

John 1:1-3

Sunday 9/13/2020

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn to the Gospel of John. We are going to start today a verse-by-verse study of what is actually, I think, one of my favorite books in the Bible. I have a number of them, and of course, like everything, when you are going through something in your life or a period of time in your life, different things become more important to you. But at the end of the day, it is all important.

You have heard me say many times before that the breakdown of the Old Testament and the New Testament is key to understanding what God is doing. In the Old Testament, you have the book of Genesis, which is your first book in the Bible, and it is the greatest definitive book in the Old Testament. The book of Genesis is placed as the beginning of your Bible for many reasons, but it is the book of the beginning. It is also a book of the beginnings of everything that God is going to do throughout the rest of the Bible.

Then you have four historical books after that: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, that then begin to show you what God is doing. The reason for that is after everything is defined in Genesis, God now takes them and develops them into a nation through a 40-year journey. Beyond that, you find the five key areas that God is doing with the nation of Israel to bring them as His people, to bring the message of God to the world. But it all gets defined in Genesis.

It is Genesis that brings us through the early aspect and then brings us to Abraham. Abraham then brings us to Isaac. Isaac then brings us to Jacob. God changes his name to Israel. From Jacob come 12 boys who become the 12 tribes, and you know the rest of the story. They come out into Egypt and then they come out as a nation. During that, after it is defined for you, then we have the five key areas. Genesis starts the formulation, then the calling out in Exodus, then the establishment in 1 Samuel, and then we see their demise after David and Solomon, and then we see the captivity. It completely gives you a complete understanding of what God is doing in the Old Testament.

What I want to always try to do for you is to put the Bible together for you. I never want to leave a lot of loose ends out. You will notice that if you have been around here any length of time, I do not preach a lot of personal things. If I cannot substantiate it in the Scriptures, then I am not really interested in it. When it comes to understanding John, where we are starting today, we are going to follow the same principles that we teach in everything.

I always say it is not enough just to know the books of the Bible, but we have to understand the history and the concepts about those books. In time, as we do it, you lay your Bible out. There is no question about this. You lay your Bible out one book at a time. Then once you get good with that, then you lay the books out one chapter at a time. As you really get good with it, then you lay them out one verse at a time. But putting those books in the order of what they teach and what they bring us, each one will have its own layout that will fit together and form up for us what we know is the whole Bible.

Just like in the Old Testament, God has Genesis first, and then four historical accounts that set us on a course of what God is doing and calling out His nation. When we come to the New Testament, we have the four historical books first: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then God gives us the definitive book for the New Testament.

There are two key books in your Bible that if you are ever going to figure out your Bible and get a handle on it, you are going to have to see and understand. For the Old Testament, of what God is doing, it is Genesis. In the New Testament, for what God is doing, it is the book of Acts. Those four historical books will give us who Christ is, show us His first coming to the world, and then deal with His death, burial, and resurrection and how He changed the world. After that happens, you have the next book, the book of Acts. From the four Gospels, we know we move into the New Testament, we move into the church age, and then the book of Acts, our defining book for the New Testament, then shows and defines for you and me all that is going to happen for the next 2,000 years. Those two books have to be in your mindset of what they will do for you.

I. The Four Gospels and Christ's Portrayals

When it comes to the book of John this morning, there are a number of things that I want you to begin to grasp. First of all, I want you to understand the context of the Gospel of John. What I am about to give you, I have given you before, part of it, but it is a little-known truth when it comes to people out there in churches today. The four Gospels will show us four different aspects of Christ. Here again, getting each book laid out for yourself so that you understand how each one works.

- Matthew: Christ as the King of the Jews
- Mark: Christ as a Servant
- Luke: Christ as the Son of Man
- John: Christ as the Eternal Son of God

That is your four accounts of the Gospels. I might say, the Bible being consistent, you are going to have four accounts of the second coming of Christ. You have four accounts of the first one; you are going to have four accounts of the second one.

Now, if you want to take this even further and you want to see how God and the Bible go together, in the Old Testament, you have references to four branches, like branches on a tree. Four branches are mentioned, and each one of those branches will match up to Christ and each one of these Gospels.

- Jeremiah 23:5: The Righteous Branch (King) - Matthew
- Zechariah 3:8: My Servant the Branch - Mark
- Zechariah 6:12: The Man Branch - Luke
- Isaiah 4:2: The Branch of the Lord - John

See how it all goes together? Your Bible is so constructed and put together that everything, no matter where you go, you will see that today as we begin to come through the Gospel of John.

II. The Author: John, The Beloved Disciple

Then I want to talk about the author himself. We must look at the writer of our Gospel, John, why he was chosen to write the book and reveal Christ to us as the Son of God. As I have already said, and most of you are aware of this if you have been around here any length of time, the greatest picture of what a New Testament Christian should be will be the Apostle John.

In the Old Testament, you have five wisdom books: Psalms, Song of Solomon, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. But in the New Testament, you also have five wisdom books, and every one of them is written by John.

1. The Gospel of John
2. First John
3. Second John
4. Third John
5. The book of Revelation

What that should show you and me, and I cannot speak for you, but what that shows me is that the greatest type of a Christian that you and I should be had the wisdom down of the Old Testament to understand. When he wrote his five books, they became the five wisdom books of the New Testament. Each one of those books will lay out a key part of God and what He is doing.

My question today is, why do some of God's people go their whole life and not see any of this? What are we spending our time doing when God has given us the greatest example in what we should be?

In John 13:23, John is the only one of the 12 who goes the distance. He is the only one of the 12 that winds up at the crucifixion. I have told you before, you have the 12 apostles, and I showed you how all of Christianity kind of shakes down into this little model. You have the 12 apostles, which is bigger Christianity. But within the 12, one was a phony. That tells me that in churches in Christianity today, not everybody who says they are saved is truly saved.

Within what was left, you only had three guys: Peter, James, and John, who get honorable mention in seeing the great things that God does, the Mount of Transfiguration, the raising of Jairus' daughter. When you look at the inner three, it is Peter, James, and John, and the rest of them are not even mentioned. It goes to show me that God's people who are going to get the job done are always going to be in the minority. It is not going to be all of the 12; it was three.

When push came to shove, when things really got chaotic, when things began to go to pieces, even the inner three went their way, and only one man, John, had the courage and the guts and the fortitude to stand there at the cross where the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. It is an incredible picture.

In John 13:23, John is the only apostle that Jesus says that He loves. I know He loved them all. I know He did. But the point He is trying to make, and I know that God loves all of His saved children, but let us be honest: we do not all love Him the same way He loves us. We get upset sometimes because we think that people have favorites. God has favorites. Out of the 12, His favorite was John. He loved them all, and He did some tremendous things for them, and they did some tremendous things for Him, the inner three. But at the end of the day, it was John.

When he is standing down there at the foot of the cross and Jesus is hanging on it, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is standing next to him. Jesus looks down and says to both of them, He says to John, "John, she is now your mother." "Mom, he is now your son." People read that and just look at that and just scratch their head and blink like a frog in a hailstorm, never getting a thing out of it. John is a type of the church. Mary is a type of the nation of Israel. What He did with that little act right there fulfills Romans 9 and Romans 11, which tells us that the church now has taken the watch care of the nation of Israel, typified by Mary.

In John 13:25, he is the only man in the history of the Bible who actually laid his head on the breast of the Lord Jesus Christ and heard the heart of God encased in the Son of Man. He is the only man in the Bible and the only man in history. That is a picture of you and me. If you think for a minute that that is not a picture of where you and I ought to be, and if you want to get through life and you want to get through the things of life and become the kind of Christian you need to be, you are never going to do that unless you get God's heartbeat. We have a lot of Christians today, but they are following their own heartbeat. They are doing their own thing, not John. He laid his head on the breast of the Lord Jesus Christ and heard the very heartbeat of God. It is an incredible model for you and for me, incredible about us getting God's heartbeat.

III. The Theme and Purpose of John

You will also need to see this: the theme of the book or the purpose of the book. In every book of the Bible, Christ will be portrayed in that book in a certain way. I have given them to you before; they are on the website. In the Gospel of John, Christ is portrayed obviously as the Son of God. The Gospel of John will be given to us for a man to believe and to get saved and to believe on Christ.

The key verse will be John 20:31. This is the definitive verse of the Gospel of John, but it shows you why John was written.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Very clearly, John is written to get people saved. The people who print Bibles, in Milford, Ohio, and those places that do such a great job, many times they will just print two books of the Bible and pass those out: John and Romans. Because John will show a man, John is the greatest tract on the planet. It will show you how to get saved if you will read it. Then Romans is the greatest book to show you what you do after you get saved or what you should believe. It is incredible.

Thursday night, somebody asked a question about the name of God. I took you back to Exodus early back there and showed you the "I Am that I Am" and how that was the Tetragrammaton that set up the word Jehovah. So "I Am," wherever you find it, and I told you to watch it in the Bible, where you find the word "I Am," you have to look at it because it is a reference, it is a word that you will always find connected with Christ. In the Gospel of John, He is portrayed as the Son of God, the eternal Son of God. So guess what? Over 60 times in that one book, you find the phrase "I Am."

John was written so you and I would believe. That is what it says. That is why it was given. He wrote that book, by the greatest Christian that ever lived, as the greatest tract that any man could ever have. John declares in Acts that He is the Son of God, and the only way you can get saved is to trust Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, and he writes these things that you would believe. So you will find the word "believe" in the Gospel of John 98 times.

For a moment, let us just twist a little thing around here. Compare the Gospel of John with 1 John. I want you to see this to see how it goes in the consistency. In 1 John, there will be your walk with God after you get saved. Where John the Gospel talks about getting saved, the next book that he writes, 1 John, will talk about your walk with God after you are saved. It says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." It is on the walk. It is on knowing Him. It is on after you believe, then you get to know Him, and through knowing Him, you walk with Him.

The key verse is found there in 1 John 5:13.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Notice the similarities. John 20:31 says, "But these are written, that ye might believe." 1 John 5:13 says, "These things have I written unto you that believe." One is written to get you saved, the Gospel of John. The other was written to show you what you need to know about Him. So you find "I Am" 60 times in the Gospel. You find the word "believe" 98 times in the Gospel. When it comes to that little book of 1 John, which is only five chapters, you find the word "knowing" or variations of it 38 times. The Bible is incredible.

Every Bible scholar out there, every Bible teacher out there, every pastor on this planet, because he does not get his messages from the Bible, he gets them from another book, will tell you the theme of 1 John is love. That idiot will say that, never stopping and looking at over 38 times in five chapters, the theme of that book is knowing. But that is Christianity today, is it not? That is you. That is me. It is all of us. We all try to love Him before we ever try to know Him. I wonder why it does not work for us.

IV. Outline of the Gospel of John

We also need to see the outline of this book. We have to get this stuff down before we actually get into the book. So we need to see the outline of the book. John will outline Christ's earthly ministry from John the Baptist when it finally starts up to His crucifixion. You are going to find,

this is an easy dividing up of the book for you, you are going to find that the Gospel of John is simply built around four Passovers. If you break those down in your Bible, you have it.

- 1.) The First Passover: John 1:1-2:13 (First six months of His ministry)
- 2.) The Second Passover: John 2:13-5:1 (First full year)
- 3.) The Third Passover: John 6:4-12:1
- 4.) The Fourth Passover: (Third full year, leading up to His becoming the Passion Lamb or the Sacrificial Lamb found in Exodus 12)

Let me break it down for you even better than that. If you want to get a breakdown chapter by chapter of John, so as I go through these over the next 30, 40 years, you will have it down. Here it comes, chapter by chapter.

- Chapters 1-2:13 (Up to the First Passover)Chapter 1: The Incarnation up to His baptism.Chapter 2: His first miracle, then the first Passover.
- Chapters 2:13-5:1 (Up to the Second Passover)Chapter 2: The first cleansing of the temple.Chapter 3: The story of Nicodemus.Chapter 4: The woman at the well.Chapter 5: The story about the sheep pool. Then you come up to the second Passover.
- Chapters 5:1-6:4 (Up to the Third Passover)Chapter 5: The controversy over His deity of being the Son of God, which will bring you up to the third Passover.
- Chapters 6:4-12:1 (Up through the Fourth Passover)Chapter 6: He declares Himself to be the Bread of Life.Chapter 7: Another controversy with the Pharisees.Chapter 8: The woman taken in adultery story.Chapter 9: The blind man that He heals.Chapter 10: He declares Himself to be the Good Shepherd.Chapters 11-12: The raising of Lazarus.

That brings us almost up to His crucifixion.

- Chapters 13-21 (The Last Night and After)Chapters 13-17: All deal with the last night before He becomes the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world at the fourth Passover.Chapter 13: His foot washing.Chapter 14: The Holy Spirit of God coming as the Comforter.Chapter 15: He is called the True Vine.Chapter 16: Again, He talks about the coming Holy Spirit of God and His prayer.Chapter 17: He lays out what we know as the Lord's Prayer.Chapter 18: He is betrayed that night.Chapter 19: His trial and His crucifixion.Chapter 20: His resurrection.Chapter 21: Where He meets Peter after the resurrection and him and Peter are restored because you remember Peter would deny Him.

There is no better way that that book could end because Peter is a type of the nation of Israel, and Peter denied Him just like Israel has denied Him. But when He comes back, just like at the first coming, Peter got restored, a type of the nation of Israel. Israel is going to get restored when He comes back the second time. You just cannot beat it. John has great insight. If there is anything I want you to see today for you, I want you to understand and see why he has that insight.

V. John's Unique Insight and Wisdom

There is another thing you will want to remember. This sets John completely apart from all the other writers and really makes him an incredible picture of what you and I are, or should I say,

should be. When John writes, he has all of the Old Testament and the New Testament, everything laying on the table before him. He is the last writer. He writes around 90 A.D. Every other book of the Bible had been done for probably 25, 30 years. So when John sits down to write, his insight is into what he already has in front of him to see where everything is going. In that, he has all of what God is doing, and he understands like we should. So he gives you and me five wisdom books that completely lay out every aspect. I am going to give it to you before we get done today.

Then he writes the capstone of the Bible, the book of Revelation, a complete and total breakdown of the church age, the rapture, the judgment seat, the tribulation, the second coming, the millennium, the new heavens and the new earth, and then eternity. What he writes and what he writes for us and lays out for us by his writings is what the church has believed for the last 2,000 years, in spite of all the heresy that has come along. John's writing established and foundationalized the great doctrinal teaching of the pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have told you many, many times in 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul says, "The things that I have committed to you, you commit to faithful men." John does that. He follows that principle because what we believe today we got from what John wrote.

John is the only writer in the Bible that goes from an apostle clearly into the New Testament church age and is an important writer that covers it all. There are other people that did it, but John is the only one that did it that completely gave us a record of when he was with Christ, and then he transitioned into the church age and sees what is going on. I want to introduce you this morning to probably the greatest type of what your life and my life should be anywhere in the Word of God: John Zebedee, the brother of James.

His book, the Gospel of John, contains 21 chapters, 879 verses, and 19,094 words. It is written between 88 A.D. and 90 A.D., right after the destruction of Jerusalem. He is the only man who had his ear pressed up against the heartbeat of God and then wrote to us the wisdom book based on what he heard. John saw the 20th and the 21st century. He had tremendous insight in prophecy of laying out exactly where the church is at today. No man in either time, the 20th or the 21st century, ever saw what John saw unless he had and believed the King James 1611 Authorized Version. Every Bible college missed it. Every scholar missed it. Every seminary missed it. 99.999% of the pastors missed it along with their entire congregation. Even the ones that saw it either did not really believe it or never acted upon it. The churches are full of people like that.

In our world of Christianity, there are going to come some tough times. We as God's people need to understand what John saw.

VI. The Oneness of God and His Word

Allow me to read our first three verses here.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You today. We pray, Father, as we begin to open up this great book, that You will open up our hearts, our minds. Allow these good people who have made the pilgrimage here today to hear Your Word, to let the Word of God touch their life. We thank You for the testimony of the many, many, many people around this world that rely on what these people have provided for them: a way to hear the Bible taught, learn the Bible, grow in the Bible. Lord, we do thank You and praise You for that. We just ask Your blessings upon this time. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

Look at verse one here for a moment. This first verse begins where the Bible begins in Genesis 1:1. It also begins where the Bible begins in the book of 1 John, "in the beginning," the beginning of the creation. There is no clearer verse anywhere in the Bible that will tell you and I that Jesus Christ and the Word of God are one and the same. How God's people got fooled by scholarship, fooled by education, that would let somebody destroy John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." You cannot separate God from His Word. That oneness is the key to everything that we have, or should I say, we do not have today.

Down through the history of the church, you will find, and I have talked about this many, many times, this unbroken line of biblical teaching. I have showed you very clearly when we have come through church history that there is a non-biblical line and there is a biblical line. I have told you before how all history is nothing more than God moving down through history to do what He is going to do, and the devil moving in opposition to stop that. So you will also find within Christianity, the non-biblical line, that they will try to separate the truth that God and the Bible are one. They will do this basically by two concepts.

You will find that, and it is absolutely true, it is a fact, the true church, the Church of Jesus Christ, will protect the truth of the Word of God. Scholarship and groups outside the false church, based on scholarship, based on rejecting the Bible in John 1:1, will always destroy the truth of the Word of God.

I have said it many, many times that the church is God's total structure for every child of God. I am told all the time by people, "Well, you do not have to go to church to be a Christian." No, you do not, but you have to go to church to be a good Christian. It is just that simple. The job of the church is to teach and to edify and to be a place of safety and protection. As you come down through church history, it was the church, the true church, that decided what books should be in the Bible. That is why you only got 66. Yet you could go to some bookstore out there and you could find a book on the lost books of the Bible, like the Bible lost these books. No, it was the church that decided what ones were going to go in. It was the church that decided what was heresy.

I have talked to this before. From time to time, idiots come into every church that have some teaching that God only gave them. The moment you hear that, you know that they are heretics simply because we know and we believe, no matter what some idiot wants to do with it, we

know and believe that the church decided real truth. We just cannot find what you are putting out there in anything in church history. So, out the door.

In Revelation 2:2, in the first church in Ephesus, it was the church, the true line, that decided who were really apostles because everybody wanted to be one. They decided for you and for me what was established truth. If this church is truly in that biblical line, then our job is to hold to that truth and to make sure, no matter what happens, that that truth goes on, that generations from now, if Jesus does not come, that the truth is still here. The devil and the world will do its best to separate you from His truth one way or the other.

VII. The Church and the Remnant in Troubled Times

A couple of weeks ago, I preached a message on the year 2020. I got a call last week and two this week from three different pastors who follow our website. Each of them wanted to sit down and talk with me about where they go from here with their churches. I felt like it was probably a better way to do it was to get all three of them together on a conference call and sit and try to help them and find out where they are at and what they are struggling with. We had about an hour and a half, two-hour conversation, nice guys, Bible-believing guys. But they are struggling just like all churches. They have the issues that everybody is facing right now. They heard that 2020 message, and they wanted to find out, "Okay, we believe that. We know that that is where it is at and where it is going. But help us. How do I go back to my church and what do I do?" All of them said it, "This is uncharted waters. Nobody has ever sailed this sea before. I have people that I am responsible for that are looking to me for leadership. Frankly, Bob, I just do not know how I am going to be able to do this."

I talked with them, and I told them, "I try to learn from everything that I go through." I realized that when I preached that message on the year 2020, which was the end of Proverbs, I said, "There are a lot of things that I saw that the average Christian probably is not ready for." I said, "In your churches, there is no different than mine, and no different than other. You have three types of people in your church faced with this virus situation that we are up against. Your church is no different than mine. You have the same three in yours that I have in mine. This guy does too, and this guy does too, and every other pastor that I have talked about." You are going to have to understand that, and you are going to have to come where I had to come and understand the times that we are in.

I told them, "The first kind of person that you are going to have in your church that is not going to come to church are the people who have medical issues and conditions that they need to stay home. They do not need to expose themselves to this. They absolutely need to be taken care of, be checked on, but they need to stay home because we are coming through this now, and they are already in a weakened condition, and getting it, you do not want to take that chance. So they need to be encouraged to stay there."

Then I said, "You are going to have a second group. That second group are people who just are afraid to get out in it. They may not have any underlying medical conditions, but they are just afraid that they do not want to get it. They do not want to be around it. So they have elected that

they are going to stay home." It is a thing where, and I told them, "You cannot judge anybody in your church by any three of these because I am going to tell you something. It is a thing where everybody has to get this one for yourself. There is no way I am going to," and I told these guys, "There is no way you want to stand up in your pulpit and criticize anybody for not coming simply because everybody has to make their own choice. That choice is going to be based at where they are at with the Lord and what is important to them. I am not getting into that. You cannot either. Through this one, guys, everybody is going to have to make your own call based on what the Bible says, where you are at with the Lord, and what you have going with Him."

I said, "You are going to have people like that. I have them in my church. They are afraid. They are fearful. It is a very fearful time. It is a time where there is a lot of uncertainty. The 2020 messages that I preached were only the tip of the iceberg of what is coming our way."

Then I said the third one, "We would be stupid if we did not know this." They all laughed and said, "Yeah, you are right." "The third will be that there will be people out there who will use any excuse not to come to church. The coronavirus is a great cover story for them. They do not really want to be here anyhow. They do not want to be part of what is going on." One guy said to me, "I had people last week who called me and said that they were not coming back to the church." I said, "Were they really good people?" He said, "Well, they are just very nominal." "They come," and he said, "I did not know how to answer him." I said, "What I would have done, I would have answered him back and I said, 'How do you leave something that you are never really a part of to begin with?'"

I told these guys, "If you have no investment in your church, if you do not have people counting on you, if you are not invested in something that God is doing, then what reason do you have to come back?" I get it. I told him, "You are going to find that there are people who need to stay home, legitimately. There are people who think they need to stay home, and they are legitimate. That is fine. But you are also going to find that there are people that are not; they are just using it because they do not want to do anything with God. This is a convenience for them." If you are a nominal person, a child of God, and you do not like coming to church anyhow, what a great cover story you have. If you think that is not true, I said, "It is true."

I told him, "Here is what I have learned." I said, "In my years in preaching, which is almost 50 now, I made two errors in my hermeneutics." Hermeneutics is the big \$25 word for teaching the Bible. I call it hemorrhoid nudics. But I made two mistakes. I have told you about the one. I told you how back in the 70s, when I was just getting into it, and we were talking about the Laodicean church, and God was going to have a faithful remnant and a faithful few that were going to do the work. We all thought, it was not just me, we all thought that that was the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Lutherans who once had the Bible, but then went back to Rome. Honestly, back in the 70s, we thought that that was the Laodicean church, and that the Baptist church was the true line, which it was. But as time went on, and we got into the 80s and the 90s, and in 2000, I thought, and we were wrong about that. Because when we got into the 80s and the 90s, we actually saw that the Baptist church that we thought was the true church back there, a bunch of people departed from that and went to be part of the neo-evangelical crowd.

Here again, what was left was the Bible believers that now we thought, churches like ours. I told these guys, "Churches like yours." I actually thought that we were the remnant out of that. That was my second mistake. I told them this, "I have come to the conclusion now, and we all know this, that God does everything meaningfully He does with a remnant." I thought back in the 70s, it was the Baptist church. I thought back in 2000, it was the Bible-believing churches. But now when we see what is coming on around us, when we see what is happening, I am telling you right now, as I told them, "You are going to see out of the Bible-believing churches that claim to believe the Bible, hold the Bible, you are going to see out of this what is coming and what is already here. But even more so what is coming, you are going to see God call another remnant. This will probably be the last remnant." I told you in that 2020 message, "Wait till the next couple of years."

We talk about the Laodicean church, and I have told you before, but even I did not think it through. Laodicea means "rights of the people." We are living in a time right now where the Bible is gone, churches are gone, and all this whole country cares about is the rights of people, and God's rights are not even in it. Wait till that happens. Let us see what you do. We have already seen what so many of God's people, you realize there was a poll taken a while back, and it said of Christians, quote-unquote Christians, that 75% of them said they would not go back to church during this time. Let us see what you do when two years from now, churches like this have a target on their back, and we are labeled as racist. We are labeled, and I am telling you right now, if you do not think that the establishment wants to get rid of Bible-believing churches, you woke up on the wrong side of the bed.

I am telling you right now, back in the 70s and the 80s, Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina, lost their tax status because they would not allow blacks to come to that university. The federal government came in and jerked their tax exemption because of the fact that they would not allow blacks to come to their school. That is racist, no question about it. But I want to tell you, when it comes to churches today, it is not going to be the issue of race with black people because now we have transgenders, we have same-sex marriages, we have homosexuals and lesbians that the whole world says is now another unit identity. What are you going to do when all of this country gets on board that if you do not accept that, if you use the wrong word to describe a black man and you get taken to court? What happens? You saw what happens when a guy who, I guess he was a Christian, he had a bakery, refused to do a wedding cake for two lesbians or two gay, whatever the case may be. You saw the flak that he got? Wait in two years when this country completely changes, and it is going to change in November. You are going to get a group of people in there that hate churches like this, they despise people like you, and their whole agenda is to get rid of us. What are you going to do?

You will not come to church now because you are afraid you are going to get it. That is your choice; I am good with that. What are you going to do when you might lose your job or be labeled a racist because you will not accept same-sex marriages? What are you going to do when they stand outside of this church and take pictures of you coming to church and then put you over your lovely Facebook and declare you? Are you going to stand then? It comes down to this, folks, you are either going to hide under a rock or you are going to hide in a rock.

Do you not know where this country has gone? Do you not know that President Trump this last week signed an agreement that when they do get a coronavirus vaccine and it becomes available, he is now charged, first time in the history of this country, he is given a responsibility of who gets it and who does not get it to the military. They are going to work in conjunction with the CDC, but it is the military. What is the military? I will tell you what it has got. This country is headed for a police state setup. They are going to come in, and they are going to take everything that we had that we value. You forget your freedoms that you once had. You can kiss them goodbye. When this thing goes down, it is going down, and all that is going to be left standing is God's people that says, "Up your nose with a rubber hose, I am staying where I am at." Hide under the rock or hide in the rock.

I told these pastors, "What is coming our way is a country that cares more about the rights of the people, and you will not have any rights. They will target us. They will target you." Maybe you know what they said? Again, somebody said, "We cannot force anybody to get the virus because constitutionally we cannot make you do it." You know what they are doing? He said it, "So you know what we will do? We will look at you and we will say, 'If you do not get it, then you are going to be a threat to everybody else. So it is going to cost us more money. So we are going to tax every one of you who will not get it, get a vaccine that has not been proven that may do some other damage that they have no clue that they have rushed in.'" If you do not take it, the federal government will fine you \$10,000 a year, and then they will fix it so you cannot go to work, just like your kids cannot go to school without certain vaccines. Then what are you going to do?

At some point, folks, you better get your head out of wherever it is at, and you better quit worrying about Corona 19 and your little fears about it. That is you. I have no problem with it. Every man has to figure it out for himself. But you better get a big pencil and a lot of paper because there is going to be a lot of figuring coming your way because it is not over. They want this country. They want you and me out of it. They want Bible Christianity out of it. The greatest thing the world has done is to try to separate God and His Word, and God's people let them do it.

This is so true. I told the guys this, "When this all broke out, the medical world, God bless them, the heroes, the medical world told us that if you had bad deficiencies medically, that there was a real risk for you getting coronavirus because you may not live, and it may kill you." We have seen that happen. But I told these guys, "I got another angle for you. Most of God's people before it ever hit were spiritually inefficient. They had spiritually underlying conditions. When the virus hit, it killed them spiritually because they did not have the courage to stand up and say what God is doing in my world is more important than what the world is doing." I am not fighting anybody. I defend whatever decision you make. Unfortunately, forget I am a pastor, unfortunately as a born-again child of God, a Bible believer who believes the book, I do not have that luxury.

All down through history, the devil has used every means at his disposal to separate God's people from the only thing that will keep them safe: saved from hell through salvation, saved from the world through your walk with God, through the Word of God, saved through the Word of God, your walk. You better see all of this and what it is. This is a defining moment. You can pretend it is not. You can whine about it and complain about what you do not like. I am telling you right now, with what is coming and where we are at, John saw it. John saw it in the book of

Revelation. He wrote about it. We do not want to see it. This is a defining moment, not for the church, though it is. Whatever your decision is, and that is between you and the Lord, and I have no care one way or the other. I only have to take care of what is me here, but I am telling you right now, this is the defining moment for all of us. I believe with all my heart that God in these last days is calling out His remnant. No matter where it goes, no matter what happens, if they throw us all in jail, we start a jail ministry. Whatever they do, we take a stand.

At the end of the day, I am telling you, you are going to see Christians bail out of Bible-believing churches like rats off a sinking ship. Simply know that you cannot have both the book to work for you outside the structure that God put it in. No matter where you are at in any of this, you better get a plan for the unbroken line of truth. He says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." There are some things about God you simply cannot separate in your Christian life.

You know the first thing they did? The first thing they did is they took the book from you and told you that it was full of errors and it was just a translation by man. You know the second thing they took? They took God's structure of the church, and they turned it into a Super Bowl halftime show. The church age is three things that are essential to your walk with God and your relationship with God: it is the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God, and the New Testament local church. Every child of God, I told the third tonight, whenever a child of God stumbles and falls, it will be in those three areas. The world in Christianity will try to separate you from the three, and it will always lead to a disaster.

Look at verse one again. I promised these guys that we are going to work together, and I am going to help them, and they have got some more questions, and they have got some issues that they are going to have to deal with. I said, "Look, I will help you any way that I can, but you need to go back and realize that I have come to the conclusion. I am just telling you right now. I have come to the conclusion, and you might as well know this, that I am done trying to build a church." All of our outreaches are shut down and probably will never come back. I am done trying to build a church. There will be people who come in that you bring in and visitors and get saved, praise the Lord, but it is never going to be like it once was. It is never going to be that way. I have come to the conclusion in my mind that I am not going to, I mean, if somebody comes in and we decide, I mean, I am all for it, but I am saying, I understand in my mind the days of trying to build a church are over. My goal right now, starting in a couple of weeks, is going to be to build a remnant because we are going to have to stand together. I will show you that before we are finished here this morning.

VIII. The Beginning of God's Way

Let us move on. Look at John 1:1 and 1 John 1:1. They both say, "In the beginning," just like Genesis 1:1. This beginning has and is one of the most misunderstood and unknown aspects in all of the Bible. I am asked this all the time, "How did an eternal God have a beginning?" You have probably heard that one. "How did a God in eternity with no time have a beginning?" It says in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "How did a God

who has no beginning have a beginning?" Those are all legitimate questions, but based on the fact that somebody has not spent a lot of time in the Bible.

The answer to this, "the beginning," will be found in the deepest chapter in all of the Bible: Proverbs 8. It sets up the platform and the foundation of understanding God and the Bible in His whole purpose. This great chapter reveals Christ in three fundamental aspects in Proverbs 8.

6. It shows you Christ in God before Genesis 1:1.
7. Then it comes on down and shows you Christ coming out of the Godhead, Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, the manifestation of Christ. You will find that in John 17:8.
8. Then the third aspect is Christ then going into the world, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as the begotten eternal Son of God.

In Proverbs 8:22, it says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way." That beginning in Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 was not the beginning of time. It is not the beginning of eternity, but rather the beginning of God's way, God's plan, where He is going now. The plan for the redemption of man and the establishment of His kingdom, both with Israel and the church. That "in the beginning God," that beginning is not the beginning of time; it is the beginning of God going through a direction by which is going to be His way. The Bible is a complete picture of that way.

This will give you a totally different viewpoint of the word "way" in the Bible. It will always go back to here: Genesis 1:1, John 1:1, and 1 John 1:1. When the Bible says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," that gives another whole dimension to it. He is not just talking about a direction; He is talking about the way, the whole concept of what God's plan is.

When the Bible says in Genesis 24:27, "I being in the way the Lord led," it is not just, "Well, here I am, Lord, just push me down the road." It is you being in the way, understanding the whole concept of what God is doing. Genesis 3:24 says God put a flaming sword in front of the tree of life to keep the way. You could take that way from Genesis 3 and follow that way all the way to Revelation 22:14, in the direction. It is where God is going. Do you know where God is going? Are you in the way?

- Genesis 18:19: To keep the way of the Lord.
- Exodus 13:21: A cloud to lead them in the way, a cloud during the day and a fire at night to lead them in the way. What way? The way to the Promised Land, the way to the establishment of the kingdom, the way to the millennium, and the way into eternity, God's structure and God's plan.
- Numbers 20:17: The king's highway. You know what the king's highway is? At the second coming of Christ, when He comes back to Mount Sinai and He comes up, He goes up the king's highway that leads Him into Jerusalem and the Eastern Gate. Not just a direction, it is the way God. Do you know the way God is going today? Are you part of that? Are you under the rock? Are you hiding in the rock?
- Psalm 25:8: Teaches there to be in a way.
- Psalm 25:9: The meek will He teach His way.

- John 10:1: Getting to heaven some other way. It is not putting up a step ladder and crying; it is another way. It is not a direction; it is a mindset, the way God says you have to get to heaven.
- 2 Peter 2:15-16: Somebody forgetting the right way and then following the way of Balaam. There are two ways: there is God's way and the devil's way. God's people try to do a mix-and-match concept.
- 2 Peter 2:21: We should know the way of righteousness.

That little word "way" will always take us back to the beginning of God, God's way. When He began to unfold His plan, unfold His purpose, His mind that He gave us in a book that we could completely understand which way He is going. "That I being in the way." In John 1, He is telling us that God's only way is to have God, His book, and they are one, and you cannot separate them. Yet most Christians will try to do that. They will claim to be saved, but they will do whatever they want to do outside the structure and the principles of the Word of God.

IX. The Pattern of Three

Then John 1:3 says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Two great truths here: He is the beginning of all things.

- Colossians 1:17: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
- Colossians 1:16: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."

Everything in the beginning of God's way was built for Christ, around Christ, and God Himself was the pattern for that. He Himself, that perfect pattern, unfolds to us through the Word of God.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

So we find a pattern of three through everything. We find that when God created everything for Christ, before Him and for Him, and everything that He is, that God used a pattern of Himself: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to your Bible, if you want to completely know your Bible and get God's way, you have to have the doctrinal, historical, and the inspirational. If you are a complete person and you are saved, it is because you have a body, soul, and spirit. When God made the creation, He made the sun, the moon, and the stars. When you breathe around us and walk out of here, we have three things: the air, the land, and the sea, not four. When you look at the kingdoms around you, you have animal, vegetable, and mineral, only three. When you look at the precious Lord Jesus Christ, you can call Him Christ, you can call Him the Lord, you can call Him whatever you want, but if you want His perfect name, it is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament, if you want to break it down, is broken down into three things: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. In the New Testament, you have the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. Everything is a pattern of God.

He made everything after Himself, and God is omniscient, He is omnipresent, and He is omnipotent.

Back to our concept of the three things that God has given us you have to have in your life: you have to have the Holy Spirit of God, you have to have the Word of God, and you have to have the structure of God, the true church. In John 1:1-3, it all starts out with the eternal concept of God and the Word of God being one. Later on, God's plan unfolds into the church age to establish His spiritual kingdom, and those two now add a third one because when Jesus Christ went back to heaven, as I told you Thursday night, God replaced Himself with three things: the Word of God, that is His mind; the Spirit of God, that is the Holy Spirit; and the body of Christ, the church, that is His body. If you do not have those three in your life in the way, you are kidding yourself.

X. The Remnant and the Cost of Faith

John will be a model, a pattern of what we as Christians in the 20th and 21st century should be. We are going to be a remnant. You should have learned a lesson, I should have caught it earlier. I cannot believe it. When God took them down into Egypt in Genesis, they were a remnant. When God sent them back after the seventy years captivity, they were a remnant. When Christ showed up in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they were a remnant. In the tribulation period, there are going to be 144,000 wiped down to a remnant. Why would we ever not understand that at the end of the church age is where we are at, in a church age that has never been tried or tested?

You have never had your kids fed to pigs while you had to watch them and not deny Christ. You have never had your fingernails pulled out. You have never been burned at the stake. You have never been tortured for what you believe. We have had it really good, have we not? Nobody kicked down your door and dragged you before a magistrate and whipped you with a cat of nine tails. Nobody ever put you in a barrel of pitch and then lit you on fire and let you run down the street screaming. Nobody ever took you and put your head in a bag full of snakes or rats while you screamed, while they wanted you to deny Christ. We have had it pretty good. If you think for one second God is going to allow you to go to heaven and say, "Well, everybody else paid a price, and we are going to slide," I have some news for you. The remnant has always paid a price. You are sitting here right now and do not like what I am saying because deep down inside, you know you will cut and run when the first knock on your door at three o'clock in the morning.

When your boss calls you in and says, "You do not have a job here anymore if you are still going to that church." When they are picketing out front, Channel 9, Channel 5, Channel 4, Channel 41, and they are all standing out there saying, "How can you go to a racist church? How can you be part of an organization that downs gays and lesbians? How can you take that stand when there are people just like us? They have got hearts, they have got souls, they have feelings. How can you take a stand against something like that and say it is sin?" They will have to catch you at home. I am telling you, folks, the quicker you understand that it is over, the better off we are all going to be. I have no illusion that this church will go down to a handful. I am not under any illusion because finally, praise the Lord, every one of us, finally, you are going to have to pay your own price. That is a good thing.

You are not going to like what I am about to say, and I do not like anybody getting sick or anybody dying. I am talking about us here as a church. I will tell you something. From my standpoint, I think the coronavirus is the greatest thing that ever hit Christianity because now we know where you are at. I do not want to get sick. I do not want to lose my taste. Two McDonald's cheeseburgers with no taste, my life is over. But I am telling you, I did not bring it here. God did. If you have not figured out yet that all down through the history of your Bible, God judged His people through other nations and the plagues that He sent them, you need to stop and get a GPS and find out what planet you are on. You just do not like it. It is an inconvenience for you. It is an inconvenience that you have to go through this. Do you think I like it?

I was over at Petco the other day. I walked in to get my dog some food, and I forgot my mask. But I had already got it in the cart before I realized I did not have it. I am thinking, "Well, this is all I need. I am going to run up there, and I am going to get out of here." Then I heard it over the loudspeaker. "Well, that is kind of bothering me. You do not have the guts to come up and tell me yourself." Over the loudspeaker, "Ladies and gentlemen, please observe. We all must wear masks in the store." Why did you not just say, "The guy in the tan shorts with a T-shirt on that says, 'Kill them all, let God sort them out.'" You know what I did? I got my mask, put it on. I do not like it. I hate everything about it. But having said that, get used to the new norm.

Wait till November. Wait till the liberal left wing who hates this country, who hates your guns, who hates every liberty that you have, who are going to have one goal and one design, and that is to turn this country into a socialistic government. Learn from history. Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Russia, the list is endless. Every nation went communist, went communist when they got rid of two things: guns and this book. You sit around like an ostrich with your head in the sand.

John writes five wisdom books. Through those five wisdom books, he shows us God's way, five ways.

9. The Gospel of John shows us God's way of salvation.
10. The epistle of 1 John shows us God's way to walk in fellowship with Him.
11. Second John shows us the ends of what we want to do when our little worlds get dashed by our own.

Do you think that they were not afraid? Do you think they were not confused just like we are? Do you think they did not have talk among themselves what is going to happen? Do you think they did not sleep at night because they are knocking the door? Somebody is going to drag them out because you were with Him? Do you think they did not have fear and trembling and heartache and despair and confusion and disillusionment just like we do? Do you actually think that this little petty thing we are going through could even compare with the day they came and took Jesus right out of your midst?

Can you not see all down through history the world has tried to separate us from the very things of God? This was a time of treason. It was a time of confusion. It was a time of anger for many of them. It was a time that I felt, I am sure they felt hopeless. I am sure they woke up when He

was gone, and they said to themselves, "What do I do now? What do I do now? I have followed Him for three and a half years. I believed everything that He said. What do I do now?"

You know what they did? The picture of the twelve who represent our church today, churches, they all fled. They all hid under a rock, even the inner three: Peter, James, and John. Peter standing around a fire when somebody tried to associate him with Christ, he just curses like the world so they know that he was not really one of them. James, you do not really know what happened to him. He is not around. Of all twelve, only one goes the distance: John. A remnant, a remnant out of the twelve men that saw the miracles, saw Him heal blind people, straighten withered legs, bring people back from the dead, turn water to wine, do all the very people who saw the very miracles when crunch time came. All but John, a remnant of God. The rest of them, the eleven, the rest of them missed. They missed the greatest event the day that their Savior hung on the cross and gave up His kingship to be a sinner. They all missed it.

I am telling you right now, that is like I told these young pastors, "You are going to lose some people in your church. That is not always a bad thing. But you are going to lose some people because God is going to call out a remnant. You are going to find, just like with the apostles I told them, who will stand and who will not." Everybody has to make their own call. Everybody has to make their own choice. But you and I are headed, this church, those pastors with their churches. I told them, "I feel bad for you. I wish we would have met earlier because the difference between my church and your church is I have spent the last 10, 12 years building a core. I have built young men and young ladies that no matter what will come, we will still get the job done. We will find a way." When push comes to shove and they come down and they hammer us, then we will be the anvil that breaks their hammer. We will have the steel in our backbone and the gravel in our guts. We will hold the line no matter what happens. We will not hide under a rock. We will not look for excuses not to come to church. We will be and do what God has called us to do, and we will do it to the best of our ability because that is what John did.

I am going to tell you right now, it is going to take John to get it done. If you have not prepared, I told these guys, "If you have not prepared your people for what is coming, you are going to have a tougher time. My suggestion is that you go back to them and you clear off a spot today on Sunday, and you just lay it out where you are at and what you have got to do and where you are going, and then see who follows you."

What I am about to say, I do not want it to be taken the wrong way, but it is what it is based on where I am at. I love you all. I would die for every one of you. I would do whatever I can do to help you, anybody, whether you are listening today, whether you are upstairs out in the foyer, or you are here. But I am going to tell you right now, at the end of the day, I do not really give a flip if you stick with me or you do not. You have to make that decision for yourself because it is going to get tough. I only know one thing: me and my house will stand for the Lord. I am not asking anybody else to do it. I do not expect anybody else to do it. Things are going to get so bad and so tough. You wait until they come down and hammer you for coming to this church. Right now, you get hammered because of the King James Bible, do you not? Sure you do, by your other friends.

Where do you get hammered because of the stand we take on the world when all the world now is against taking your stand against us? Where do they bait and trap us? Where do they set us up? Where do they do the things that they are doing to everybody else out there in the world now, but it is coming our way? It is going to take a John. It is going to take a John to take that stand that you do not get around a campfire and curse like Peter. Do not go to church on Sunday. You do not be like James that you do not even hear from him anymore, or the other twelve that panicked and ran. When push came to shove, and John could have just as easily, somebody said, "He was with Him, let us get another cross and crucify him." He did not care. He loved Him. He had heard the heartbeat of God. So he was willing to go the distance with God.

I am going to tell you the reason why God's people today will not go the distance is because they never really heard the heartbeat. When you hear the heartbeat, I am not saying you do foolish things. I am not saying you do stupid things. I am just saying you have got a higher calling. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world," and "perfect love casteth out fear." We find a way to get it done. We find a way to strengthen our core. We find a way to strengthen what we have. You are always going to have peripheral people that when it hits the fan, they know where to be found. That is just a standard rule. Every pastor should know that. It does not make them bad people. I have told you folks from the very get-go, never made it a secret, that I am looking for a certain kind of person. That is where we are at. John.

It is so apropos that the book that we are going to study now is the one book that we need in the times that we are going through because we all need to be Johns. We all need to take that stand and put that in our heart that we do what God has called us to do.

Let us hold up there, and we will have a word of prayer. We will be dismissed. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You. Thank You for all You do for us.