

# God Speaks What Is True

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, good morning. Our children are dismissed to their classes.! Let's open our Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 18.

! Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 9. I'm thankful for the opportunity to preach this week and next week.

We're going to do a little two-week miniseries on the doctrine of Scripture, on its truth and authority.

This week, Deuteronomy 18. Next week, 1 Kings 13.

That'll be a strange story about a false prophet and a donkey and a lion and some crazy stuff that goes on. So make sure you're back next week for that.

Let's open in prayer and ask for the Lord's help. Father, as we open the book of Deuteronomy, we are aware that this is your holy word. And we need your help to understand it.

[ 1 : 09 ] And we pray that your Spirit would press upon us its truth, its relevance. I pray that you would help me to be clear and for all of us to be attentive. And we ask these things in your name.

Amen.

Amen. Everyone, Christian, non-Christian, past, present, future, wants to know things.

We want to know. We want to know about the world around us. And that's because knowledge is a kind of power. It helps us make decisions.

It gives us perspective. It can sometimes give us influence over other people and over outcomes. It creates opportunities for us.

And we want our knowledge to be reliable and true. And so we look to sources of knowledge that are accurate. I grew up watching Dan Rather, the anchor of the CBS Evening News.

[ 2 : 11 ] I know some of you are too young to know him. Dan Rather spoke with authority. He had gravitas. He was one of the anchors of the big three networks.

And when he spoke, people listened. But then, on September 8, 2004, in the midst of the U.S. presidential election, Dan Rather reported on documents that had been discovered that called into question one of the candidates in the U.S. presidential election, George W. Bush, that called into question his National Guard service.

And these documents said that he had disobeyed orders and that his record had been embellished. But almost immediately after the broadcast was over, the authenticity of those documents was questioned.

The font and the spacing in the documents were not those of a typewriter of the 1970s. And the source of the documents admitted that he had lied on how those documents had come into his possession.

And a few weeks later, after everything had been sorted out, Dan Rather came on the air and he apologized and stated that he should not have run the story. But it was too late.

[ 3 : 34 ] His reputation was ruined at that point. He could not recover from this serious and significant blow to his credibility.

And a few months later, he stepped down as anchor of the CBS Evening News. And the next year after that, he was fired altogether. He had been an anchor, a serious anchor at CBS for 24 years. So let's do some math. There are 260 weekdays in a year times 24 years. That means, and we'll be conservative here on our estimate, that means that Rather anchored the news about 6,000 times. And if in a given newscast he anchored about 10 stories, that means that over the course of his career he had anchored 60,000 stories. And yet, when he got one wrong, it destroyed his credibility. Now, it was a big one. It was a big one because it was tied up with the presidential election and questions about media bias and things like that. But one faulty story out of 60,000, and people would not take him seriously any longer as a source of knowledge.

[ 4 : 51 ] If we have high expectations for a 30-minute newscast on CBS, how much more do we require a reliable word from the Lord?

A word that teaches us about how and why God made us. A word that teaches us what God values and what he hates and how we're supposed to treat each other and what we're supposed to prioritize in our lives.

A word that warns that we are actually born into a hostile relationship with God and what he has done in the gospel to solve that problem and what we must do to have that solution applied to us. It's huge. The stakes are high. It is critical. We have to be able to depend on the word of God. In the Bible, God acknowledges that a word that is authoritative also must be reliable.

And he addresses this issue through Moses in our passage today, Deuteronomy 18. If you, again, have your Bible, why don't you follow along with me.

[ 5 : 59 ] In the context here, Moses is giving a series of instructions to the people of Israel as they're right on the edge of going into the promised land. And Moses calls for obedience and he warns against the consequences of disobedience.

And he reminds them of the resources that God has given to them to remain faithful, God's presence and his power and his word. And Moses has been an incredible prophet.

He has been God's spokesman who led Israel out of slavery in Egypt. And he's the one that led Israel in the wilderness and performed incredible miracles.

He was the first one to function as a prophet of the Lord. He received the word of the Lord and then turned and taught it to the people. That's what a prophet does.

And he was, in fact, unique among all the prophets of the Old Testament because Exodus 33 tells us that God spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks with his friend.

[ 7 : 05 ] But then that raises a question for the Israelites. What are we going to do when Moses is gone? And here in Deuteronomy 18, Moses answers that question.

And as he looks forward to Israel's entrance into the promised land, he contrasts two fundamentally different sources of knowledge. Two potentially fundamentally different sources of special knowledge.

Verses 9 through 14 describe the practice of the pagan nations around them. And then verses 15 to 22 describe God's way of revealing knowledge to his people.

So let's look at each of these halves in turn. How does this passage inform the way that we think about the truth of the Bible? Is the Bible reliable and trustworthy in whatever it claims?

We call this the doctrine of inerrancy. The doctrine of inerrancy. The inerrancy means that whatever the Bible claims is true.

[ 8 : 10 ] Whatever the Bible claims is without error. So let's look at the first section in Deuteronomy 18, 9 to 14. When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations.

Verse 10. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a necromancer, or one who inquires of the dead.

For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. And because of these abominations, the Lord your God is driving them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do this.

Moses begins by anticipating that the way the nations gain divine knowledge is different from that of Israel. But notice in verse 9 that these aren't just alternate ways of gaining knowledge.

[ 9 : 29 ] They are abominable practices. They are incompatible with God's character, and they're deeply offensive to him. These rituals provide opportunities for the gods to speak to the people through nature or through physical objects.

One example of this is that the priests of the nations would take a goat, or a lamb, or something like that, and they would pray over it, and they would perform some kind of a special ritual over it.

And then they would slaughter it, and they would cut it open, and then they would look at its organs. They would look at the liver, and they would look at the kidneys and the lungs, and they would say, oh, what do we see here?

Are these normal, or is there any discoloration? Anything abnormally enlarged or misshapen?

Because the expectation was that by looking at the organs of this animal, this was the opportunity

for the God to speak.

The God could communicate to them through these means. He mentions in verse 10 and 11, divination, fortune-telling, omens, sorcery, mediums, necromancy.

[10:40] And notice that Moses does not say here that these things don't work. In 1 Samuel chapter 28, King Saul asked a medium to bring up Samuel from the dead, and then he came.

I mean, I don't know what to think about this. My grandfather in Ohio was a farmer, and when he needed to find sources of water in the field, he would take a stick, and he would walk around the field, and then the stick would all of a sudden dip.

And he'd say, oh, I'll dig here for water, and there was water there. When my dad was a child, the cousins would gather around the farm table, and they would chant. True story, absolutely true story. They would chant, and the table, the heavy oak kitchen farm table would levitate. One half of it weighs about an inch or two off the ground. And then the kids would ask the table questions, and it would tap.

These things work. They really do. But what they all have in common is that they are attempts to extract information from the divine world.

[11:50] They are at the initiative of the people. The people decide what they want to know and when they want to know it. They are in the driver's seat of this knowledge.

And they all assume many different sources of gods and voices. There is no overarching authority here. Instead, there's all this conflicting information that needs to be sorted out.

Because one person learns one thing in this ritual, and one person learns this thing, and maybe they're coming from different gods, and it's all under human control. And it's usually used to support human agendas and to strengthen those people who are already in power.

To strengthen the position of the king, or to strengthen the position of the priesthood, or something like that. And these sources of knowledge are alive and well in other parts of the world.

In Africa, in Asia, South America. When I teach at the seminary in Liberia, and we talk about these kinds of issues, the people are like, well, yeah. People do this kind of thing all the time.

[12:56] This is the nature of religion. Of religious practices, right? We construct religion to control the situation, to try and figure out meaning for our lives, to try and gain knowledge for ourselves.

And we want a divine word. The temptation is to have a divine word that is under our control. That doesn't demand too much of us, but that hopefully we can use to benefit ourselves.

And God says in the first part of this chapter, the people of Israel are not allowed to go to these sources of truth and knowledge.

Look at verse 14. Moses says, But as for you, the Lord has not allowed you to do this. The people of God belong to the Lord.

His word is the only legitimate authority, and he will speak when he wants, for his own purposes, and then he expects his people to obey.

[14:04] Because he wants good for them. But how is God going to speak? Well, let's look at the second half of our passage in verses 15 to 22.

Verse 15. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. It is to him you shall listen.

Just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, or see this great fire anymore, lest I die.

And the Lord said to me, They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. Verse 20. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

[15:10] Verse 21. And if you say in your heart, How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken.

The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. In contrast to the nations, with their various and frantic attempts to extract knowledge from the divine word, the Lord has a gracious gift for his people.

The institution of prophecy. Moses says in verse 15, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. Moses had access to the presence of God. He had received God's word and delivered it to the people. He mediated between God and his people, and so he will serve as a pattern. And the singular here, God will raise up for you a prophet like me.

It's a generic singular. It means many prophets, right? Prophets like me. God is going to use prophets like Moses to reveal himself to the people.

[16:22] He's not going to use magic. He's not going to use divination. And the word order at the end of verse 15 signals an important contrast. Look what it says at the end of verse 15. It is to him you shall listen.

Not to the magicians and diviners. You will listen to the true source of God's revelation, the prophet, and the word that God has spoken.

God has provided only this one source of divine knowledge. In verse 16, Moses refers back to Horeb, which we also read in our Bibles is called Mount Sinai.

He goes back to Mount Horeb, the original gathering of God's people. It says, when you said, verse 16, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire lest I die.

See, at first, it sounds like the people don't want to hear from God. But actually, they did want to hear, but they knew that because he was holy and they were sinful, they could not speak with him directly.

[17:28] They're like, I don't want to hear the voice of the Lord because I'll be killed. He's holy. They're sinful. It's too dangerous to be close to God. And in verse 17, God agrees with them.

He says in verse 17, they are right in what they have spoken. In God's holiness, he cannot just have a direct conversation with the people. He needs representatives.

He needs spokesmen. So, God says he will raise up a prophet like Moses. Look at the second half of verse 18. I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

This is like a job description for the Old Testament prophet. Unlike the nations, it is God who will take the initiative. He will decide when to speak.

It's on his terms. Unlike the nations who control the rituals and perform the rituals in order to try and get the God to do what they want him to do, the prophet obeys.

[18:32] The prophet obeys and serves God. And unlike the nations who have this plurality of deities all speaking different things, there's the God of thunder and there's the God of fertility and there's the God of the sea.

No, no. Instead, there is one God. There is one God and his word is unified and coherent. He says, these are going to be my words. And because they are the actual spoken words by the one true God, they are authoritative and binding on the people.

They must be obeyed. God will hold his people accountable to that word because it comes from him. Look what he says in verse 19.

Whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

So, the stakes are high. If it is a word from the Lord, it must be believed and obeyed no matter what. But because the stakes are high, because the word from God is absolutely authoritative and absolutely binding, the people have to know that it actually came from God, right?

[19:54] They can't get something false and then find themselves bound to that. It has to be known that this comes from God because it's the source of the word that gives it its authority.

And in verse 20, Moses acknowledges a potential problem. There is going to be a temptation among people in the community to fabricate the prophetic word because if the word has that much authority in its binding, well, let me make something up and then everyone's going to do what I say. there's going to be a temptation in the community to invent it or to make it up and then attribute it to God and say, hey, you'll never guess what God told me.

And Moses says in verse 20, but the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, why, why, why is that a temptation?

Why is that a temptation to fabricate or invent a divine word? Well, I mean, from a purely theological standpoint, you might want to make the God say what you prefer.

[21:16] You want a God who acts like you and thinks like you. You want a God who agrees with you. You don't want a God that has any rough edges or says anything that you find offensive or demands too much of you in your life.

or you might invent a word of the Lord for influence and power. If you control it, if you create the divine word, then you can shape people's values and control their actions.

They have to listen to you, right, because the authoritative word of God. Or you might make up a divine word to excuse yourself from wrongdoing, to redefine right and wrong.

To say, well, I know everyone thought that was wrong, but let me tell you, God told me it's okay. This is the question in the Garden of Eden in Genesis chapter 3 when the serpent says, did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree?

There's always a temptation to invent a word from the Lord that supports our own behavior and beliefs. the stakes are high. And so God says, if anyone does this, if anyone invents a word from the Lord or fabricates a word from the Lord that I did not actually speak, that same prophet shall die. [ 22 : 43 ] The prophet who invents a word and attributes it to me when I didn't really speak it, that prophet shall die. It cannot happen. You cannot allow people in the community to invent something.

The people in the community of Israel cannot be expected to obey a word that was just invented.

The source of the divine word is what gives it its authority.

So the people have to have confidence that it really came from the Lord. But that raises a question. How do we know?

Someone can just claim to be a prophet. They can say, guess what? I received a word from the Lord and here's what you all have to do. It's that easy to fake it. It's super easy. So how are the people of Israel supposed to know if it's a genuine word of the Lord or not?

Well, Moses answers that question in verse 22. When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken.

[ 24 : 01 ] If the prophet speaks in the name of God on his behalf and claims that the divine word came from God and if that word does not come true, then God did not speak it. If it does not come true, it cannot be from the Lord.

It must be fabricated and invented. This is based on an assumption, right? It's a pretty good assumption that God never gets things wrong.

Humans get things wrong. Humans who invent or fabricate a supposedly divine word get things wrong but not the Lord. He bats a thousand. He has a perfect record.

And notice here that it does not specify the nature or the seriousness of the error. It does not say, well, if it's a really important prophet who spoke it.

Or if it's a prophetic word that concerns a key doctrinal issue, then it matters. It doesn't say that. It says, any time the prophetic word does not come true, God didn't say that.

[ 25 : 08 ] It doesn't rank the prophetic word into categories. Well, these are more important aspects of God's word. These are less important aspects of God's word. It's a test that only falsifies.

It only falsifies. It doesn't, now, unfortunately, right, if it comes true, you don't know. If it comes true, it could be a coincidence. It could be, even a false prophet can guess and get things right sometimes.

But if it ever is shown to be false, you know it's false because God never gets things wrong. And if you discover that the word is not accurate and therefore it did not come from God, then it is not authoritative.

He says, just disregard it. Don't worry about that. He says at the end of verse 22, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You don't need to be afraid of that. So, Moses has just described for us two potential sources of a divine word here.

two sources for a word that comes from the divine realm, that comes from outside of our natural world and outside of our experience. The first is utterly human.

[ 26 : 21 ] It might be obtained by the practices of the pagan nations. It's characterized by human initiative and control and manipulation. Or, it might be attributed to the Lord, but it is not authentic.

It is invented or fabricated to serve the interests of the false prophet. That's one source, the human source. The second source is actually the Lord, the God of Israel.

He speaks at his own initiative and on his own terms to a prophet of his own choosing. And that prophet serves as a spokesman repeating the word of the Lord faithfully.

And these are the only two options. These are the only two possible sources. And not only are these the only two possible sources of the prophetic word, but these are the only two possible sources of Holy Scripture that we have in our Bible.

The prophetic word that is here described for us in Deuteronomy 18, the prophetic word of Moses and David and Jeremiah and Amos and Isaiah and Daniel and Luke and Paul and John were written down over time.

[ 27 : 40 ] That prophetic word was given by God and written down over time and published in the books of our Bible. And either the words that we have in our Bible are of a human origin and the men who wrote those words are just simply doing their best, they're just trying to write something kind of inspiring for us and they're just trying to articulate a convincing faith but they're writing out of a very limited perspective, a very limited historical context and they're just kind of doing their best to come up with a plausible religion or this is the word of God and it has its source and its origin in God and if it's a human source then those people in history that wrote the Bible are going to get some things right and some things wrong and in some cases they're going to have a perspective that doesn't really hold up very well over time but if it's from a divine word then it has its source and its origin in God and it's rooted in his character.

Listen to what it says in 2 Peter 1 in the New Testament. No prophecy of scripture no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

So whatever Moses is teaching us here in Deuteronomy 18 applies to how we think about our Bibles and how we think about scripture today. Deuteronomy 18 gives us three links in a chain. Three links. the accuracy of the word indicates its divine source and the divine source is what establishes its authority.

Or let's flip it around and make it negative right? The way that Deuteronomy 18 puts it. The text is invalidated when it errs. And an errant word must have a merely human source and a merely human source has no authority and must be disregarded.

[ 29 : 57 ] Its accuracy indicates its source and its source indicates its authority or if we work backwards if it errs then it must be human and if it's human it has no authority.

Why should we pay attention to something like that? Dan Rather anchored 60,000 stories but when we learned that one of them was fabricated we're like okay we're done with you.

So what is the main point of Deuteronomy 18? If we were just going to say let's just summarize this in one main point I think it's this God's word is authoritative because it was spoken by him and we know it was spoken by him because it does not err.

It does not make mistakes. This is what we mean by the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy.

God's word is authoritative because it is spoken by him and we know it was spoken by him because it does not err.

Now does this mean that the Bible says everything that it could say on a given topic? No. But it means that whatever the Bible does claim is always accurate.

[ 31 : 18 ] It never gets things wrong. Now let's take a couple of minutes then and reflect on what we lose if we compromise this view of Scripture.

What if we were to say well I think the Bible does sometimes make mistakes. I don't think it always gets things right. I'm not sure it is entirely from God. What do we lose?

Well the easy answer if we just get it directly from Deuteronomy 18 is we lose the authority of Scripture. If the Bible is not accurate then it doesn't come from God and if it doesn't come from God then it doesn't really have any authority over us.

But I think we can break that down a little bit and so let's talk about three might as well do three let's just talk about three quick things that we lose if we compromise our doctrine of Scripture.

Number one without inerrancy and the authority of the text we lose authentic revelation. Sometimes people say that the historical details of the Bible are just trivia.

[ 32 : 29 ] It doesn't really matter if the Nile actually turned to blood in the book of Exodus. It doesn't really matter if food fell from the sky in the form of manna.

It doesn't really matter if the Israelites conquered the promised land. That's history. The important thing is that the Bible gets theology right. That we learn the truth about ourselves and the truth about the gospel.

That's what really counts. In fact I had a professor in grad school that said that. He said the Bible isn't factual but it's true. Maybe the way that literature is true.

It speaks something true about my heart but it gets a lot of things wrong. But the problem with that view is that the Bible unlike other ancient and contemporary religious texts anchors what it claims in

history.

If the Bible's historical claims are wrong then it means that human authors are just kind of doing their best. They get some things wrong here and there. And if human authors are making theological claims about God and what he's like it also means that they're just sort of doing their best.

[ 33 : 42 ] They're kind of guessing. I wonder what God is like. This is what I think. The stories of the Bible tell us that God is powerful because he actually allowed the Israelites to cross the Jordan on dry ground.

It tells us that he's holy because he actually killed a man named Uzzah for touching the Ark of the Covenant when it started to fall onto the ground. It tells us that God is gracious because he actually showed mercy to the people of Nineveh when Jonah preached to them.

So the history is the anchor and the foundation for the theological claims. And another reason that the Bible's historical claims are important is that predictive prophecy in the Old Testament that has been fulfilled in the short term gives us confidence about long-range prophecies.

In other words, when Isaiah gets a prophecy right in his own time period or maybe a hundred years in the future, then it builds our confidence that when he talks about the new heavens and the new earth and God's ultimate justice and the kinds of things that Pastor Mike was praying about in that prayer of lament, it means that God can actually do that, that he actually will do that because we've already seen him fulfill prophecy in the past.

Second, without inerrancy we lose our objective standard of morality that is anchored in God's character. Morality refers to objective, absolute standards of right and wrong that never change.

[ 35 : 31 ] And how do we know the nature and the contents of God's unchanging character? Well, we read about it in our Bibles. Our Bibles tell us about all kinds of things.

The right treatment of women, the death penalty, the right attitude toward government authorities, right behaviors of sexuality, the right treatment of people who are different than you are, the right attitude toward the poor, and toward money, and children, and toward your spouse, and toward issues of justice.

The Bible talks about all of these things. And in our society there is such a huge variety of perspectives on all these matters, right? And some of them are highly contentious.

And unfortunately some of these values and issues become associated with national political parties, and then we engage in a kind of trench warfare, wrangling over them in a power play. And so these values and morality become weapons that we use to kind of defeat the other side. Here's a ridiculous example.

[ 36 : 47 ] A number of months ago, do you remember when we saw this little miniature culture war arise over Sidney Sweeney's genes? Do you remember this? Sidney Sweeney, the actress, did a marketing campaign for American Eagle genes.

People on the political left complained that American Eagle was advancing white supremacy and eugenics because they said she had good genes. But then, people on the right saw an opportunity to do battle with the left, and so they defended the ads.

And they said to people on the left, you're being ridiculous. And then people on the left were offended because of the way that the ads objectified. And then, because they had to do battle with the left, the people on the right praised the ads for returning to traditional standards of beauty.

And they went back and forth. It was a ridiculous situation. It was not our society's best moment. And here's what happened. What happened is that because of the demand to just do battle with the other side, conservative Christians, because they were doing battle with the left, and they were joining the right, ended up defending ads that were sensual and fairly inappropriate.

They gave up their traditional values of sexual morality in order to win an argument. When we do this kind of thing in our culture, we are just drifting.

[ 38 : 23 ] We are just reacting and drifting and engaging in a kind of trench warfare. There is no objective sense of right or wrong. There is just winning. There is just power.

We stake out our little claim and we're going to defend that spot, even if it's drifted from what the Bible teaches us. And the problem is that ideas of right and wrong shift with cultures over time.

There was a time in American history when slavery was accepted and defended by the majority of the country. And now it is rightly condemned.

But now the majority of our country accepts homosexual marriage, a position that was rejected by both political parties only about 30 years ago. consensus, social consensus is not a basis for morality.

What we need is an authoritative scripture that does not change teaching God's enduring will and values that are in effect no matter what.

[ 39 : 31 ] Scripture tells us what is right and wrong in every society, in every time period, no matter the circumstances. But if we do not hold to the doctrine of inerrancy and we say that scripture just kind of came from people who took their best guess, then the authors of scripture are merely adding one more perspective to the chaos of political battle.

I know what this person thinks, and I know what this person thinks, and here the people in the Bible, they also have some ideas too. We'll see what we like the best. No.

No, the people in the Bible have written based on God's word, and those values are rooted in the unchanging character of God. Finally, number three, without inerrancy, we lose our impulse and basis for evangelism and missions.

There are passages in the Old and New Testaments that teach us that we have a sin nature that separates us from God and prevents us from being in a relationship with him.

Are those texts reliable? Or are they only the opinions of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Paul? Jesus says in John chapter 14, verse 6, I am the way and the truth and the life.

[ 40 : 59 ] No one comes to the Father except through me. Did Jesus really say that? In Acts chapter 4, verse 12, Peter teaches that there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Is that true? Is it true that Jesus is the only way to solve our problem with sin? If so, then that will radically affect our relationship to other religions.

sins. And it is a powerful motivation for evangelism and missions for people who need to know that because there is no other way of salvation.

Jesus really did command us in Matthew chapter 28 to go and make disciples of all nations. And in these statements, the authors of Scripture are not mistaken.

And therefore, evangelism and missions are not only legitimate things for the church to do, they are absolutely critical. Because our practice depends on the instructions and we have to know that the instructions actually came from God and that they're authoritative and true.

[ 42 : 15 ] So if we compromise our doctrine of Scripture, if we compromise on the inerrancy of Scripture, then we not only lose historical trivia, you know, little historical details or geography or science that may or may not be true, we lose the divine source of Scripture.

That would be a word that the Lord had not spoken. And then we lose the authority of Scripture too. We lose it all. And we would be left to sort through the statements from news anchors and political parties and to drift with the social consensus.

us. And that is not what God has desired for his church. He has given us his holy word as a great gift to be believed and obeyed in all that it teaches because it's true and it comes from him.

Let's pray. Father, we pray as we reflect on this passage which is so clear about the source of your word, about its accuracy, we pray that this would settle down into our hearts and give us an unshakable confidence in the authority and the relevance of your word for our lives.

It is so tempting to focus on certain parts of Scripture that we like the best, to ignore parts of Scripture that we aren't as crazy about, to reject parts of Scripture that seem offensive.

[ 43 : 52 ] We need a settled confidence that this is our rock and our anchor in all that we do in our lives and that your word is true. And we thank you for telling us this this morning.

In your name we pray. Amen.