

# Proverbs 23

Sunday 3/25/2018

Last week, we began a study in Proverbs. Through our normal study, we came across Proverbs 22:28, which is an incredible verse by itself, but it ties in with another Proverb verse in Proverbs 23. We talked about Proverbs 22:28 last week, and now we are going to talk about the other one today.

You remember last week we began a study on laying out these two incredible verses. If I could pick two verses that would probably be the foundation every Christian needs in their life, whatever they are going to try to do for God, it would be these two verses. I know there are a lot of good verses in the Bible. I know there are a lot of good principles in the Bible, but when it starts with Christianity, you have to start with a foundation. These two verses are the foundation of everything in the Bible, in God, in history, and in what He is doing.

You remember I started the message last week by telling you the tragic story of the World War II B-24 Liberator, the Lady Be Good, that disappeared over the Mediterranean in 1943 and 15 years later was found in the Libyan desert. I walked through that story for the whole purpose of telling you that that plane got lost and messed up and became a mystery for many, many years, all because the navigator missed the landmark. I was building upon the concept of how absolutely vital it is for you and for me as Christians to have landmarks in our lives.

These two verses will become the common thread that will pull the Bible, that will pull God, that will pull all history, and of course, you as a Christian, together as God's plan as it lays out through the Bible. Remember last week I told you that God has three distinct plans. They are all separate, but they are all connected. God has a plan for the universe. There is a reason why He created the universe, and of course, if you know anything about the universe, you know that there are billions and billions, probably countless trillions, of universes out there in the vastness of outer space. God had a plan for the universe. God has a plan for the earth, and of course, God has a plan for your life and my life. They are all separate, but they are connected because you and I live on planet Earth, and planet Earth is in the universe. So, they are all tied together.

The Bible says in Ephesians 2:7, talking about eternity future for you and for me:

*Ephesians 2:7*

*That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

What an amazing verse. What a plan that God has. Sadly enough, most of God's people, the majority of God's people, go through their whole Christian life never understanding God's plan for the universe, never understanding why God created the earth, and certainly never understanding God's plan for their own life. These two verses are found in Proverbs 22 and Proverbs 23, and these two verses will form for us the landmarks—the two landmarks that you and I, as a child of God, must understand about what God is doing.

Last week, I told you the Bible is a history book. The Bible is many things. Yes, I know it will get you to Heaven, the plan of salvation; I get all of that. But fundamentally, the Bible is a history book, and it is not a history book like all the other history books that are separate from them. All the other history books that you will ever read will tell you down through history what man is doing. The Bible is not a record of the history of man. The Bible is a record of the history of what God is doing. You want to find out where He is at? Find the landmarks. You want to find God today? Get the landmarks. That is the key.

Last week, we looked at Proverbs 22:28:

*Proverbs 22:28*

*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.*

We saw that in the Old Testament, the landmark by which God does everything will be the nation of Israel. We saw that. We looked at seven things that came out of last week:

1. All history will flow through God's nation as He builds His kingdom through that particular nation, the nation of Israel.
2. All history will be a cycle. The book of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is nothing new under the sun. History repeats itself, and this is the great lesson that we miss in history.
3. God will bring into existence the Gentile nations and allow them to exist. But for them to find God in the Old Testament and to find the true God, they had to go through the nation of Israel, and there was no exception to this. Everybody in the Old Testament that was a Gentile had to come through the nation of Israel. You will see it in the book of Ruth. Ruth was a Moabitess, but she met Boaz, and she says the famous line that we always use in weddings: "Your people shall be my people, your God shall be my God." What was she saying? She was saying, "I am a Moabitess, but I want God, and to have God, I have got to become part of the nation of Israel." Romans 3:2 tells us that the oracles of God, the very words of God, were given to and through the nation of Israel. Romans 3:2  
Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.
4. Salvation of mankind, whether it is in the Old Testament or the New Testament, will always be through this landmark. John 4:22 says that salvation is of the Jews. John 4:22  
Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
5. All teachings in public schools, higher education, wherever you go, and many times in Christian education and in Bible colleges, their teaching will always go against what I have just said to you about the nation of Israel being the landmark.
6. All teaching today contrary to the nation of Israel, what we call anti-Semitism—that would be the white supremacist groups or the Aryan Brotherhood or the Ku Klux Klan or any anti-Jewish group that thinks there are many, many people who claim to be Christians and think that they have actually taken the place of the nation of Israel and God is finished with the Jew, and the Jews over there in the Promised Land are not the real Jews, that now they are among the Gentiles and you are the true Israel—all of that teaching, the root of that teaching, will be satanic. Revelation 12 and Revelation 13.

7. At the end, God will use all the nations, as we saw last week, to bring His people back to God, and then He will destroy those nations at the Second Coming of Christ.

Today, we are going to look at our next landmark that is found in Proverbs 23:10, where it says:

*Proverbs 23:10*

*Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:*

Let us pray.

Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the Lord Jesus today, and we love You. We ask You, Father, today to be with us, to give us the Word of God, help us to see these truths, and we just pray today that You will open up our eyes and our hearts and allow us to see the reality of the way things are, not as they appear. We pray, Father, that You will give us clear understanding and clear insight through Your Spirit into Your Word, and help me to find the right words to say the right things that will help people see the truth. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.

## I. The New Testament Landmark: The True Church

In the Old Testament, the landmark will be the nation of Israel—the true Jews—and they are very traceable through history. In the New Testament, our landmark that we are going to follow when we get into the New Testament will be the true Church of Jesus Christ, the Body of Christ. Finding this landmark and staying with it will keep us on track and keep us from entering into, as the Bible says, "the fields of the fatherless."

The "fields of the fatherless" in Proverbs 23:10 will be being lost in history. It will simply mean that you and I do not know where we come from. We do not have any roots. We are orphans. We do not know who our Father is. If there ever was a time that Christianity has lost its way and has gone into the apostasy that all Christianity finds itself in, it would be today. Christianity today, from around 1970 or so through 2018 up through the Rapture, has completely lost its way, and we clearly now are in the fields of the fatherless. We believe the Bible, but we do not know why. We have favorite scriptures or passages and stories, but we could not explain them if our life depended on it. We say we are saved, but if you had to open up the Bible and show the process by which God saved you, you could not do it. That is the mess we are in today.

## II. The Apostasy of the Modern Church

This is not going to be an easy message today. It is going to be a fun one for me, maybe not so fun for you. I am a preacher, and a preacher has a right to preach on another preacher, and I am going to be all over him today. I have been in this business almost 50 years. I know I do not look that old, but I am. One of the kids asked me a couple of weeks ago, "Were you in the war?" I said, "Yes." He asked me if it was the Civil War. I slapped that kid. He reminded me of a kid years ago in a church I was with. Out in the lobby, they had this big plaque of all the soldiers from that church that had died in World War II and in Vietnam. There were like 30 or 40 people

on it, and a little bus kid came up to me. He had never been to church before, and he was looking at it like this, and I said, "Why aren't you in Sunday school?" He said, "Oh, I am going, mister." He said, "This is great. Who are all these people?" I said, "Oh, these are guys who died in the service." He looked at me and said, "The morning service or the evening service?" I am making you laugh now because I am going to hit you with a Billy Jack here in just a few moments.

In the Bible, there are seven things that you lose when you lose your Bible. I have given them to you before. When you let somebody take the Bible from you, and you do not have the complete, absolute, perfect Word of God anymore, you lose seven particular things. Unfortunately, those seven things are the real base of everything Christianity is built on. I lived through this period of time. I had just gotten saved. I got right with God back in the 1970s, in the early 70s, and I actually watched this transpire, so I know what I am talking about. I did not get this from somebody's book; I lived through it. I saw it. I was in the ministry during these things that happened. I talked to the guys.

The New Testament church, by losing sight of the landmark because they lost the Bible, has fallen completely into apostasy today. The book of Colossians is an incredible book. Paul writes to seven churches. In the book of Revelation, in a moment, you are going to see where John writes to seven churches. Most people do not know this, but those seven churches that Paul writes to and the seven that John writes to, they match up. When you get into the book of Colossians, you will find that the book of Colossians lines up with the Laodicean church period—the worst church period in the history of the New Testament church. The book of Colossians mentions Laodicea five times. If you know your geography, Laodicea was just like 11 miles south of Colossae. We find in this great book that this book represents exactly where we are at today. There are only four chapters in it, but each chapter lays out and shows you what the issue is.

In chapter one of the book of Colossians, he goes through and redefines who Christ is again. He talks about what He is, what He has done, what He means to us. Why does he do that? Because the Laodicean church has lost that concept. In chapter two, he tells us what has replaced the Bible today, what has replaced New Testament Christianity, the Church of Jesus Christ. He says in Colossians 2:8:

*Colossians 2:8*

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

That is what has replaced it: philosophy, vain deceit, the rudiments of the world. Then in chapters three and four, two great chapters that tell us as a New Testament Christian who has the landmark, as a New Testament Christian who understands what the issue is, "What do I do? What is my response to it?"

Like the crew of the Lady Be Good that we talked about last week, God's people are lost in the desert. They are dying spiritually. They are in a hostile environment that is called Christianity. That ought to be the place where you have the peace of God, where you get answers to your

problems. God's people have more problems today than the unsaved world does. The tragedy is—and this is hard for some people—the majority of churches today and the pastors and people have lost their way.

When I say what I am about to say, it infuriates people. They get upset with me all the time. What I am about to say is probably one of the most unpopular things anybody can say. I cannot help that; it is true. When I am done this morning with this, hopefully, if you have an IQ above sub-plant life, you will be able to see what I am saying is true. All across this country today, they are holding a Sunday church service in churches that claim to be Christian, but they are using the devil's Bible. Now, you just hang with me. I see your blood vessels popping on your forehead here. Hang on.

It is hard to believe. You and I may go to a church that exalts the devil's Bible to the same level of God's Word, but when you know your Bible in places like Revelation 3:20, the Holy Spirit of God will not. That same majority of God's people that I said will get infuriated with me for making that kind of statement. You know why they will? Because they are orphans. They are living in the fields of the fatherless. They have no roots. They have no depth to them. They are just fooling around with the Bible, and they have drunk the Kool-Aid that the churches are putting out today. They have drunk the Kool-Aid that God's Word is not as powerful as it was all down through history. They have drunk the Kool-Aid that the pastor put out or Bible colleges put out that you cannot have a perfect, absolute Word of God that is every word that God wants you to have without error, that you can trust your soul on.

Now, I believe that. What is wrong with that? You look at me like there is something wrong with what I just said. You know why? Because you live in a Christian world that believes that God did not know what He was talking about. In my Christian world, I know what He was talking about, and He wrote it down for me. How in the world is God going to judge you someday, saved or lost, if the Bible has mistakes in it? You just point out the mistakes, and you will be off the hook. There is only one perfect thing in this world, folks. There is only one perfect, pure thing in this world, and a real child of God will find it. They will fall in love with it, and it will be their most cherished possession. It is the Word of God that God has given you. You do not have that; you do not have anything.

I do not love this world. There is nothing in this world. Oh, I have a good time. I enjoy things. I enjoy doing things with you, but at the end of the day, this world is not my friend, and it is not going to be your friend. The only friend you ever had is the One who died for you on that cross, loved you, and then He wrote you a love letter. The truth is, all of us, alongside real Bible-believing Christians down through history that paid a price with their life and shed their blood over a book, you and I are a joke. We are a joke. Your biggest problem today or next week will be something that he talked about me. "I did not like what the preacher said. He did not shake my hand." Back in the day, what they were worried about is, "Are they going to come and take my little baby boy or girl and throw them to the pigs and let them eat them in front of me and try to make me deny Christ?" A little help balancing the problem, don't you think? People get mad when I talk like this. They get mad. They get upset. You know why? Because deep down inside, they know they could not defend what they believe if their life depended on it. Somebody would

put the old Billy Jack move on them so fast they would not know what hit them. Not only do they not know what to believe, but what they do believe, they could not explain it if their life depended on it. You bought it hook, line, and sinker. Somebody took your Bible from you. Somebody relegated your Bible, which is the perfect, pure Word of God, to make it just like any other book at Barnes & Noble.

### III. The Baptist Distinctive and Church History

This is why we live in the day and age today where pastors of Baptist churches are taking "Baptist" off their name. You went right along with it. You were in a church, he got up, and he said, "We are going to take Baptist off our name," and everybody said, "Oh, that is wonderful!" Everybody else says, and you went right along with it. You never stood up and said, "Are you out of your mind?" You never stood up and said, "I am out of here." You went right along with it. Evil triumphs when good men do nothing.

This message, among other things, and laying out the landmark, I want you to understand, I am going on record here: this message, for time and eternity, will be the reason why we are a Baptist church, or we will stay a Baptist church, no matter who says, "Well, I am not going to a Baptist church." Praise the Lord. I am sure in the Old Testament there were Hittites and Amalekites and Jebusites and Canaanites that said, "I am not going to that Jew to define God," and God said, "That is fine, do your own deal." It does not change the fact. I have had people say, "Well, those crazy Baptists." Well, yeah, those crazy Evangelicals too. Those crazy Charismatics, those crazy Bible... everybody has got crazy. Is there any family in here that you know right now that you have got a crazy uncle or aunt someplace in your family? You are laughing; you know it is true. Yeah, you have got several. I have got several. We all go to family reunions, and it is a joke. Your crazy aunt will go off on something, and you will just all look at each other and say, "Okay, here we go." Now, let me ask you a question: Do you leave the family? Do you change your name? You all have crazy people in our families; you are going to have crazy Baptist churches.

People tell me all the time, "Well, I had a bad experience in church, and I am not going back to church because I had a bad experience." I have had parents tell me, "Well, my boy or my daughter will never go to a church because they had a bad experience in a church one time, and they are just not going back." People are so stupid. I mean, it is ridiculous. I ate at a restaurant one time and got food poisoning. Bad. Threw up for weeks, months. Still have it. I ate at a restaurant, and I know what it was. When you get something that you eat that makes you sick, when you throw up, that will be the taste that comes into your mouth, and you know what it was. I know what I ate. I ate fish with tartar sauce, and the tartar sauce had probably been outdated about 20 years ago. I was so sick. I have got to tell you, it turned me off with tartar sauce for a long time. But I still go out to eat. In other words, just because I had one bad experience in one restaurant, I am never going to not eat out again. What is your mindset? How ridiculously stupid. "Well, I had a bad experience at church, so I am not going to go." Yeah, but you know what? You can go get a bad restaurant, and you will go back out and eat all the time. People are nuts. Absolutely nuts.

Have you ever seen a bad movie? Those of you that go with the ones that I pick, you tell me all the time they are terrible. Nothing crushes my spirit more than me putting together an "Operation 100." We all go out to the movie, and you come out, and I say, and I am excited, "How do you like it?" "Oh, it is terrible." Shut up. Do not be a Methodist. I guess you guys went out to a movie the other night after Bible study, and you did not invite me. I know why: I am no fun, and it was not my kind of movie. You see, you go to these He-Man movies like Captain America, Thor, and all that. I do not go to those. I am much more spiritual than you. I know they are the guys in Genesis 6. Can I get a "whoa" now?

Years ago, a pastor by the name of Reverend Graves from Ashland, Kentucky, wrote a series of books that taught that there were certain prominent landmarks that the Baptist Church had and that they held to all down through history. He said it sets them apart, different from all the other churches. He was a pastor, and he called his church Landmark Baptist Church. I think that is a great name. There are only three names that I would pick for the church: Landmark Baptist, Old Paths (Jeremiah 6:16), and Antioch Baptist (Acts 11). All the other stuff is fluff. If you go to a Baptist church and they call it Grace Baptist or Heavenly Way Baptist or whatever, do not get mad at me. I am just telling you. I told you already, it is just not good. You should have turned this off a while ago.

He says that they were Baptist distinctives. When I was trained in the Bible many, many years ago, almost 50 years ago, this is what I was taught: 10 or 12, I do not know, fundamental Baptist teachings that the Baptists have held all the way down through church history, all the way back to Acts 11, where they are first called Christians in Antioch. I like the word "Baptist" as a Baptist. We are the only group in the history of the world that was given their name by their arch-enemy, because of a doctrine that we held to. Back in the 1300s and 1400s, the Roman Catholic Church was hollering a "mail" through Europe, and the Dark Ages was in effect, and there was a group—we are going to see them in a moment—there was a group of people that the Catholic Church was teaching, "You have to baptize your babies to go to Heaven." A group of Bible believers said, "You are out of your mind," and there were thousands of them that took their stand. You know what they called them? Anabaptists. That is Latin. A name means "again," pedro means "child," baptist means "baptize." We got our name because we refused to deny the blood of Jesus Christ for salvation for adults. We would not baptize our children, and our enemies called us Anabaptists. A little bit later on, by the time we get into the 1500s, they dropped the "Pedro," and they called us "Ana," and in about the 1600s, now it is called "Baptist."

Rome gave Christianity the two defining names. In Acts 11:26, they are first called "Christian." We got that term from the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire had over 600 gods. New Testament Bible-believing Christianity only had one God. They looked at that as a poor man's religion. They made fun of us because they had 600, and they only had one, and we talked about the One that we had living inside us. So, they sarcastically called us "Christians," which means "you are a little Christ." You know that is exactly what you are today. If you are saved this morning, Christ is living inside you. That is a doctrinal statement. The greatest enemy that Christianity ever had gave us two defining names: Christian and Baptist. If you think I am taking

that off of this church, you are out of your mind. You are nuts. You have been smoking something.

Now, let me show you what I am talking about. I need to stop here for a moment, and if you have not already picked this up, this message is going to be very condescending. This is not going to be for the weak, jellyfish, spineless Christians who want to hold hands and sing "Kumbaya." It is not going to play with you. So, if you are listening on YouTube or you are going to listen to this on tape down the line, my advice to you is to shut it off right now. Go over here; there are plenty of places you can go where you can hear whatever you want to hear. I am preaching this message by design. That is because I have the utmost disrespect and disdain for pastors and churches who play church with the devil's Bible, who take their people that God has given them and then steal the Word of God from them and do not give them the truth.

I will tell you, if you have not figured it out, I am old school. I was trained by the guys that were older school than me. I have preached what I believe and preached what I preach for almost 50 years. I have never changed one thing in my stand. I have never come to the place, "Well, I do not believe that anymore." I would hope I got better in my preaching, but I have probably gotten worse, but the bottom line is, I still believe the same thing. There is a book out you ought to read about the Marine Corps in World War II comparing it to the Marine Corps today; it is called *The Old Breed*. Things were different back then. Things meant different back then, and when I grew up in Christianity 50-some years ago, things were different. I am old school. I still believe the Bible is the Word of God. I still believe it will fix every problem you have got. If you look around here and go on our website, we do not have a staff psychologist. We do not have a Christian therapist. We have the greatest Book the world has ever seen. We have the Holy Spirit of God living inside us, and you have a preacher that will preach the hell out of you when you need it. I am just getting warmed up.

I will follow the old paths of Jeremiah 6:16, and I will stay with the old and the ancient landmark.

*Jeremiah 6:16*

*Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*

Last week, I showed you the ancient landmark was the nation of Israel, broken down into eight sections. This week, I am going to show you the landmark of the New Testament church that breaks down into seven, and it makes it real easy. You will find them in Revelation 1, 2, and 3. Know this very important: as you move through these seven stages of the true Church of Jesus Christ, you will also find a false church with a false Bible following right on its heels. When we look at the landmark and we study the landmark and we identify the landmark, we find two clear lines of churches and Bibles: God's and the devil's. So, when I am talking about what I am saying about the devil's church and the devil's Bible, I am not just some raving old senile fanatic. I know what I am talking about. Staying on the old paths with the old landmark will get you to see where God's people down through history traded the Church of Jesus Christ and His Word—yes, that is

right—traded the Church of Jesus Christ and His Word for the devil's church and his Bible. I am going to show it to you today, and most of God's people have no clue. They could not defend their position of their church or what they believed if you put a gun to their head.

New Testament Christianity will start, as I said, in Acts 11:26.

*Acts 11:26*

*And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

I am going to walk you through this. They are first called Christians in Antioch. Antioch is the model church for us. We pattern our church after that church; that is a pattern in the Bible. That is where the landmark is set. In Revelation 1, 2, and 3, it tells us that for the next 2,000 years of church history, we have got to follow that landmark, and God makes it easy for us by breaking it down into seven historical sections. I am going to give them to you very briefly. I am going to give you the eras out of Revelation. I want to give you the time frame in history. We are going to move through these.

- 1.)EphesusRevelation 2:1-4

Revelation 2:1

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Revelation 2:2

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Revelation 2:3

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Revelation 2:4

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.If you want to put this time period approximately in history, it would start around 60 AD, around Acts 20, and run up to around 200 AD. This is a really good church. Revelation 2:2 says about this church in history that it tried the church. It found people who claimed they were apostles, and the Bible says that it found out that they were liars. This was a good, strong church that tried the spirits and laid people out when they were not doing what was right. This church was started by Paul and probably his converts. We have in this time period what we call in history the Apostolic Church Fathers. A couple of them, like Ignatius or Polycarp, were good, solid men. They loved the Lord. But we begin to see during this first 200 years false teaching begin to come into play. We see it originate down in Alexandria, Egypt, and spread up into Christianity. We now begin to see that there are not just four Gospels, but everybody has got a gospel. Today, as we speak, there are probably 80 gospels. There are only four of them that are of God; the rest of them are of the devil. You will find people all

the time. I know a church one time, the pastor said, "Well, I do not think Judas was such a bad guy. I mean, he wrote a gospel. I think he was just misunderstood." John, in John 8:40 someplace in there, it is in the Bible someplace, "Bible John, he is a devil. A devil." Misunderstood? We begin to see it creep in. The devil flooded it with counterfeit manuscripts. He flooded it with pagan philosophers. We see in Revelation 2:4 the beginning of the problem where he says about this church—and by the way, Ephesus means "fully purposed"—it was a church that had everything it needed to do the job. And yet, we see in Revelation 2:4 that we see the first problem where he says, "You left your first love. I have one thing against you: you left your first love." That is the Word of God. We see the first deviation of false teaching and people leaving the Word of God not 200 years after Christ showed up.

- 2.) Smyrna Revelation 2:8-9

Revelation 2:8

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Revelation 2:9

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Smyrna means "bitterness and death." In time period, it will pick up where Ephesus ends, around 200 AD, and it runs up to about 325 AD. The church started to go, you know, it was severely persecuted by the pagan Roman Empire. This will be the time in history where you have the 10 official persecutions of Rome against God's people. Revelation 2:9 says that somebody is coming in claiming to be Jews, and they are not. This will take us up to the Council of Nicaea with the Emperor Constantine in history, and we will find here the Anti-Nicene Fathers, the ones right before the Council of Nicaea. With the first two churches here, Ephesus and Smyrna, we begin to see the development of two lines: two Bibles, two churches.

- 3.) Pergamos Revelation 2:12

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; Pergamos means "much marriage." This period is from 325 to 500 AD in history, found in Revelation 2:12. This will be the rise of Constantine, the Roman Emperor, who was given credit, by the way, in history for ending the pagan Roman Empire and bringing in Christianity to Rome. Actually, with Constantine starts the Roman Catholic Church. He calls the Council of Nicaea, and they have a meeting there, and they set up the rules for Christianity. He goes back to Byzantium, which is modern-day Constantinople, Istanbul to you, and the whole thing was a lot of bull. Anyway, it is a thing where when he goes back, he leaves a bishop on the throne in Rome, and we got the first Pope. So now we start to see that pagan Rome, who used to kill Christians, has now overnight come into Papal Rome, and now it is Christian, and there is no more Christian in my two labs. In fact, my two labs are probably more Christian. We see in history the official start of the Roman Catholic Church. Now, the Catholic Church will tell you that they are the oldest church, that they have been around forever, and people drink that Kool-Aid like it is true. Of course, anybody who knows the landmarks, anybody who knows how the history

knows that the Roman Catholic Church did not start until 400 AD, 400 years after Christ. But that is fact. You say, "You are just, you are just..." No, no, no, you could go to any library in any city in any town in this country and find that information. Somebody said one time, "Wow, how do you find all this stuff? It is a conspiracy; they hide it in books."

- 4.)ThyatiraRevelation 2:18

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;Thyatira means "odor of affliction." Time frame: 500 to 1000 AD, the first part of the Dark Ages. Revelation 2:18. Where in Pergamos the pagan Roman Empire murdered all the Christians, now the Roman Catholic Church will murder all the Christians because they will not become Catholic. This is the start of the Dark Ages. The Dark Ages run from 500 to 1500 AD—the worst period of time in all the history of the world. The world is in total darkness. If you had a forerunner of the King James Bible back in the Dark Ages, and you were found by the Roman Catholic Church to have that versus their Bible—we have two now because we have two churches—the punishment for having the Bible that you have in your lap, even though it was not in effect yet, but the forerunner of it, was capital punishment. You were killed. Somebody said one time, "We need to have a knockdown of all the nuclear weapons. The most dangerous thing in the world is an atom bomb." How stupid that is. No, it is true history: the most dangerous thing in the world is the Word of God. I do not know any nation that outlawed the atomic bomb, but I know a bunch of them that outlawed the Bible. So, you have Thyatira. Worst period. The only light during this period of time are the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of men and women, just like you, who believed a book, believed God, and in spite of the opposition, in spite of the oppression, in spite of the persecution, took their stand. You could read about them in Fox's Book of Martyrs, orTortured for Their Faith, two great, great books that you ought to read.

- 5.)SardisRevelation 3:1

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.The next one, number five, is Sardis. This will be Revelation 3:1. Sardis means "red ones," red in the sense of covered in blood. This will bring us up to 1000 AD till the end of the Dark Ages in 1500 AD. This will be the time of the Crusades. This will be the time of Robin Hood, Camelot, all the fun things that we like to watch, all the things, "men in tights"—not my favorite movie, but maybe you enjoyed it. You will find it during this time: the first English translation. Get this: the first English translation in around 1200 AD, which is a forerunner of the Bible you have in your lap right now, the King James 1611 Authorized Version. Wycliffe put out his first English translation in 1200 AD, and the Roman Catholic Church went ballistic. We find during this time the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and the history of the Pope, which was written by the Catholic historians, leads us up to the Reformation with Martin Luther, which brings us into the next one.

- 6.)PhiladelphiaRevelation 3:7-8

Revelation 3:7

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and

shutteth, and no man openeth;

Revelation 3:8

I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Philadelphia, Revelation 3:7, which is about in our time frame 1600 to 1900 AD. Philadelphia means "brotherly love." Without a doubt, Philadelphia is the greatest period of church history the world has ever seen. It is a time when three-quarters of the world were won to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The two greatest nations on the face of this planet that had a King James 1611 Authorized Version were England and the United States. During those 400 years, the King James Bible reigned supreme. You only had two Bibles back then: you had the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims, and you had the King James 1611 Authorized Version. You had great preachers. You had great missionaries. You had the whole world bathed in the light of the Word of God. I wish I had time to go into great detail. I am just giving you a small capsule. If you ever want to get it, go to the website. We are going to have five or six volumes on church history in the book, but you can get it on the website. I took about 500 hours and laid this stuff out, went into every detail. I cannot do it today, but my point is to show you the landmark. This is called in Revelation 3:8 the "church of the open door." You know why? Because the Bible says in that passage that because they kept His Word, God opened the door, and no man can shut it, and the King James Bible went around the world several times.

- 7.)Laodicea Revelation 3:14

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; Then around 1900 or so, we move into the last, the seventh period, Revelation 3:14, which is called Laodicea. This will run from about 1900 up through the time that you and I live, up to the Rapture of the church. This is the final apostasy of the church going back to Rome. Revelation 3:20, where he said in Revelation 3:8, the Philadelphia church was the church of the open door. Now this church, Revelation 3:20, is the church of the closed door—a fake, godless Christianity and church with the devil's Bible that pretends to be of God. What a mess. Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Within these seven periods, you will find your roots as Baptists. You will find your roots as a Bible believer, and also you will find those Baptist distinctives that we hold to, the doctrines that we believe today that they believed all throughout history by the Bible-believing groups. Remember, a church, the real true Church of Jesus Christ, will not be defined by what it looks like. It will not be defined by how big the congregation is or how nice the choir sounds. The real Church of Jesus Christ, the true church, will all be defined by what they believe. When you do not know what the Baptist distinctives are, of what was held back through history through the landmark, then you can see your problem: 99% of God's people today are in the fields of the fatherless.

## IV. The Line of True Bible Believers

Let me walk you through this now that I have given you a little overview. Here is what we have got: when Christianity got started in Acts 11, the church at Ephesus, there were men who were born again. Many were saved by Paul or some of his converts, and they were men who loved the Lord and loved the Word of God. This will be the church at Ephesus in Acts 20. As we see now, we start to see the first deviation of the Word of God, and bad teaching began to creep in, and the true men that held the line and believed the Book and knew that they were the true church said, "You are out of your mind!" The doctrine of infant baptism had come up, the doctrine of all kinds of heresies that began to creep in, and they simply said, "Absolutely not!" The whole world of Christianity back then, coming out of Alexandria, was shifting to this blasé, gray mesh that we call Christianity today, and these men would not do it. Revelation 2:7 calls them the "overcomers."

*Revelation 2:7*

*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

There were men like Montanus, men like Novatian, men like Donatus, men like Manes, men like Pelagius, and of course, they took a stand, and they said, "Our church is not going that way. We are going to stick with the Book. I do not want any of this junk that you are bringing up from Alexandria. There are a bunch of philosophers down there that believe everything about the Bible is false. We are not going with that." When they took their stand against what was forming up as the mainstream of Christianity, the people that followed them were called by the leader that they followed: Montanus's group was called the Montanists; Novatian's group was called Novatians; Donatus's group was called Donatists; Manes's group was called the Manichaeans. Now, the new order of Christianity, the false church, labeled these men as heretics because the false teaching beginning to develop under the devil was beginning to move through, and anybody who stood for the truth was being persecuted by the hierarchy of all the other teaching. So, they labeled these people after the men that they followed. This early group—this is just a few, there were a bunch of them—were called by the man they followed as a tentative statement on what they believed. It was a lot like you being called a "Ruckmanite" back in J. Frank Norris's day; they called his followers "Norrisites." These men were pastors who would not compromise with the corrupt teaching that was coming out of Alexandria, and they stayed away from it, and they stayed with the Book. They stayed with what they knew to be true, and they preached it.

Stay with me, stay with the landmark. As Christianity gets larger and moves across Asia and into Europe, the true church was moving forward, and the false church was hot on its heels. In 325 AD, in Pergamos, we saw the false new beginning of the Roman Catholic Church under the Emperor Constantine, and we see the start now of Roman Catholicism. We see in Revelation 3:14 that their doctrine is now established. The Bible says in Revelation 2:13 that in this church, Satan has a seat.

*Revelation 2:13*

*I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

This next group picks up around 500 to 1500 AD. This will be Thyatira and Sardis, into the Dark Ages. Now, there are so many Christians all over the place that they cannot label them by the guy that they are following. Before, it was easy because they were small bands of churches and groups that took their time. Now, by this time, four or five hundred years later, they are all over the place, and the false church, the Roman Catholic Church, is having a tough time with them. So now, in history, they do not call them after the guy that they are following anymore. Now, they will call them in history after the geographical location by which they lived. These are all Bible believers that believe you get saved by the blood. They all believe that the King James 1611 is their Authorized Version of the absolute Word of God, and they all believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the great whore (Revelation 17 and Revelation 18; read it, go to the public library, get a book on it). You have now, they are called Paterines out of North Italy and Southern France. Now, they are called Bogomils out of Eastern Europe. In France, they are called Cathari. They are called the Waldenses in Italy, or the Lombards up in North Italy. They are called Albigenses in Southern France and Waldensians in the Piedmont Valley of Italy. They are called Huguenots in Southern France. They are called Hussites in what used to be Czechoslovakia. They are called the Sandilades in Italy, and they are called the Paulicians after the fact that they would not follow the teachings of Peter that the Roman Catholic Church taught. They said, "What we believe, the church follows what Paul writes." You see, they could not call them anymore by the guy they followed; too many. So now, they call them by the geographical location in which they live.

I am going to tell you this: when you read history and you get a history book, you will find that these guys are labeled by historians as cults—people who believed all kinds of weird things, some of the worst things are said about them. You know why that is? Because during the Oxford Movement, the Roman Catholic Church, through the Jesuits, rewrote history and read all that stuff, and the very enemies of the one who wrote their history. It will be a lot like a hundred years from now if somebody who does not like us writes our history; that will be worth reading.

As time moves on, we find the end of Sardis moving into Philadelphia, 1500 to 1600 AD. Now, the Bible-believing groups are so strong, and they are everywhere. I mean, they have all linked together. Europe is filled with them. Bible-believing men and women are out there preaching and passing out and telling the story, the Gospel, and just putting it out there, and Rome could not kill them fast enough to stop them. So now, they give them a name not based on the man that they followed—stay with me—not based on the man that they followed, not based on the geographical location where they live. Now, they give them a name based on the number one doctrine that they had against them. Now, they called them Anabaptists because these guys all across Europe, Asia Minor, they were taking their stand that if you baptize a baby for salvation, it is going to go straight to hell when it dies. They were teaching and preaching that salvation is only for adults through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross, exactly what we teach. Later on, they are called Anabaptists, then they are called just Baptists. The Baptist church, the

true one, the ones that stood around—very few today—will represent the line of the Bible believers and the landmark going all the way back through history to Acts 11 if they understand the landmark and follow what the church had always believed.

When we started our church 15, 16 years ago, I made no bones about it: we would be as close to the church at Antioch that we could possibly get to. We believe the King James Bible is the absolute, perfect Word of God. We just simply believe that. We believe that all other Bibles are satanically inspired, including the New King James Bible. You have got a lot of either idiot-stick pastors out there that say, "Well, we do not use the King James; we use the New King James." The New King James is satanic. It has got over 10,000 changes. It came out with Thomas Nelson in 1979. You know where I was in 1979? I was here in Kansas City. I knew the pastors that Thomas Nelson said, "We want to put out a new translation. We are just going to take the old King James Bible, which everybody loves, and make it better." All the pastors said, "Okay, nothing wrong with that." Then they went around to all the big Baptist preachers, 20 or 30 of them, and they said, "Would you sit on a board to make sure that this is acceptable?" And they all said, "Yes." I knew all of those pastors. I was very good friends with several of them. Every one of those pastors got off the revision committee. They said, "We want no part of it." I asked them why. They said, "It became obvious enough that they were not just updating the archaic words; they were changing the text to bring it in line with a corrupt Roman Catholic text out of Alexandria, and it made over 10,000 textual changes." You will say, "Well, in our church, we use the New King James Bible; it is not as bad as the other." Let me ask you a question, pastor: In your church, how much error in a Bible are you willing to allow? That is the question. "Well, we... we do not know." You do not know the issue. You are too busy mixing the Kool-Aid for all your people. The only one dumber in your church is the people who listen to you, who you try to say, "Well, the King James, New King James Bible is okay." No, no, no, no. The New King James, all the Baptists got off of it because of where they were going with it, and they sold you a bill of goods, and you stand in the pulpit every Sunday morning preaching the Word of God out of a Bible that the devil has sown his poppy seeds, a little sprinkly on your Bible donut. I did not have that in my notes; I just thought of that. That was kind of good, little sprinklies on your document.

We believe in separation from the world. We still do. We do not think Christians ought to drink. We do not think Christians ought to socially drink. I had a church one time, I had a buddy that had a drinking problem, and they sent him to that church. They had a psychologist, and he says, "Well," he says, "you know what? Drinking comes in three phases: we have recreational drinking, serious drinking, and then addiction to drinking. As long as you stay in the first one, you are okay." Now, I am going to tell you something: your old sin nature will never let you stay in the first one because there is always another party to go to. You say, "Well, I am just going to have a beer or two," and somebody will bring out Captain Morgan, and there you go. Do not tell me you cannot tell your flesh when enough is enough. You cannot tell your flesh, "I am just going to have a little bit." You cannot tell your flesh. I will tell you what, when they legalize marijuana in Missouri, and you know they are going to, you are going to see a revolution in churches now that it is okay because it is not against the law. You know how I know that? Because some of you are already smoking it, and it is against the law. And now it is going to be,

"Jesus was high on a mountain." Do not tell me. We still believe that if you are a Christian, you ought to be separated from the world. You ought to be different from the world. What is going to draw people to Christ if you are just like the world? You ought to be different than the world. You ought to smell different. You ought to look different. You ought to act different.

We still believe that salvation is by the blood of Christ. We still hold to the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that doctrine is the most important thing.

*2 Timothy 3:16*

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

We just follow the pattern that Bible is profitable doctrine. You know what doctrine is? Doctrine will tell you what is right. You know what Christianity does not have today? They do not have a guideline of what is right anymore. Then it says "reproof." Not only will the Bible tell you what is right, but then it will tell you what is wrong. Then it says "correction." Not only will it tell you what is right, it will tell you what is wrong, and now it will tell you how to fix it. Then it says "instruction in righteousness." Not only will it tell you what is right, wrong, and how to fix it, now it will tell you how to keep it fixed. We hold to the teaching that the books of the Bible, all 66 of them, are sacred and were given to us by God for us to live our lives by, to raise our families by, and to live our own personal relationship with Him by. We also believe that all down through history, the Christian church, the church was not for everybody. Neither will this one be. We are built on truth, and there are very few people out there today that want the truth.

Stay with me, follow the landmarks here. The Reformation comes under Martin Luther. Europe is now landlocked, so the Pilgrims show up. They are escaping religious persecution from Rome, so they come over, and following them are thousands of Bible believers who want a place where they can teach the Bible, raise their family, read their Bible, have their Bible without their door being kicked down at three o'clock in the morning and being tortured. They are Dutch Baptists. They are German Baptists. They are English Baptists. The first two Baptist churches in America were founded in 1637 and 1638 by two men in Rhode Island, both pastors: one was John Clarke, and one was Roger Williams. John Clarke and Roger Williams were from Waldensian stock, right on the line. The next hundred years, we see the Baptists spread out through the Eastern Seaboard and through America like melted butter on popcorn. But then apostasy begins to set in, and in 1900, the three major denominations—the Southern Baptist Convention, the GRB, the American Baptist—all go into apostasy.

What did God do? God does what He always did. He raised up out of the Southern Baptist Church a man by the name of J. Frank Norris, the "Texas Tornado." He raised up a man who took on every Baptist theological seminary on this planet and said, "We are going to stick with the Word of God," and boy, did he take them on. Now, get this, I want you to understand landmarks, get this, get this: this church, me, we are the great-grandchild of J. Frank Norris. My pastor back in Canton Baptist Temple, Dr. Harold Henniger, was one of Norris's boys. They sent me out here to Kansas City, ordained me, and sent me out to preach the Gospel and build a church in 1976.

He was one of J. Frank Norris's young men. We have stayed with the landmark. We are on the right line. We are right where we are supposed to be.

Again, in 1970 and 80, 90, up to today, the Baptist church has lost its way, got caught up in higher education, and lost the power, the truth, and the leadership went south, and neo-evangelicalism came in and destroyed what was left of it. God raised up another guy; his name was Dr. Peter S. Ruckman. What J. Frank Norris did back in the 20s and the 30s, Dr. Ruckman did back in the 60s and the 70s and the 80s. Now, it does not matter to me what you think about him. It does not matter to me if you even like him, but I will tell you this: you would not have a Bible this morning that you could call your own without those two guys. We would all be in the fields of the fatherless. Why? Because there were two little guys that would stand up and say, "We are going to take our stand." Now, I do not know about you, that bothers me that at the Judgment Seat of Christ, I am going to have to stand alongside of those guys. Maybe that does not bother you. These guys stayed with the old landmark so you and I could have it, and what do we do with it? These men paid the price, along with thousands of others, so you and I could have a Bible. My personal heritage in life, my personal line going back through the Bible, right on the landmark, the two of the greatest men that kept Christianity from going into apostasy, J. Frank Norris, my former pastor, and Pete Ruckman, taught and trained my father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka. I am on the right line. I am not sure what line you are on, but I am on the right one, and that is why I am not changing. I know where the landmark is. I know what it means, and all of this is lost today. It is gone, swallowed up.

The idea of the Laodicean church is that the churches today are to be rich, increased with goods, have need of nothing. The Bible says in Revelation 3:17:

*Revelation 3:17*

*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

And this church, we will stay with the two landmarks that God has provided for us. We will not lose our way. We will not forsake our heritage, our roots. We will not forget where we have come from. We will not forget the price that was paid. As far as from this pulpit, I will never, absolutely never, forget that, and as long as I have breath to preach, I will not let you forget it, and I will never let us forget that we, through history, are Bible believers, and we will have our enemies too. We will have enemies that are within the Body of Christ, and we will have enemies without. It just goes with history. People will hate us, lie about us, call us a cult, laugh and make fun of us. That is okay. But just know and make note of one thing: they will always do it behind our back or from the safety of a computer keyboard. They will never challenge you face to face. They will never challenge us face to face in an open forum because the answer is simple, and obviously, Billy Jack is waiting for them, and some of you men and some of you ladies and some of our high school kids would plant your left foot up around their head so fast they would not know what hit them because there are those here who know the Bible. I have made it my life mission to take every young man, every young lady that wanted, every mom and dad, every

couple, every older person that wanted to have the Bible, I have made it my life mission that you could have it. Why? So you could stand and take your stand.

## V. The True Church vs. The False Church

Just as within the nation of Israel, the ancient landmark, all nations, false religions were against them and tried to stop them, and they tried to stop them by erasing the landmark from history. So, in the church age today, the enemy of God, the true church, the enemy of the true church, will try to erase, and they will use Jesus Christ's own church to get the wrong Bible, to get the wrong King going, and try to erase your heritage in history, and God's people just stand by, let them do it. We think because we have got a great big church, and it has got a praise band, it has got all these things going, and we have got this, and we have got that, "Oh, it is a wonderful thing, God must be here." God does not need a Starbucks. He does not need a praise band to give Him praise. The praise comes in the hearts of believers through the Word of God. You do not have the Word of God, you do not have praise; you just have a Christian rock band. So, in the true church today, the enemy of God, or the true church, has tried to erase the very truth that the true Church of Christ was founded in Acts 11, and up to about 120, 140 years ago, every Baptist in this church believed.

Now, the Bible says in Hosea 8:12 that those same great doctrines and teachings that we all stood for are now strange things, all because we removed the two great landmarks that will keep us on course and keep us from being deceived.

*Hosea 8:12*

*I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.*

Christianity today, Baptists, we have entered into the fields of the fatherless. We have lost the truth of God's Word. History will always repeat itself. Not learning the lessons of history will be the greatest mistake any pastor, any country, or any church will ever make. The only thing that men never learned from history is men never learn anything from history. Whenever we went into the apostasy, they lost everything that they once had with God, and the Bible says that now in 2 Timothy 3:5 that they had a form of godliness, but they denied the power thereof.

*2 Timothy 3:5*

*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

1 Samuel 4:21 says that when God's people in the Old Testament, the landmark, went into apostasy, and God was going to put them into captivity, it says back there in 1 Samuel 4:21 that God wrote "Ichabod" over the door: "God is departed."

*1 Samuel 4:21*

*And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.*

And the Church of Jesus Christ, "Ichabod" is over the door. Revelation 3:20, it is just that simple. Romans 2:20 says, "We have now instructors of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has a form of knowledge."

*Romans 2:20*

*An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law:*

Colossians 2 says, and today in the New Testament church, Christianity is nothing but an empty shell, a phony, broken system of endless, meaningless programs that are all tied back to the world system through philosophy (Colossians 2), vain deceit, traditions of men, and rudiments of the world. "Oh, but we have got a great church!" "Well, what is your church like?" "We have got a restaurant. We have got a Starbucks. We have got a gym. We have got a fitness center. We have got an on-staff psychologist. We have got millions of dollars in property. We have got a rock praise band. We have got everything but the Bible." Ichabod.

But as always, God—I love it—you will find all down through history of the New Testament church, the true landmark, as the main line slipped into apostasy, there always was that little no-name guy or gal who took the stand for Christ. Every place in history, the common, ordinary guy who never got his name up in lights, never wrote any books, never was a famous pastor, never was the toast of the Christian town, but he just dealt with truth and put the truth out. Just a little guy who held up the light in the darkness. Just a guy just like you. Just a mom just like you. Just like you young kids at school, in your job, wherever you go, the world is in darkness, and you are that little light. Most of you, many of you, got into this church and got saved because somebody was a shining light in your dark world. While all Christianity today and all the big churches are running like a big business—they do not call it a pastor anymore, he is now a CEO—they run like a big business, and all of them are fighting in this town, in every town, to build a bigger building that looks better than the other person, to get all the amenities, that "you will go to my church because we have got a prettier doghouse." Everybody today in Christianity, all the churches, all the pastors, they all want to be the main chandelier in the ballroom of Christianity. I do not ever want this church to be the main chandelier in Christianity in Kansas City. I want this church to be a light bulb in the back porch. I want it to be a church where the lost, the broken, and the hurt, the ones that do not have any money, the ones that do not have anything, the ones that have addictions, the ones that have problems, the ones that struggle when they are married, they struggle in their own personal life—I want this to be a place for them. I want you, God has given me you, the little guys, the nobodies, much like myself, but nobodies, just to stand in the darkness of this old world and hold up the light that God has given you. That is all He has asked us to do. But you have got to have the landmark. You have got to have the landmark.

## VI. Christ's Focus on His Bride

Last week, I told you that in the Old Testament, all God cared about was His wife, the nation of Israel. Now, listen to me very carefully: all the events of history, the great strides of the Gentile nations, the great wars, the advancements of science, their great discoveries, the great

philosophers, the great writers of plays and music, the great architects—God cared absolutely nothing about them. History writes volumes on them; God never mentions them. All God saw, all God could care about, and all God was focused on was the nation of Israel, His wife. To Him, and today—and you better get this, this is so far out of line that it is unbelievable, but it is so true—all Christ cares about is His bride. Look at Song of Solomon, in particular chapter two. He does not care who wins the Final Four next week. I have got a little 99-year-old lady over there that is praying that Lola wins it, but it does not matter. God does not care. I know that when a guy hits a home run, he will walk around going, "God!" God does not care. A guy makes a touchdown, he will go like, "Thank you, God, for giving me the speed to run past all these guys." God says, "What is that? Did he break his knee or what is going on down there?" God does not care. He does not care who wins the Super Bowl. He does not care who wins the World Series. He does not care what is going on around the world. He does not care about North Korea. He does not care about China. He does not care about the things that are happening all around the world. That is the Father's plan.

Oh, Jesus, listen to me, listen to me, listen to me: all Jesus Christ cares about is you, His bride. He thinks about you all the time. He desires to speak with you all the time. He wants to have a relationship with you all the time. He wants you to take Him wherever you go, speak to Him through your own spirit in every way, in every way you can. He cares about only us. Song of Solomon 2 talks, right before the Rapture of the church, about how the Bridegroom, the love of our lives, is looking through the lattice, getting a glimpse of His bride. He cannot wait to be with you. The difference between us and Christ is that He only has eyes on you and me. The difference is, we have eyes on everything but Him. We love things. We love our cars. We love our houses. We love our boats. We love our money. We love our material possessions.

I have seen in my ministry, over all my life, I have seen kids that had great potential. I have seen young ladies that I thought could have really turned the world upside down for Christ. They had great potential. I have seen many of you here, but they never would go the distance. They never would get past a point in their life. They would find some guy in their life, and they would give him everything. They would give the intimacy that God wanted with them; they would give it to him. They would give all of themselves to him and give nothing to the Lord. Oh, they would give a little bit. They would come to church. They would get disciplined. But you see very clearly that there is coming a point in their life where they are not going any farther. They now have somebody in their life that they love more than they love God. Christ, in Christ's eyes, they are everything to Him. In their eyes, Christ is a secondary thing. "This guy right here is all I want." I have seen guys do the same thing. I have seen them have great potential. I have seen where I thought they could do some incredible things for the Lord, but they will only go so far. They will put a stopgap in their walk with God because they will find some gal, or they will find this, or they will find some job, and they will find something to them that means more than anything else in their life. The most important thing in your life this morning ought to be the Lord Jesus Christ, who loves you more than life itself. He loves you. He wants to spend time with you. When He wants to talk with you, you are too busy texting all over the world. He wants to just spend time with you. You cannot. You are on Facebook. You are telling everybody about your latest disease. You have got social disease. You are bragging about it. You are out there telling about the party

you went to last night, the vacation you are going to take, and all the time He is just standing there waiting for you to talk to Him, dying, looking at you, saying, "Why won't they put Me in their life number one?" That is a good question. Why won't we? Why won't we for the things of this old world? The landmark, you see, when you know the landmark, then you know your heritage. When you know your heritage, you know your roots, and when you know your roots, you know the price that was paid, and you are not going to sell that to anybody.

## VII. Antipas and The Call to Stand

Many heroes in the Bible, if you do not get anything else out of this today, you are going to leave today understanding why I am the way I am. Maybe this is more of a reference of revealing of who I am than it is for you. But there are many heroes in the Bible, men and women who form great role models for us to all follow. You have got Moses, you have got Abraham, you have got Joshua, you have got David, you have got Elijah, you have got Micaiah, one of my favorites. My list is endless, but to me, my favorite, without exception, is a man that there is really nothing mentioned about in the Bible hardly at all, and you would think that would be strange to make this man your role model. But when you look at the context of the circumstances that he lived in, he is only mentioned one time in the Bible. Nothing really stated about him anywhere else in the Bible, but he is a man that I want to be like. Most people, most Christians, do not even know where he is at in the Bible. They do not even know that his name exists. That is a tragedy. He is found in Revelation 2, and he is found right in the middle of the Pergamos church period, 325 to 500 AD. He is found at a time when the church is going to hell quickly, and they are getting hooked up and married to the world under Constantine, and he is about to face some of the greatest challenges as a Bible-believing man who loves God that anybody is ever going to face. He is found in Revelation 2:13, and it says this one little verse on him:

*Revelation 2:13*

*I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

All we know about him, and yet I can get out of that one verse four things about him, and these four things are important, but it is not the reason why he is my hero. It is not the reason that I am the way I am today, and maybe you will better understand once you see the landmarks. The first thing that he says there is that he never denied the faith. He stayed faithful. I appreciate that about him. I appreciate any man that is faithful to the Word of God, any woman, and I have got a bunch of them here. You are more faithful to the Book than you are to anything else in his life, and I love you for that. The second thing is that he was faithful in what he did. He was faithful in what God called him to do. You see, faithfulness is a great quality that runs throughout this church. My job is to take you younger men and women, like we talked about, and get involved in things and do, but I commit those things to other men who are faithful, who have been around, who know, and the whole system just teaches not only to divide the faith but teaches you to be faithful. Then the third thing I know about him is the fact that he was martyred. Now, that does not mean that I want to die as a martyr, but it does mean to me that something that we all had a

love for, that he loved the Book enough to die for it. Do you? And yet, I will say that it is easy to die for the Lord; it is really hard to live for Him. But he was a martyr. The fourth thing we know about him is he was killed by the Roman Catholic Church where he stood his stand on the Book because it says "where Satan's seat is" and "where Satan dwelleth" in 325 AD in Pergamos. That is only one place. Four great things about him. There will be great character qualities for anybody to follow, but that is not why I follow him. It is his name that says it all and speaks volumes about him, and in the time period that he lives. Antipas, you know what Antipas means? Antipas means "against everything." This man stood against everything that was not right with God. That is what got him martyred. Antipas means "against everything." In my day and age, Bible Christianity is being married to the world. Let me ask you, what are you against? What are we against? For me, I am against everything. Everything in this rotten mess called Christianity, and everything that destroys people's lives in the Word of God. Someday, I will have to stand before God, and I will have to stand with Antipas, and I want to stand tall with him. I do not want to have to be afraid that when I finally get there, I realize that I missed the landmark. I missed my calling. I missed the greatest opportunity in my life to take my stand for God against the opposition, but the opposition was too great, and I was too fearful, and I just put my tail between my legs like a little puppy dog. I went in the corner when all the Antipases stood up and paid the price.

I do not think he is a real character, but one of my favorite movies is the movie Spartacus with Kirk Douglas, the old one, the real one. All these fake things now. You know, I went to see the new Ten Commandments movie. What a joke! You know, they just must figure it out that once you have a classic, you are not going to improve on it. One of the goofiest things is back in the day when Cecil B. DeMille made that movie, he had 30,000 extras. When they showed those great mob scenes for millions of thousands of people, they were all real people. Today, we computer generate them. You know, you can tell the difference. You can tell between a real person and a computer-generated, like you can tell the difference between a real Christian and a phony. You just have got to look close. But my favorite part of the movie is when they get defeated, and they have got the captives left, and this Roman emperor wants Spartacus because Spartacus had been a thorn in his side. They have got him on the hillside, and he will say, "I will let all of you live and will not kill you if you do not tell me. I am going to crucify you upside down all the way down the Appian Way out of the Roman city. I want to know who Spartacus is. Tell me who Spartacus is. I want Spartacus." And Kirk Douglas, Spartacus, he has got some honor. He is not going to let that happen, and he starts to stand up, and one of his guys pulls him down, and over here to the right, some little guy gets up, and he says, "I am Spartacus." He looks at him, and then this guy stands up, and he says, "I am Spartacus." And then this guy stands up. Pretty soon, 40 people are standing up saying, "I am Spartacus." Pretty soon, they are all standing up, and the real Spartacus is looking with tears running down his eyes. He made such an impact in their life that they were willing to take his stand. That is what Antipas has done for me. He made such an impact in my life that at the Judgment Seat of Christ, when the Lord says, "Will Antipas stand up?" I am going to stand up and yell, "I am Antipas!" standing with him. That is where it is at today. That is where it is at today.

In the United States Navy, a captain of a ship, the man who walks that bridge, has literally your life in his hands. You may be an able seaman, the chief petty officer, or even an officer in the officer corps, but he makes the decisions, and when he says, "Go to battle," you all go to battle, and he literally, by the decisions he makes, holds your life in his hands. Listen to me: the church that you go to and the pastor you submit yourself to has your millennial rewards in his hands. What he teaches you, how he leads you, what he gives you, and what he takes from you. The Bible says in Revelation 3:11:

*Revelation 3:11*

*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

You better get the right church with the right guy, with the right line, with the right landmark. You better get the right landmark. You better get the right pastor. You better get the right Book, and you better get the right church because your millennial heritage depends on it. It depends on it.

Now, there you have it: the landmarks, one for the Old Testament, one for the New Testament, that brings you completely through the Bible and wraps everything that God is, everything God is doing, around two identities. In the Old Testament, it is the nation of Israel; everybody had to go through the Jew. In the New Testament, it is the church; everybody has to go through the church. Where in the Old Testament a Gentile had to go through the Jew to get salvation, in the New Testament, the Jews have got to go through the Gentile to get it, just reversed. But it has to be the true line. It has to be off the old landmark. It has to have a heritage and roots that are fundamentally built all the way back to Antioch by a line, through a line in history, that never lost sight of what God was doing. Men have changed. Times have changed, and some things are different. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word will never pass away." That Book is as good today as it was 500 years ago. Nothing about the Bible needs to be changed, but everything about us needs to be changed. That is the key.

Let us pray.

Father, thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You. I pray today would be received, accepted with the spirit and the love that I tried to give it. I just get upset with pastors who steal the crowns from God's people, and I know You do, and I am just doing what I think You would do if You were here. I love You, and I love You for what You have done in my life, the Book You have given me, and how good You have been to me many times that I did not deserve it, the chances You have given me when I did not deserve it. I just pray, Father, that You will just take these people and help me every day to be a better pastor, a better teacher. Help me to love them more every day, love You more every day, and love that Book every day. Help me never to stand on this pulpit and flinch from the truth, no matter who it may offend, and help me to take young men and young ladies and help train them and teach them to be everything that God wants to be. Bring me the men and the women who will help me do what I need to do in the lives of these young men and women. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, and thank You for the landmark. May we never lose them, never, never lose sight of it, and may we

always know that today, tomorrow, until Jesus comes, the number one thing on Your Son's heart will be us. Help us love Him like He loves us. In Jesus' name, we ask it, Amen.