

(1 Timothy) Church and the Truth

by Brian Brodersen

The Church is a family of believers who are united in their love for God and for each other, and who hold up the truth and defend it against attacks from outside and within.

Duration: 57:55

Scripture: Isaiah 44:9-20, Acts 2:42, Ephesians 4:15, 1 Timothy 3:14-15

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Divine Inspiration"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a surf movie called 'Noah's Ark' that he recently watched. The movie tells the story of professional surfers who have encountered God and experienced a transformation in their lives. The speaker relates this to his own experience of becoming a Christian and emphasizes the importance of having a personal encounter with the living God. He also discusses the significance of the Bible's prophecies in proving its divine inspiration and highlights the role of the church in upholding and proclaiming the truth of God's word with love.

Transcript

1st Timothy chapter 3, picking up tonight in verse 14, we're going to look at verses 14 and 15 this evening. And now Paul says, these things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly. But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God.

So as we pointed out in the past, this epistle was written so that Timothy and future generations of Christians would know what the church is supposed to look like. I'll tell you, and we mentioned it before, but just to say it again, it's such an unfortunate thing and such a tragic thing that historically the church hasn't paid a whole lot of attention to the scriptures. Things would be so much different had the church historically done that.

But because the church left off following the biblical model, because the church moved away from the simple pattern that was laid out in scripture and began to follow after human wisdom and ingenuity and ideas, we have really quite a mess in church history. The scriptures are clear, the church, it's it's supposed to look like something and it's laid out in various portions of the New Testament. We see it in the book of Acts.

We've studied that together. We see it in what we call the pastoral epistles, what we're looking at here with first and second Timothy and Titus. And so Paul's purpose was to pass on to Timothy and then on to us,

ultimately a model for ministry.

But notice as he goes on, he makes reference to conducting yourself in the house of God, which he says is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And so those are the three things that we want to talk about in our study this evening. We want to talk about the house of God.

We want to talk about the church of the living God, and then we want to talk finally about the pillar and the ground of the truth. So this term that Paul uses, the house of God, or more literally, we could translate it the household of God. The church is a family.

And that is something that we need to grab hold of. That's something that we need to realize that the church is first and foremost, it's a family. You know, we live in a time and this has been the common thought for quite a few years now.

When you when you even. Say the word church, generally speaking, a building comes into the mind of a person. But, you know, that the word church doesn't mean building at all, the word church really refers to the people, the word actually means those who are called out.

The assembly of God, the people of God. And as God's people, we are called into his family. And so when we think of going to church, which we're doing here this evening, we need to think of it not so much in terms of I'm going down to that building there at thirty eight hundred South Fairview in Santa Ana, but no, I'm going to meet with the people of God.

I'm going to spend some time with the family. I'm going to get together with brothers and sisters and loved ones, and we're just going to enjoy our time together tonight in the Lord, worshiping him and and praying to him and encouraging one another with the gifts that God's given to us and being instructed from his word. And so we come in thinking in those terms.

Not coming in thinking that, you know, here I am at this building again and wow, look at all these people who are these people anyway, I don't really know anybody here and, you know, I feel kind of awkward and boy, I can't wait till this is over so I can get out of here as quick as I can and, you know, get back out to that familiar place wherever it might be. But no, this ought to be the place where, you know, we're all coming together like, you know, this Thursday when people from all over the country are going to be traveling, you know, perhaps by plane, train, bus, car, however, they're going to get there. But what are people going to be doing? They're going to be going over to.

The homes of their families and they're going to be getting together and having just a time of, you know, loving each other and enjoying fellowship with each other, and it's going to be a grand time as the family gets together. Well, that ought to be the mentality that we have every time we gather together, we're getting together with the family. Now, granted, although we are family because of our relationship with Christ, because we've all become the sons and the daughters of God, if we put our faith and trust in Jesus, the reality is, of course, we don't know each other, all of us.

And so there can be a little bit of timidity on the part of a person or, you know, a bit of shyness or something like that. But, you know, as we just take time and reach out and talk to one another, encourage one another, pray with one another, it's wonderful how the Lord knits us together so quickly. Just this past, what was it, last Saturday, a week ago, we were doing, we're putting the fence up over there at the Karras building.

Some of you guys were over there to do that. And during the course of a couple of hours, as I was out there helping out, I got to work alongside of a guy named Bill and I'd seen Bill before, but I'd never met him, didn't know his name, had never had any conversation with him. But we went around the field out there together, installing the little concrete boxes around the the plumbing for the sprinkler system.

It took us a couple of hours to do it. And now Bill and I, we're best friends. You know, it's amazing.

I see Bill everywhere now. Hey, Bill, how are you doing? How's your back? How are you? Oh, yeah, I'm still kind of sore, too, you know, and but it's amazing to me how just a little bit of time with another brother or sister in the Lord, how the Lord can connect you with people. And, you know, speaking of that, I was at the men's breakfast this morning and again, just, you know, meeting a couple of guys, sitting down, chatting with them, praying with them, and then walking away feeling like, wow, I know I know another member of my family that I hadn't previously known.

But just spending a few minutes and listening to them and praying with them and finding out a little bit about their background and all that, you know, it's wonderful. Because what happens is because we truly are family, even though we might not know each other, once we connect and the spirit of God does that work in our hearts mutually, that's how lifelong friendships are developed. That's how relationships that are going to have an impact on you and upon many others potentially, that's how those things occur.

And I can think of so many people that, you know, I can think of people that 10 years ago I didn't even know. And yet today they are some of my nearest and dearest friends, and my life would be so much poorer if I did not know them. And it's all about this family thing.

It's a wonderful thing. But that's what the church is. It's the household of God.

The church is a family. But then he refers to it, secondly, as the church of the living God. Now, Paul here is using this phrase in regard to God, the living God that is used some 30 times in the scripture.

Interesting to me, it's used 15 times in the Old Testament and 15 times in the New Testament. I don't know what the significance of the number 30 is, but I just found it interesting and especially that it was evenly divided between the two covenants, the old and the new. But Paul, of course, using this term would be in one sense, he would be making a contrast between the true God and the idols that the vast majority of the peoples were committed to and devoted to in those days.

And of course, the feature of the idol is that the idol is really nothing but a piece of wood or a piece of stone. It has eyes, but it can't see. It has ears, but it can't hear.

It has a mouth, but it can't speak. It has hands, but it can't touch and feet, but it can't walk. Basically, an idol can't do anything for you.

You can worship it till hell freezes over and it's never going to be able to profit you or benefit you in the least because it's it's not a living thing. But our God, in contrast to that, our God is the living God. And when we come together, this is something that I think is so wonderful when we come together, we come together in anticipation of the Lord's presence of being sensed among us.

You know, this this is to me one of the great things about the Christian faith. We're not involved in just some religious ritual. We're not here just doing some duty.

You know, we've got to show up and we've got to put in our time. We are here meeting with God. God is real.

He's living. He's alive and he's powerful and he's present and he's moving and he's working and he's speaking to us and he's touching our lives. And it's such a glorious thing.

It's such a wonderful thing. It's the church of the living God. And when we congregate together, one of the things that we can expect is the presence of the Lord to be manifest among us, because, of course, over and over again in the scripture, God promises that he dwells among his people, he inhabits the praises of his people.

Where we gather together in his name, he is there in the midst of us, all of those wonderful promises. And so we come together and we worship the living God. Last night here we had the sneak preview of the this surf movie Noah's Ark that's going to be showing around Orange County in the next few weeks down in Newport at the big theater down there in Newport, then over in Huntington and at the Edwards Cinema there and then at the Spectrum over in Irvine.

And then I think eventually down in San Clemente as well. But anyway, that was a little advertisement for the movie. But, you know, as we were watching that film last night and I've seen I think I've seen every surf movie ever made and I had to say afterwards the guys asked me, would you think of it? And I said, you know, it's the best surf movie I've ever seen.

And primarily because it wasn't just surfing, because that kind of gets old after a bit. But it was the story of these guys, these professional surfers who have been touched by God truly, literally, powerfully. And and it's basically their testimony.

And as I was watching it, quite honestly, there were a couple of minutes where I started to get kind of emotional because I felt like this is my life being repeated over again, you know, 25, 30 years later, very similar to the kinds of things that I experienced back in the days when I went from not being a Christian to becoming a Christian. And to see these guys on this film having an encounter with the living God. It wasn't that they got wrapped up in some religion or somebody sucked them up into this thing, but it was something individually independent of one another or of other people.

God began to work with these guys and to deal with them and to and to bring a sense of discontentment into their life, although they they had everything going for them. All the things that they aspired to, all the things that they probably dreamed that they'd like to do and thought, man, this will ultimately satisfy me. They had all of those things happening.

And yet there was an intense dissatisfaction in their lives and there was a sense that something wasn't right. And eventually this led them to receive Christ, and then there's sort of a domino effect happened, a chain reaction and a number of them came to the Lord. And and then the movie just, you know, sort of the end of it is just all of these guys who have known each other all their lives, grew up in this surf culture together.

Now they're all serving Jesus together and just having the greatest time in the world. And as I was watching it, you know, just the sense of life that was coming through the film and and again, connecting back to that idea of these guys have met the living God. He's the living God.

He is alive. Of course, he's alive, he's alive forever, he's the eternal one, and he is with us as we gather together collectively. Of course, he's with us individually as well, but in a special way, he's with us when we gather together as his people.

And so it's the household of God, we're a family. It's the church of the living God, a place where God's presence is manifest. And then Paul says regarding the church, he refers to it as the pillar and ground of the truth.

The pillar and ground of the truth, a pillar is used primarily to hold something up. That's the primary use of a pillar to hold something up. The word ground, the Greek word could be translated in a variety of different ways.

It could be translated support. It could be translated bulwark. It could be translated buttress.

So Paul says the church is the pillar and the support or the bulwark or the buttress of the truth. And so the picture Paul is painting is that of the church, first of all, holding up the truth so all men can see it. And then secondly, protecting the truth and defending the truth.

That's a picture that Paul gives us of the church, the church in the world is to be first and foremost, holding up the truth so other men can see it as the pillar, as the buttress or the bulwark of the truth, the church is to be protecting and defending the truth. Now, when the church no longer proclaims the truth. When the church no longer protects and defends the truth, it ceases to be the church in the true sense.

Now, of course, the truth that we're referring to here is the truth of the scriptures. The veracity of the Bible has been under attack for centuries. I think you're aware of that.

Yet to this day, no one has been able to disprove a single statement of scripture. Amazing. Amazing, especially when you consider the intensity of the attack, the attack, the consistency of the attack.

For literally over 200 years now, they have been doing their best to undermine the veracity of the Bible, but to the present day, they've not come up with a single piece of evidence to disprove any statement of scripture. Now, having failed to disprove the inspiration and that subsequent authority of the Bible, because if the Bible is inspired, then it obviously would be authoritative as well. But but having failed to disprove that.

Atheistic humanism. Has. Turned its attack against the very idea of truth itself.

They've not been able to disprove any statement of scripture, and so in a sense, they sort of left off the attack of that in one sense, not totally, but in one sense, they sort of left off the attack and then gone at just the concept of truth itself. If we can destroy in the minds of people the belief in any sort of absolute truth, then, of course, we don't have to worry about trying to disprove the Bible because any claim, any truth claim can be invalidated. And that is what is happening in our culture today.

Relativism is the philosophy of the day. Relativism is permeating our culture in the West, especially relativism has been has had its place in the East for a long time because the Eastern religions, with the exception of Islam, are to a large degree, spiritually relativistic. There's not real heavy truth claims, but now what's happened in in Western culture is that this philosophy of relativism is really taking root, of course, as always is the case.

It sort of begins on one level, the level of intellectualism and academia, but then it eventually sort of. Trickles down to the culture, generally speaking, and and it's trickled down quite a bit. Many, many people today do not believe.

That there is absolute truth, they do not believe that there's anything that is truly right or anything that is truly wrong, relativism. In the moral sense, moral relativism is the belief that absolute standards of right and wrong do not exist. Absolute standards of right and wrong do not exist.

All truth is relative to one's culture and ultimately to one's personal preference. So then. Something is true only if I believe it to be true.

And then if I believe it to be true, it's only true to me, it's not necessarily true to you or to anyone else. That's moral relativism and that is what is permeating the culture today. If you walk onto a university campus today and you say you believe in absolute truth, you become the laughingstock of the campus.

It's absurdity in the minds of so many in that realm, and we see that same mentality in the media, we see it to some degree in the government. Certainly certain people in the government have embraced it wholeheartedly. But the absurdity of relativism seems to me to be self-evident.

This this is the thing that puzzles me. I when I read about things and study different things, I I don't only want to know about the thing. What really intrigues me is why do people believe this? That's the thing that I find myself a lot of times trying to get at.

Now, what's the attraction with this? Why would somebody want to embrace such an idea? And all I can figure out with relativism is that on the surface, it sounds plausible to people, but it's only because they've they've they've not thought it through. If you think it through to its logical conclusion, it's total absurdity and it's absurdity is, as I said, I think it's self-evident. Truth is not dependent upon my opinion for certain things are true, as you know, whether we believe them or not.

Now, we have been told that at one time a majority of people believe that the earth was flat. Now, I don't know that that's actually true, but that's what we've been told. Now, if that was the case, let's just say for argument's sake, that there was a point in history when almost everybody believed the earth was flat.

Did that change the shape of the earth one bit? Did it alter the shape of the earth in in any way at all? Of course not. It it wouldn't have mattered if every single person believed the earth was flat. It wasn't flat and there was objective proof.

The very ball they were standing on, they just didn't know it was a ball. Now, two plus two is always going to equal four, regardless of what I think. You see, these these things, these are these are absolute facts.

Now, we're talking about truth in a rational sense and relativism is provably false rationally, as I think we just demonstrated. But it's also provably false morally. You see, the person who embraces relativism, if they really, truly embrace it in the fullest sense, the sense that they, of course, ought to, if they're going to claim that this is reality, they they would themselves then be incapable of.

Making any judgments. Of believing anything to be right or wrong, but, you know, the funny thing is they never do that. They don't want you to believe that certain things are right or wrong.

And they you know, they they cry out the mantra of relativism against it, but then, of course, they want to be able to maintain that certain things are right or wrong. But you can't have it both ways. If there's no right and wrong for me, then there's no right and wrong at all.

Now, most university professors in this country are moral relativists and they passionately reject the idea of anything being absolutely right or wrong. But they also passionately oppose injustice, inequality, oppression, intolerance, they passionately oppose those things. But here's the question.

On what grounds? On what grounds can you really oppose these things if there is no absolute right or wrong, and if it boils down ultimately to what every man feels himself, then they themselves don't have a leg to stand on. They really don't. And for the life of me, I don't understand why they don't see that.

I think it's just intentional, really. But, you know, to say that, for example, to say that apartheid is wrong was wrong. On what basis is it wrong? Well, they shouldn't they shouldn't have oppressed those people.

They shouldn't have treated them that way. Why not? Well, because well, because why? Because you think they shouldn't. Well, I think maybe that it was OK.

So you see, in the end, what you come to is you just have a difference of opinion. And who's to say that my opinion is better than your opinion? That's ultimately what it all comes down to. So if there is no absolute truth, then.

You end up basically with an unlivable situation. Now, another thing that I think is interesting, that most professors are also avid Darwinist and Darwin taught just to summarize it. He taught that everything was all about ultimately the survival of the fittest.

So doesn't that mean that the weaker aspects of the race are going to be subjugated and ultimately eliminated? So what's the matter with white European males dominating the rest of the world? It's just obvious that they are the stronger in the species. And that's the way it all works anyway, because it's just survival of the fittest. And so you find yourself fighting against your own theories, contradicting your own theories.

Relativism, taken to its logical conclusion, leads to the destruction of civilization and ultimately to the destruction of life itself. Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, they were all relativist. Ultimately, they were a law to themselves.

That's what relativism is in the end. It's a law. You're a lot of yourself.

That's what those men were. And collectively, they were responsible for the deaths of some hundred and fifty million human beings. So the scary thing is relativism is becoming the dominant view in our culture.

The church. Is about the only thing that's standing in opposition to it, and unbelievably, some segments of the church are buying into it as well. Some have bought into it already long ago.

We talk about the mainline Protestant denominations and they long ago, they they departed from the faith. Long ago, they stopped holding up the word of God. They stopped protecting and defending it and began to actually try to undermine it.

But but it's not just among them today that is happening in what has historically been called evangelicalism. Evangelicalism as as a movement or as a category within the church is is the term that

historically has identified the Bible believing segment of the church. But now within evangelicalism, you have this relativism that's creeping in.

And you have in churches that were known historically for being Bible believing and Bible teaching churches. Now you're having ideas come through that, well, you know, we can't really be sure that, you know, this is necessarily wrong. I know, you know, it says something about it here in scripture.

But how do we know that Paul wasn't just mistaken at this point? How do we know that it wasn't his own personal bias that just sort of bled through? And so in reality, they're questioning the inspiration of scripture and the authority of scripture. And that's happening in the evangelical church today. There is absolute moral truth.

And it's found in the pages of scripture and it comes to us from the living God. And we need to understand that we need to hold on to that, we need to protect the truth, we need to defend it and above everything else, we need to proclaim it. But here's the question, how do I know that the Bible is true? Well.

Is the Bible true because I believe it to be true? No. You see, the Bible is true, whether I believe it to be true or not, it's not a subjective thing, meaning that I. The subject, this is this is what I believe, but it's an objective thing. There's something outside of me that confirms the truth of this book.

Now, it is true for me subjectively and for you, too, because I've experienced the truth of it. But I'm not going to go out and necessarily convince anybody that this is the absolute truth of God simply because I've experienced it. That will go somewhere with some people.

But other people, it won't go anywhere with them because, well, that's just, you know, fine. That's true for you. That's good for you.

That's well, I'm happy for you. But, hey, that's not for me. So it's got to go out of the realm of the subjective into the realm of the objective.

I've got to have other things that I can point to when I say this is the word of God. I have to be able to say this is the word of God because this right here proves it to be the word of God. And we have proofs that the Bible is the word of God.

Now, of course, we have, first of all, the biblical claim to be the word of God. Now, the claim in and of itself isn't necessarily the proof that it is the inspired word of God. The Koran claims to be the word of God as well.

But Christians reject that claim. And I think on good grounds. But when we claim that the or when the Bible itself claims to be the word of God, it doesn't only claim to be the word of God.

It has in it proof of its claim. And so what I'd like to do is take a couple of minutes and just walk through a few things. First of all, things that support the biblical claim to being the inspired word of God.

They don't prove it, but they support it. But then we'll look finally at that thing that does prove the scriptures to be the word of God, the built in proof for the inspiration of scripture. But let's look, first of all, at a few things that support the Bible's claim to be the word of God.

One thing that supports the Bible's claim to be the word of God, I'd mentioned it earlier, but it it's the indestructibility of the Bible. Now, you might not think that's significant unless you realize the extent. To

which men have sought to destroy the scriptures, there has been an all out assault on the word of God all throughout history.

An all out assault. Now, there's a very small number of books that survive or by survive, we mean remain in circulation for 100 years. Very small number, the number of books that survive for a thousand years is microscopic, probably count them on your hand.

But the Bible, which has been the object of more persecution and opposition than any other book in history, is today at the beginning of the 21st century, it is the best selling book today. Now, you won't find it on the New York Times bestseller, but it is indeed worldwide the number one bestseller, over a half a billion. Bibles distributed in the last year.

Now, the persecution of Diocletian is one example of the type of persecution that the scriptures have endured. Back in 83 or three, the Roman Emperor Diocletian, he wrote an imperial letter ordering the burning of all Christian scriptures. And that's just one example of many in history.

The historical irony is that the emperor who followed him, Constantine, he ordered 50 copies of the scriptures to be produced by the best scribes at government expense. So Diocletian sought to destroy the scriptures. The very next emperor came along and advanced the scriptures at the government's expense.

The historical veracity of the Bible is another thing that I think supports its claim to inspiration. One of the most well-known archaeologists, a man named Nelson Gleck, he said it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. So the archaeologists, all they've ever discovered has been supportive of what the scriptures already said.

Now, as I mentioned, for a long time, the Bible has been under attack and it's been under attack by the academic world for the past few centuries. And they would come up with these theories about the Bible that it was grossly mistaken. It was really nothing but a bunch of Jewish mythology and there was no historical veracity to any of the things.

And, you know, they would assert these things. And unfortunately, people would believe it. Thousands of people left the churches as a result of a lack of confidence in the scripture because of what these men have said over time.

And they would give examples of. Their ideas, they would say things like Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible that are attributed to him because they said there was no writing at the time of Moses. But through archaeology, they discovered that not only was there writing at the time of Moses, but the land of Canaan that Joshua would come in to conquer was filled with libraries.

And books. And not only that, but centuries before Moses, 400 years earlier in the time of Abraham, there was a huge library in the city that Abraham came from or of the Chaldees. So all of these things, of course.

Came to the surface through archaeological discovery after these grandiose claims had been made by the critics. The critics said that there was no such thing historically as the Hittite nation that the Bible made numerous references to. Guess what the archaeologists found the Hittite nation, the remnant of it, the remains of it.

They went so far as to say Pontius Pilate was a fictitious character. He was made up by the writers of the New Testament. He did not exist in history.

And then the archaeologists found a stone in Caesarea with Pontius Pilate's name carved on it and the very date that he was the procurator of Judea carved in it as well. And so. As the archaeologist Nelson Gleick said.

No archaeological discovery has ever controverted the scriptures, they've only affirmed what the scriptures already said. An interesting. Time magazine article from some years ago stated, 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, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack. Amazing, amazing concession. The scientific veracity of the Bible is another thing that supports the biblical claim to inspiration.

The Bible is not a scientific book. Now, we hear all the time that all, you know, science a long time ago disproved the Bible or the myth of this, you know, the Bible and the science Bible and science being at odds with one another. This isn't this is not true when it comes to science in the in the true sense.

But of course, we know that there is something out there that masquerades as science and the Bible is certainly in contradiction to evolutionary theory. But evolutionary theory is not science. I read I read this crazy article a couple of days ago, how this professor at a university in Utah, he's done all of this research and he's discovered, you know, the certain thing about how running evolved, how men went from a walker to a runner.

And, you know, he walked for two point five billion years or two point five million years, and then he started to run eventually. And, you know, reading this stuff, it's like, you know, these guys get paid to do this. I mean, maybe I could go over and get a job.

And, you know, at the university, maybe I could do some research on Peter Parker, how he transformed into Spider-Man and all of the you know, all of the implications of that. I mean, it's the same sort of thing. It's just ridiculous.

And so after this whole thing and this big presentation in the news about him discovering this, then they go in to interview another guy and he says, no, it's rubbish. He says, this guy doesn't know what he's talking about. You know, there's no proof of anything he said.

Well, why doesn't he just say that about the whole thing, because that's the truth of it all. So the Bible and science are not at odds. The Bible is not a book of science.

But no scientific observation in the Bible contradicts known scientific evidence. Now, this is interesting to me. Every other ancient religion had certain unscientific views of astronomy, for example, medicine, hygiene.

But the Bible is absolutely free from those kinds of scientific absurdities that were common to other religions. Thirty five hundred years ago, Moses said the life of all flesh is in the blood. Scientists discovered that in the 17th century.

Three thousand years ago, David said the sun is moving in a circuit through the heavens. Astronomers discovered that in the early 1900s. Two thousand years ago, Paul spoke of creation being in the bondage of decay.

The second law of thermodynamics was realized in 1850. See, the Bible was speaking accurately scientifically thousands of years ago, things that have just been discovered in the past few centuries. So there is no contradiction between the Bible and science.

The unity of the Bible is another thing that supports its claim to inspiration. And it's truly an amazing thing when you think about this, the unity, the harmony. You know, when you read your Bible, you know you're reading one book.

But yet, of course, you know as well that it's made up of in our English version, it's made up of sixty six different books. It's made up of sixty six different books, approximately 40 different authors. It was written on three different continents over.

Fifteen hundred to maybe even three thousand year period of time, four thousand year period of time. And yet the Bible is one book, it has one doctrinal system, it has one moral standard, one plan of salvation, one program for the ages. There's no parallel in history like it in this regard.

It's amazing. Now, again, none of these things necessarily absolutely prove the inspiration of Scripture, but I think they they support. Our claim that the Bible is inspired, but.

God left us with something. That proves the inspiration of Scripture, and that is predictive prophecy, prophecy is the built in proof, all of these other things that I just shared with you. These are interesting things and I think it's good information and it's stuff that we ought to try to to some degree, you know, get into our memory bank so we can communicate these things to people when the opportunity arises.

But in the end, these things don't prove it. But what does prove the Bible's inspiration is predictive prophecy, because God said in Isaiah forty nine, nine and ten, he said, for I am God. And there is no other.

I am God. And there is none like me declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times, things not yet done. You see, God says I alone can tell the future.

That's the claim that God is making here. He alone tells the future and he tells it with absolute accuracy, not some vague, nebulous prediction about, you know, this could happen and not that at all. But the smallest details all spelled out and thousands of these details.

This is what God has done and we have examples of it over and over and over again in scripture. We have. Hundreds of prophecies concerning the Jews.

You know, someone said once. That the existence of the Jewish people alone is enough to prove the existence of God. And I happen to agree with them on that.

There isn't really a human explanation for the existence of the Jewish people and especially Israel as a nation after all of those centuries of being cast out of their land. But not only being cast out of their land, they weren't simply cast out of their land and living happily ever after wherever they happened to land in the world. You know, the story of Jewish history, wherever they went, there have been attempts to annihilate them, attempts to obliterate their memory from the face of the earth.

And that's still going on today. But yet they're here, they're in the land, and although all of the surrounding nations with, you know, the population is so much greater in the surrounding nations and the wealth and

the the resource and all of that and all of them have the one common desire to get them out of the land, yet they're there. This is nothing short of miraculous, but Jesus said concerning the Jews, he gave sort of a sketch of their history after his time, he said.

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies that know that his desolation is near, that happened 40 years after he said these words for these are the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled, for there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

That is the history of the Jewish people right there in a nutshell, a summarized history. But it's a history that's spoken before it ever happened. It's a prophecy.

And then, of course, we have the Messianic prophecies. All the prophecies of the Messiah himself, hundreds of Messianic prophecies fulfilled by Jesus now. Of course, there were the prophecies about the family that the Messiah would come from, he would be of the seed of Abraham, but he would also be a descendant of the tribe of Judah.

He would come out of the house of David. He would be born in the city of Bethlehem. He would arrive prior to the destruction of the second temple.

He would come into Jerusalem humbly on a donkey. He would be betrayed by a friend. He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver.

They would pierce his hands and his feet in his death. A description of Roman crucifixion, which did not exist at the time that the prophecies were written. All of these things were fulfilled literally.

To the smallest detail. In the person of Christ, it is mathematically impossible that these things could have been predicted and fulfilled coincidentally. For the person, the skeptic who comes along says, oh, well, you know, that's interesting that the Jesus, you know, and all this matches up, but it was just a coincidence.

It's mathematically impossible. That someone could fulfill that number of predictions and not be the person that was predicted. So the only explanation for the fulfillment of these things is that they were given by God and that Jesus is indeed the one who was prophesied to come.

And then, of course, we have that other aspect of prophecy that talks about the future that we haven't yet experienced ourselves. The future of ultimately the second coming of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom upon the earth, but all the things that lead up to that, the Jews being back in their homeland, Europe becoming the center of world power once again, technology advancing and developing to the extent that everybody in the world could receive a mark on their right hand or their forehead, or that everybody in the world could watch in the city of Jerusalem when two men are slain and laid to rest. Dead in the streets and then rise up after three days.

All of that stuff speaks of technological advancement. And so as you go through and look at the prophecies one after another, which we obviously don't have time to do, these are the things that. Not merely support the biblicals claim to inspiration, but they prove it.

They prove that this book had to be written by. Someone outside of time and space, someone who could see the future clearly, and of course, that someone is God, and so it's this truth. The church is the pillar to hold it up so all men can see it.

The church is the ground, the bulwark, the buttress were to protect and defend this truth. We're to proclaim the word of God, and the final thing I want to say about it. Is we're to do it in love.

Remember what Paul said, he said, speak the truth in love. And today there's there's a battle in our culture and people refer to the cultural wars that are going on. And there are indeed cultural wars and we're in the thick of it.

And we have the responsibility of giving the truth to people, but we need to be careful, you can have the truth and you can do some serious damage with it. Just because something is true doesn't mean that you have to present it with a sword. It is true, but we need to make sure that when we communicate the truth, that we're communicating it in love.

I saw a representative of the church on CNN the other night, and he was being questioned by one of the commentator guys and about this whole, you know, sort of revolution that's taken place, according to some in the country, this this values revolution. He was being questioned about that and he was being questioned about the future. And, you know, they they were asking him, well, you know, what's your plan? Because he's putting together a coalition of values, conscious people to to continue the momentum in the direction he says.

And so, you know, we want to continue to get people in office like the president who share our values. And we want to see judges put in the system that are going to, you know, properly interpret the Constitution, the laws and so forth. And, you know, everything he was saying, I agreed with him, but.

The way he was saying it. It was just like, man. He's not speaking the truth and love, and so often that's what happens.

Remember back at 9-11, September 2001. I remember so vividly when all of that happened and being there in the midst of it and then hearing some representatives of the church on national, international television, whatever the case, saying this is God's judgment. He's killing people because of sin in this country, and, you know, he went down the list of all the people who are sinning and that's why this is happening to the country.

Now, you know, to me, I look at I think that that is not the message to be proclaiming at that moment, because what about the Christians who died in the Twin Towers? I know of at least a half a dozen Christians that died in those events that unfolded that day. So what were they? Was that part of the judgment of God on them, too? And to make a statement like that, you know, it's it's just I think it's the wrong approach to things. And when we have the truth, one of the things that people are afraid of absolute truth for is because they have seen times in history, unfortunately, where people who have claimed to have the truth have then abused others in the name of the truth.

We've got a classic example of it right now in Islam. These guys claim to have truth from God and look what they're doing with it. They're killing people.

You see, we have the truth. But remember the great truth. Of ours, this is our great truth, love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself.

That's what our truth is rooted in. It's not rooted in lop off their heads for your God. Blow yourself up and take as many infidel with you as you can.

It's not rooted in that. It's a truth, but it's rooted in love, love for God and love for people. And so we, the church, we're the pillar in the ground of the truth.

And so we need to hold the truth up so other people can see it and other people can come and experience the truth that sets them free from sin and sets them free from death. That's what the church has to offer to the world. Lord, we thank you that we are part of the church of Jesus Christ, that we are members of the household of God.

That we're part of your family, Lord. And that you are the living God, the God who meets us personally, individually, the God who meets us collectively as we gather. And Lord, we thank you that you have given us the truth.

That there is truth and the truth sets us free. And Lord, may we, as your people collectively and individually, as believers in you, may we hold up the truth for others to see. Lord, give us wisdom and understanding to protect and to defend and to proclaim the truth to this lost generation.

Lord, deliver people from the delusions that they've come under, the delusions of relativism and similar kinds of philosophies. Show them the absurdity of these things and show them the beauty, the glory, the wonder of the truth you offer. And Lord, may we be good representatives of that truth, speaking it in love, by your grace, in Jesus name, amen.

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