

Emmaus Road - From Confusion to Clarity 3 of 4

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[0 : 00] Let's look at the book of Galatians before we get to Luke chapter number 24. I'll show you a verse in chapters 1, 2, and 3. It's been nice having Miguel and Mary Angela home on furlough from Columbia, having Mary Angela get involved in singing.

And as Mary Angela was singing, I thought about how in our last building, me and Zach were coming in the L-Rod, gave the offering devotion. We were coming in the building. I don't know if you remember this, Coach. And Miguel was about to propose to Mary Angela.

Angela, Mary Angela's cousin, was over to the corner singing a song. Everybody seemed to know what was going on except for me. And I was walking with Coach, and I thought, what is Miguel doing?

And I started to yell at him across the room to say, get up. What are you doing? I didn't see the context of the story, and I almost ruined it.

I almost ruined their beautiful engagement. I'm so glad that I didn't. I think maybe Coach grabbed my arm and said, help me figure out what was going on. Which wasn't the only time somebody had to help me figure out what was going on, all right, in life.

[1 : 02] And I'm sure it won't be the last. But because I was missing the context, I should have saw the beautiful love story here. They were falling in love. That Miguel was preparing to get engaged.

I should have taken in the big picture. They helped me appreciate what was happening in that moment. But I was missing the context of it. And knowing the whole scriptures, and I'm going to say this a million different ways.

I said it last week. I'm going to continue to say it. The need for us, we need the entire scriptures for us and growing. We need the entire scriptures and understanding the gospel, appreciating the gospel, and growing in that context.

One of my favorite things that we got to have happen at camp this week, and you saw in the video there, was John Allen, missionary of ours, that strategic partner in Papua New Guinea. And in 2005, his son Matt went to Papua New Guinea.

And then three years later, he went over there to visit and see his grandkids. And they saw one of the things that Matt told his family. He said, Dad, if they don't live, then we can't get Jesus to them.

[2 : 04] They were dying in the village. They were dying at an alarming rate. There was no medical help. And so his mom started a clinic. And they saw something, I believe, like 2,000 patients a month.

It was a five-hour hike from the airport where they would land. She started a clinic. Well, the dad knew that they didn't have a Bible translated into the Khmer language.

And that's what he began doing. And so he shared with the teenagers how over the last 15 years, he's been sitting at a table with some men and working. And he showed us 80% of the New Testament was done.

He read to me part of 1 Corinthians 13, which only a small group of people had been able to see yet. And he shared that story, a group of people without a written language.

And that's what he's been doing for the last 15 years. And he shared that with the teenagers. And I was so grateful because he said, Should I go to the car and should I get a copy?

[3 : 01] Should I set this up? Do you think the teenagers would appreciate this? And I thought, I sure hope they do. I sure hope they could understand how important it is that people would have a Word of God.

And they did. We just all geeked out about it, right? We just all thought it was just the coolest thing in the world. And they stayed that afternoon. And people asked them questions. And the people are going to have a Bible.

They're going to be able to see Jesus from the Scriptures. And it's super special. It's such a wonderful way for them to invest their lives. And it's something that should be done.

It's something that should not have... That the people of the world should have a Bible and get to see Jesus in it. Because why not just translate a gospel track, you know?

Why wouldn't a small amount of Scriptures be sufficient? But they need to be able to see Christ through all of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is the author. From Genesis to Revelation. Offering devotional from Genesis to Revelation today.

[3 : 57] And it's consistent. It's written by one author. We saw that last week. And we have that privilege. Even though we have the privilege, we don't always take advantage of it. And I'm going to encourage you to do that.

Encourage you to be a serious student of God's Word. Today, though, as we turn to Galatians, what I'd like to highlight, as we're looking at this topic of all the Scriptures, is that God gave us the whole Bible to guard against misunderstandings of Jesus.

To guard against misunderstandings of Jesus. By reading the Scriptures correctly, we guard and defend the truth of the gospel. And this is tragically illustrated in Paul's letter to the church of Galatia.

The Galatians have been misreading the Old Testament story. As they've been misreading, they're in danger of denying the gospel. So Galatians chapter number 1, verse 9, has strong language here for what is happening.

It says in Galatians 1, it says, And we said before, so shall I say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

[5 : 02] And so there was another message that was being propagated, and that it was being shared. Another gospel. And so, what leads Paul to speak so strongly?

Some in the church were forgetting the very heart of the Christian gospel. The good news. Next chapter, Galatians 2, verse 16. It says, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of law.

For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. In their misunderstanding of the Scriptures, in their misapplication of the Scriptures, they were missing salvation that was offered by Christ.

And that's happening today. All around the world, and in the world we live in, there's a misunderstanding of God's Scriptures, that people are teaching it, they're changing the story of Christ in the Scriptures, and now they're calling upon something other than somebody to be saved by Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.

I have a couple slides here. I called it the state of theology. I found these stats in this. Dude, it's a slide. Not sure how well you can read it. Probably not well at all, but I can read it for you here, okay?

[6 : 14] And so here, we have some stats that show these in 2022. I don't imagine that the numbers have got better since this time. But 60% of people in America that were surveyed believe that religious belief is a matter of personal opinion.

It's not an objective truth. 60% of people believe that. That's the kind of conversations where people talk about having their own truth, where there's many ways that God, that coexists, that everybody has their own version of the truth, and that it's right.

52% believe that God learns and adapts to different circumstances, that God is ever-changing, that through the years, there's a different God in the Old Testament, then there's a New Testament, and there's a new God today, then even then.

55% believe that Jesus was created by the Father, that He was not co-eternal, co-existent God, but He was created. And then 40% believe that modern science disproves the Bible.

And that's something that seems to come around ever so many years, is that the Bible and science are not in alignment together, and that the science has disproven the Bible.

[7 : 25] And I made reference to it last week, the idea that we have to unhitch from the Old Testament, because people don't believe the stories of the Bible. Jesus believed the stories of the Bible, and so we should believe the stories of the Bible.

And that's what He's saying. He opened up the Scriptures to them. He said these are authoritative. This is God's Word. Let me give you a few more of these real quickly. Next slide here. 53, oh, you already did.

That's quick. All right, sorry. 53% said that Jesus was a teacher, that He was only a teacher. He was not God. 52% don't believe in Jesus alone.

They don't believe that only those who trust in Christ, a Savior received God's free gift of eternal salvation. 67% believe all religions are equal, and the 66% believe that we sin a little, but most people are good by nature.

And so you can find, I don't think they're raising children, are they? Right? That's 66% there, that we're good by nature. And so I don't think, how, is anybody in here, is anybody surprised by what I just gave you?

[8 : 28] You're probably not, right? You know this. You know this to be the case. And we live in a very confused time. There's a misunderstanding about what the Scriptures say. And so how does Paul counter this misunderstanding of salvation?

He retells the story, Galatians 3, verse 6 through 9. If you'll turn there. He retells the story properly to demonstrate the centrality of salvation by grace through faith. Galatians 3, 6.

Even, this is what Paul said to a group of people that were confused, about their understanding of the gospel, the people that were confused about the role of works in salvation, people who didn't know that it was by Christ alone, grace alone, through faith.

This is where he started with them. Even as Abraham believed God and was accounted to him for righteousness, know ye therefore that ye which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, for seeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In these shall all nations be blessed.

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. He shows them that people came to a saving faith in God before the laws were even written, before what we knew as the Ten Commandments, that those laws that were given were not a means in which somebody would be saved, but they were something that was laid down beside your life to show that you were in need of a Savior.

[9 : 51] This is just a simple thought. But the Apostle Paul counteracted false teaching and confusion about salvation by giving a basic teaching of God's Word.

He opened it up. The most loving thing that he could do in the moment was be able to open up the Bible and take them and show them the error of their way and show them what God's Word had said.

The Galatian church needed to get Scripture's story straight, and they hadn't. In the Corinthian church, we see that they were vulnerable to teaching that the resurrection hadn't happened, and Paul was able to show them, correct their misunderstanding.

He argues that Christ died and was buried and was raised according to the Scriptures. And so how do we respond to these? How do we respond to the fact that 60% believe that the religious belief, the matter of a personal opinion, is not objective truth?

We respond like this. John 1.1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. How do we respond to 52% believe that God learns and adapts to different circumstances?

[10 : 53] We turn to Isaiah 46.10, and we say, Declare the end from the beginning, from ancient times, as things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, I will do all my pleasure. Or believe that Jesus was a great teacher, but He is not God.

We take them to John 10.30, and we say, I and my Father are one. In the same manner, in the same example that was given by Jesus on that day, where He took the Word of God and laid it down by their confusion, we are able to do that.

The same example that was given to us by Paul, and all those in the Scriptures, and we shouldn't miss it. The Bible itself teaches that we must know the Bible story if we want to help others in this confused culture.

We want to be able to give people a reason of hope. They say, This is true, and we say, No, it's not. And now the question is, Who's going to be able to point to a point of authority? They say something, we say, That's not true.

They say, I feel that's true. And you can respond with, Oh, I feel like it doesn't. And then you're going to sound like my kids in the back seat of a car, right? You're going to go in a circle, and you're going to circle, or you can say, Thus saith the word of the Lord.

[11 : 57] And you can take them in wanting to do that. You are a compassionate group of people. I know that about you. There's been time and time again where a family has been in need of something, and you have risen to the occasion to care for them.

I want to tell you that you live in a culture, in a world, where people are hurting, and there's brokenness, and there's confusion, and compassion demands of us that we would be people that know the word of God and are able to give an answer, be able to show them the story correctly.

So first of all, I want you to see that it guards it. When people have a misunderstanding about the gospel, they have a misunderstanding about scripture, and we need to know. For me, growing up in West Kentucky, did you know in the 1800s, 50% of the Baptist churches became Church of Christ?

There was a movement that spread among the Baptist churches, and they were Church of Christ. And so as a teenager, I just felt time and time again, I wish my friends would understand that they were saved by faith, that they couldn't earn their salvation.

But I wish somebody would help connect the dots for me, that if I really wanted to help my friends, the best thing that I could do was do a serious, was do a study of the word of God, which is to figure out what the Bible says, and be able to answer them.

[13 : 12] Because they would bring up questions, and nobody was able to show them. They would say, the Bible here says that you must be baptized. But a little bit of study, and a little bit of help, a little bit of context. If you look at, if you see Miguel on his knee beside a piano, you're like, what is he doing?

But if you zoom out a little bit, and you say, oh, this makes sense. All I needed to do for those scriptures they were bringing to me was to zoom out a little bit, was to see where it fit into the full story, and understand the scriptures.

And that would have been the most loving thing that I could have done for them. And I know, we're coming back from camp week, and I keep bragging on your teenagers, but that's what happens at 930 with the high school class I'm in.

They share about the gospel, they share about who they're sharing the gospel with, and what they're talking about, and they can encourage one another. So we need an understanding of the whole Bible story for growth in our Christian life.

So first, I want you to see that you need it to guard the gospel. When you talk to people about the gospel, knowing Genesis and Revelation and knowing the stories helps you when they have a confusion, and that's what Satan loves to do.

[14 : 14] He loves to deceive. I wasn't surprised when they asked what are some of the false religions among that people in Papua New Guinea, you know, just north of Australia, five-hour hike from an airport.

What was the greatest difficulty they faced? And it wasn't just animism, and it wasn't all those other things. It was a false understanding of Christianity that had been brought to them. Satan loves to introduce Christianity in a false manner to people to create confusion.

And so that's what they were teaching them. So we need an understanding of the whole Bible. There's some funny stories, too, that you might have heard. Like, he got accused of stealing a mermaid one time because they had to wrap the dead body in a blue tarp, and they had to put it in the back of a truck.

And so on court records, he had to say, no, we did not steal any mermaids from Papua New Guinea. And other things that had happened, and there were one group of people they had met, and they asked if there was any cannibalism, and they went to some of the older men, and after his cannibalism, they said, no, human flesh tastes funny.

We don't eat it. All right? That's an odd answer, isn't it? And so they had given their lives and sitting there teaching the Bible. And so we need the understanding of the whole Bible story for the growth in the Christian life.

[15 : 28] It's necessary as we're introducing the gospel to people we know the Bible as regarding the gospel, but also if we're going to grow, we're going to need the entire Bible.

Do you remember the first time that you read an entire book of the Bible? Does anybody remember? Maybe you're older in life and the first time you finished the book of Genesis. Anybody in here remember?

As a teenager, we would go to a nursing home on Sunday afternoons and there's a lady named Verbal Collins and she was born in 1899. That's correct. Yeah, that's possible, isn't it?

Yeah, all right. She was super old when I was young, all right? She was born in 1899 and she was about this tall. And so every time we would go there, she would ask me to read a chapter of the book of Matthew.

And so I did that and then I got to the end of Matthew and I remember finishing and thinking, I've never read an entire book of the Bible. And I closed it and I said, we're all done, this Verbal, we got it.

[16 : 25] And she said, no honey, there's a lot more. There's no, she's like, just turn to the next page, all right? And keep going. But I remember, just very, not very, I wish I had an opportunity.

She's been with the Lord now for many years, but I remember her love for Jesus and I remember the connection of her love for Jesus and her wanting to hear the Bible. And I remember that, there being a connection between a person that loved Jesus and wanting to hear the scriptures.

And so the same thing that makes us Christian is also what grows us as a Christian. It's the grace of God revealed to us in the gospel. The grace of God that is revealed. And so the more faithfully we understand the whole Bible, the better equipped we are to faithfully follow it.

Would you turn with me to Hebrews? I want to read to you verses 1 and 2 of Hebrews. It says, Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Very common verse, passage. If you know any passages out of Hebrews, that is probably the one. This verse in and of itself is encouraging, but in the whole context of the letter, it multiplies the effect.

[17 : 48] When the author here says, look unto Jesus, he says, Set your gaze on the glorious Savior who was written about for many chapters all through the book of Hebrews, seeing that Jesus is greater.

And through a series of contrasts, Old Testament characters events and institutions, the author puts a spotlight on Jesus. And so if we're going to understand the exhortation, we must understand it in light of the entire Bible, that it's important to us, that we know the entire scriptures.

Hebrews written to strengthen a Jewish audience, but Ephesians written primarily the Gentile audience. We're told how we were aliens of the commonwealth of Israel and strangers of the covenant, and we once were far off.

And the Bible tells a story we should appreciate for all that it means. It tells about how far we were from God and how near He brought us to Himself and what it means to live a life worthy of our calling.

And all throughout the New Testament, it encourages and warns us our Christian life, but it draws some examples from the Old Testament. For example, in 1 Corinthians 6.19, when it says, Do you not know that your bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?

[18 : 55] Your understanding of receiving that and growing from that verse and being helped by it is going to be determined by your understanding of what it means as a temple.

So you need all of the Scriptures to understand and to grow. It also says in Hebrews 3.14, And we are made partakers of Christ if you hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

While it is said, Today if you will hear this voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. If you want to figure out what that means and you just look at that verse, you're going to need to turn back in your Bible all the way back to the nation of Israel when they were in the desert and when they rebelled.

And if you don't know this story, you're going to miss the strength and the power of the verse that's given. The Bible story propels our Christian growth until we grasp the Bible's content and the context of its unified story, the New Testament's instructions are going to lack their compelling force.

So we need all of the Scriptures here to shape us. And so I want to call on us today, church, as people, to recommit to teaching every verse to every nation.

[20 : 05] That's something if you visit our website, you see it at times on our banners and the gospel literature we give out. It's on the back of my truck. Everybody knows where my truck is at because I have one of those church stickers which causes me to drive better.

You're right, that's what you're supposed to do. If you're not a good driver, we'll give you a sticker of another church down the road for you. Just kidding. It says, every verse, every nation, and you see that, and I want to focus on that.

The Great Commission given to us in the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then Acts, we're told that to go out and teach the whole council of the Lord, teaching them, observe that they commanded, the world preached to every creature.

But I went specifically in the book of Luke, the Great Commission prioritizes the Spirit's power in preaching a gospel message that is rooted in the entire biblical story.

Look back with me in Luke chapter number 24, verses 44. And it says, and he said unto them, these are the words which I speak unto you while I was yet with you, that all the things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me.

[21 : 10] Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins shall be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem.

And ye are witnesses of these things, and behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but you tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem to be endued with power from on high. Two things here, and the great commission given by Luke here, it comes right out of a teaching on you need to know the Scriptures.

Jesus showing them the Scriptures, and he tells that the Scriptures told that Jesus was going to come and be preached among all the nations, so there's twofold there. Know the Scriptures, but wait for the power of God to come, and that is which the Holy Spirit has been given to us.

In the book of Luke and Acts, there's eight times that it says, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. And those eight times, all of those eight times, you see that it came out and them boldly proclaiming God's Word.

That was the work of the Holy Spirit. It was to take people to boldly proclaim Christ from the Scriptures. Said it like this at camp. We had a canteen. They sold iced coffees.

[22 : 23] I don't drink iced coffees, but in the first 24 hours, I drank five of them. So on Tuesday, I was looking at my hand and shaking. I said, I'm done with this, okay? And the rest of my week, I walked out the canteen. I kept thinking, I want a nice coffee, but I don't want to become that guy.

So I walked away from it. But I gave my kids some money for the canteen. And anytime I give my kids money, the first question they say, what is this for? All right? They want to know if it's ear noted for something.

Sometimes I give them money to pay for something. They might forget to do it. They need to know it doesn't have a designated purpose or can I just do whatever I want with it? You know, when we speak about the Holy Spirit, 2,000 years of history since Christ, people have argued about many things about the Holy Spirit and people talk about it.

But we should look at what was with the purpose. In receiving the Holy Spirit, it was given to us to do something. It was to understand these scriptures and to boldly proclaim it.

It was to testify of Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. And so we received it with a purpose. According to Jesus, the church's mission is written in the Old Testament.

[23 : 24] It is to explain Christ from every passage throughout scriptures. And that happens in the book of Luke. In Luke chapter number 2, Simeon recognizes that Jesus will be the light to the Gentiles, which he learned about from Isaiah 49.

Then later on, it says, through all flesh will see God's salvation. In Luke chapter number 3, as he's quoting from Isaiah chapter number 40. And in Acts, the sequel to Luke's gospel, the hope is realized as Christ's witnesses proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth, a fulfillment of all that the scriptures had said.

And so here, we have the Holy Spirit. He comforts us, He guides us, He leads us, and He gives us gifts. But the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit seen here in Luke 24 is that it enables us to proclaim the gospel, to speak for God, and to show Jesus from the whole counsel of God.

And that's what we should be asking to do. Last week, my challenge was simple in that fact that I wanted you to be lifelong students of the Bible. Maybe there was a decision that didn't get made last week that you need to make this week, which is, I need to take a step so that I can understand this.

I'm still a babe in Christ. I'm still, I haven't grown much. I got saved many years ago, but I still couldn't show you scriptures to help my friends that misunderstand. I still couldn't show you when I read the New Testament what it's talking about in the Old Testament.

[24 : 45] And if you haven't developed a plan, that isn't going to change. And so last week, I said that. And this week, I want to encourage you to be people that teach the gospel, to take the lessons that you're learning from your life groups, the lessons that you're learning in your private study, and take it to the streets to help people, compassionate people.

We live in a world that's confused, and the reason that they're confused is we don't live in a time anymore where there's grandparents sitting on the front porch with an open Bible that they can go and sit to and talk to and give it.

That's a great idea. That's a beautiful picture, but it just doesn't exist much anymore. You in the workplace, you in their lives, need to be able to take the scriptures and to show them.

And we want to help you do this. And so as believers today, as musicians will come, and I'll encourage you to pray here, as I just want to encourage you, as I've been encouraged in this, him being a student of God's Word, but also to be a teacher of it, is to take what you know and to respond.

Renew your commitment to spending time teaching all of the scriptures. We live in a confused culture, and that question is, if not you, then who? If it's not you and that person that's going to walk with them through the scriptures, then who do you think that it's going to be?

[26 : 00] Because I promise you, it's not going to be found on television. They're not going to find it any other place. You are the person. The person that is empowered by the Holy Spirit should take the words and show them.

Maybe stop by the next steps table today and get some information. Speak with one of us so we can help you get involved in becoming a student and a teacher of the Word. Maybe you're in here today and those charts that I showed you would represent your understanding.

Maybe you would say that you are confused about the big things of the Bible. We're lifelong students of the Bible. There's things that we don't know that we're always learning, but there's some things that are just very fundamental that you may not have come to a decision on.

And I would ask you, what are you waiting for? The Bible, He's revealed Himself to you. You have a copy of God's Word. Why have you, what are you waiting on to make a decision about Jesus Christ?

He's revealed Himself. Allow us that opportunity. Today, recognize that Jesus Christ, Son of God, came and He died for you. He died in your place. You know from experience that you're a sinner.

[27 : 04] As I knew from experience that I was a sinner in need of a Savior. That was the easiest part of the lesson that anybody taught me when they said, you have sinned. And that's more than just doing wrong, but you have defied the laws of a holy God.

And because of that, you're not, you have not met the mark. You're not perfect. I knew that at the age of nine. I knew that, and I've known that ever since, that I am somebody, that if Jesus Christ didn't die for me, I would be without hope.

I pray today that you would see Christ from Scriptures. Maybe you have questions, and maybe you have confusion about some things, but don't you, don't you believe that the God of heaven deserves a chance to give you an answer?

He loves you so much. He sent His Son. He died in your place. And then we preserve the story right here, and it's wonderful. So give us that opportunity today.

Let's pray together. As believers are praying there in your seats, I just pray for you right now. Heavenly Father, I ask that you be with my brothers and sisters today.

[28 : 05] Lord, I know in my life, I see many people that are confused about religion, and it brings a heaviness to my heart, and I wish things were different. I wish they would have had an opportunity that had the same teaching that I had been given and had the same opportunities, but they haven't.

And I pray that you would create a holy discontent in our lives, Lord. Now, when our friends and family are suffering from confusion about the Bible, we won't neglect our responsibility.

We won't just try to say, we hope somebody else will do something about it. The heads bowed and eyes closed. I want to pray for you. I want to do that. With all my heart, I want to be a good pastor, and I want to know how to pray for you.

If you have somebody in your life right now that you're just saying, I believe that they're confused and that God could use me to open up the words of God, and would you pray for me as I'll reach out to them this week?

If you're like that today, would you raise your hand so I can pray with you? I have my hand raised. I have somebody in mind. I want to pray for you. Heavenly Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters in here that you would use them.

[29 : 08] It's not by our skillfulness, Lord. It's not by our wisdom, but it's by the simplicity of the Word of God. As we're praying in our seats, if you're in here today, can I encourage you? Pray something like this.

Heavenly Father, I recognize that I am a sinner and in need of a Savior, and I see you today in scriptures, and I see my need. Put my faith and trust in you. That's what He would ask of you today, to come to Him.

He has revealed Himself, and it's the conviction and the work of the Holy Spirit that allows you to respond. Pray that you would do that. And if that is what's happened today, I would encourage you, stop by, allow us to give you some resources, give you the Word of God, sign up for a time to study it with somebody, be the greatest journey that you could ever imagine.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for an opportunity to meet today with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord, I thank you for giving us your Word for us together around every week. May we be a people that sees Jesus in the scriptures.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.