you?

Three kinds of translations; there are word for word translations (formal equivalence); examples are the King James Version, The New American Standard.

The second kind is the thought for thought (the dynamic equivalence) where you are not trying to translate each exact word but the translators are trying to put into words the thought that is trying to be translated. Examples are the New International Version.

By the way I use the New American Standard, New International Version and New Living Translation.

Bill Bright, whose board I served on for 9 years, used the Living Bible.

When you are thinking about a Bible it depends on your personality, temperament, training and other things. There are all different kinds of text and you have to make the decision of which ones will work for you. But, what I want to do is give you a comparison.

I want to give you a verse, John 14:26, I have memorized and I want to read it to you in several different versions.

NIV

26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

You know what if that really is reliable and those are the very words of God, that rocks! Jesus says, But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

NASB

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

NLT

26 But when the Father sends the Counselor (advocate) as my representative -- and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit -- he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.

Those are just different ways of translating the same idea.

KJV

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

We don't use the Holy Ghost in other translations; why? Ghost was not a term related to the trinity. I tell you what, having a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit is one of the hardest things I have ever done, but I had a breakthrough a few months ago, and I don't call him the Holy Spirit anymore. I started calling him Holy means sacred and Spirit (pneuma) means breath; so I call him the Holy Breath of God. I call him the Sacred Breath of God. Father, come be with me; Jesus I come to you because you are the Sacred Breath of God. I come to meet with you, please come and meet with me.

For now I am back to Holy Counselor.

ESV

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

These are all different translations of the same word. NIV says counselor, NLT says advocate, NASB says helper, KJV says comforter now all but the KJV were derived from this Greek New Testament fourth edition and here is what that version says:

The but encourager (paraclete) the spirit the holy whom will send the father in the name of me that one you will teach all and he will remind you all that said to you I.

So you see why we need translations? That is why we have translations. Some translations go word for word or thought for thought, but the point is that when you pick this book up you know how sacred the word of God is.

For there to be a great commission there has to be a great translation.

Final point, confidence when the walls cave in; you heard about the guy who was drowning, flailing around and a crowd on the shore yelled STAND UP! He was only in four feet of water. A lot of people are flailing around and all they have to do is stand up because they have the very words of God.

A few weeks ago a man came to the Bible study from out of town to talk with me. We had breakfast after the Bible study. He had made a mess of his life because he did not follow the word of God. He's of retirement age, but he has a first home with a first and second mortgage on it then he has a mountain home with a first and second mortgage on it and he has no money and no job. He was explaining this to me and said I have a \$2 million life insurance policy and my wife and I have been fighting constantly. You know I just don't see anyway out of this so I have decided to take my life. I said why are you here? Well I am not really sure why I am here. I said it is pretty clear you have lost hope and I think the reason you have lost hope is because you don't have a plan. It's not that you don't know what to do you just don't have a plan to get it done.

I said no one can tell you what God's will is for your life, but here is what I would do if I were you; I would sell both homes in 90 days. It looked like he might get \$150,000/\$200,000 from them, so I said take that money and go buy a town home free and clear and give your wife some stability. Then I would go get a job, just to show my wife that I was willing to work. If a man will not work, let him not eat the Bible says.

Just as we were talking you could see the color of hope come back into his face. When I first met him I thought he might have had a stroke before. But I realized he was so ashamed that he couldn't look at me and he was talking all over the place. When he was writing down this plan a focus and resolution came back to him.

Then I said point number five in the plan: your sufferings are a precious gift from God. As soon as I said that you could see the Holy Spirit communicate resonance to his spirit. Then I gave him the verse Philippians 3:10

that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

The word of God translated into his language, the language of pain. He is a Christian, but he had gotten away from the word of God. I checked in with him last week and he is moving ahead with the plan. He got a job at the census bureau. I want to read to you a few sentences:

I cannot help but feel that the Lord would lead me to some idea that would be used to earn an income if I can't find employment. I believe that the Lord would lead me. I know that everything is in his time, but it's not much fun out there right now. Still I know that I know that the Lord is my answer, because of my feelings do you really think I would be an example? Sometimes I feel like a doubting Thomas. I am definitely not giving up. But I want you to know that I still find myself doubting where it all ends up. I keep looking at the parable in Mark of the healing of the boy with an evil spirit. I am like the father who asked by Jesus if he believed and he replied, I do

believe help me to overcome my unbelief. I pray that I would someday prove my faith, by complete surrender to my Lord Jesus; so that I can feel like a real witness to others.

I had connected him with another Real Estate developer in need, they met and here is his P.S. – I met with _____, and tried to help him with a possible census job but he called and said nothing was available. He sounded down so I am going to call him after I send you this email.

He is doing this all because he has confidence that he has the very words of God in his hands. The word of God is making him alive! The word of God is making him an agent of the great commission, and ambassador of the gospel.

That is the big idea: no great translations then no great commission, you have to have both.

Let's Pray:

Our Father, Lord it is so amazing; I think of all the things I have studied and gotten into and the more I get into them the more they seem to come apart. But your word is so opposite of that, the deeper we get into your word the more and more it comes together. We feel the power of God coming into our lives. You teach us and remind us what you have said through the Holy Spirit, because we have confidence that we do have the very words of God in our hands.

I pray that we would all walk out of here this morning with an even greater confidence.

Lord dare I say a reminder of how holy this Bible is and that is why they put the word Holy in it; in Jesus name, Amen.