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Well, welcome to the Dividing Line, another road trip Dividing Line. It is another really cloudy day here in Salt Lake City. This will probably be the last program from Salt Lake City, just about, there you go. I mean, I will be here through Saturday morning but we're going to be heading north, heading up to Idaho. By the way, just so that we have this information out there, a lot of people have been asking about the debate and there has been some confusion about it and things like that, and so, what, I just a second ago had all the information on it. Well, I forwarded it so I could go over it and I should be able to load it from there. Yeah, there we go. For those in the area etc. etc., the debate will now be at Moscow Church of the Nazarene. I'm sure the Nazarenes will find this to be a very interesting conversation. "What are you people arguing about?" Anyway, the Moscow Church of the Nazarene, 1400 East 7th Street, 3 PM, Friday, April 22, so it will now be open to the public. It was going to be at a smaller location but evidently they've just been getting so many phone calls about it that as of, I think, Wednesday, yeah, it says April, actually Tuesday, April 12 was when this was sent to me, they arranged this location. So Moscow Church of the Nazarene, 1400 East 7th Street, April 22, 3 PM, myself and Doug Wilson on the subject of Paedocommunion and so there you go, and just pray that I get up there in one piece and that we don't have too much in the way of weather to be dealing with between now and then.

Important things to get to today but first some positive things. Let's start off with something positive. I was getting a brief ride in this morning, obviously you know I'm doing that and my bike is sitting right there, I have a Wahoo Kickr. It's really good that you can do that these days and that's the only way I could do it, I mean, just given weather and just where I am and everything else, I would never be able to ride anymore, but I'm able to keep up with things. So I was riding and I get a text message from John Cooper and John spoke at an event last evening, I think it was a Turning Point event last evening, and he told me that he encountered an individual who had been raised in a fundamentalist background, lost faith, left for a number of years, and that one of the primary mechanisms of his coming to faith, coming back to faith or coming to faith was Alpha & Omega Ministries and this webcast and the topics that we discuss, and taking on the various issues and exposing the way the world thinks and the bad nature of their arguments. Then he saw John on the program on Dividing Line, that's how we hooked up with Skillet and that's why he was there and Skillet's been a real encouragement to him as well and so there you go.

And up here in Salt Lake over the past not full week, I got here on, what, Tuesday, Wednesday, somewhere around there, the encouragement of the passage of time, in other words, over and over again I've spoken with people, I've spoken with people and it was Alpha & Omega Ministries, it was, you know, Jeff Durbin, and Jeff would say, "Hey, we do what we do on Mormonism because you taught me to do it. So you get to start seeing over the decades, you know, Sandra Tanner is still alive, and we could never have done what we've done on Mormonism without Sandra Tanner, so it may not have been a Sandra Tanner video that helped some of these people but I'll never forget the first time we came up here to the General Conference and had no idea what we were doing, drove through the night to get here, landed at Charles & Sandra Tanner's house, they let us go down in the basement, take showers, get changed into our little suits and stuff like that, and head out to witness to the Mormons. And you know, that began 18 years of doing that up here in Salt Lake City and that was vitally important in the establishment of Alpha & Omega Ministries and learning more and more about Mormonism and interacted with Mormons and all that kind of stuff.

So you start to see those things that were way back then and they are bearing fruit, and so so many people I've talked to. Another guy that I've talked to, we weren't the ones that helped him out of Mormonism but he was sort of stuck in no-man's land until someone gave him "Letters to A Mormon Elder," and "Letters to a Mormon Elder" gave him the theology that he needed, and because it was expressed in contrast to Mormonism, then it was fully understandable and communicable to him and so on and so forth. Just so many of these super-positive things. I shared with you some of the stories like from Cedar City and just God's been good and God's building his church and he's drawing his people, and sometimes he does it in really really interesting ways and brings us to that place in really really interesting ways.

So a very positive report from John and then I have, let me make sure I can find it here, there it is. Then I have this picture that was sent to me and there are my granddaughters last evening, and I had not seen this before, this is pretty cool. This is a scannable tract for Mormons. I guess you can just hit it with your phone and it'll bring up the gospel for Mormons. I was sitting here thinking about, I'm thinking about the first tracts we had and I'm looking at that. I remember that first yellow photocopied tract. I'm not even sure, Rich, if you even saw that one; that was well before your time. Man, it was bad, not even fully orthodox now that I think about it. Anyway, here is Clementine and Cadence and Jenny, my three granddaughters. I guess it's sort of cold out there because Clementine is wrapped up in a blanket there but holding the gospel of the Mormon's sign outside the Easter pageant of the LDS church in Massa last night. That was last night. I also have a picture of my son-in-law Eric and, in fact, they did live webcasting last night and you can listen in to his conversation he was having toward the end of the evening there.

So these are encouraging things, very encouraging to me obviously, and pray for the word as it's going out amongst the Mormons and others there in Massa. So that's good stuff, so there's the positive stuff and before getting to the main topic, I think it is important to recognize – oh, my goodness, I don't even know how to address this. It

seems and this is not unusual, it seems that Disney is doubling down. The revelation from the videos of the just obvious intentionality of the leadership of the Disney corporation to force children into sexual perversity. Of course, you can't call it, you're not supposed to call it sexual perversity. It's all natural now because, hey, there's no God, we're not created, and, yeah, that neo-Darwinian mutational evolutionary theory stuff would probably say that transgenderism and homosexuality really means you're just wiping yourself out of the gene pool, so before natural selection but you're naturally selecting against yourself, but let's leave all that science stuff aside too. This is the new morality and we will not make arguments for it, we will emote you into it. We'll emote you into it and so evidently the Disney corporation has decided they would produce a public service announcement they're going to be running on their channels and, by the way, unless you're subscribing to their channels, then you wouldn't be seeing them, and if you are subscribing to their channels, then you're giving them the money to do this. Yeah, we've all been there. I've got grandkids, I had Disney+ for a while. I don't anymore but there you go.

So I want you to listen, we're going to be very brief on this because we've got other stuff we've got to get to; it's not like we haven't addressed this before. But we want to be believers who have thought through, you know, the first few moves of the chess match, you know? If you're familiar with chess, you know that if you've got good people playing, the first 5-6 moves may go by in a blur because it's a known variation, it's a known opening. Maybe it's the old Lopez or, you know, my favorite from playing black against pawn to k4 is the Sicilian defense but then it only takes a certain number of moves before you then get into the variations and that's when things will slow down when you get into the mid-game. But you have to be prepared. I mean, there is no one who is a Grand Master who has not spent most of his life studying opening books, knowing what all the openings are, knowing what the variations are, knowing what the pitfalls are. And so that's where we need to be, we need to be spending the time knowing what the first few moves are going to be and then being able to get through those first few moves with confidence so that we can effectively seek to be a voice in the darkness.

You know, it's sort of like, I should have grabbed it but I have a Phoenix flashlight over in a drawer over there. It is blindingly bright, 10,000 lumens. I mean, it just, whoa. And it's like we have 10,000 lumen flashlights but its on/off button is in an unusual spot and it could take somebody a little bit to find it, and if you're in a rush, you might not even find it. We need to know where the switch is. We need to have done some preparation so that we're ready to shine that light and, "Okay, here is this. Oh, there we go." And if we're fumbling around for it, very frequently the opportunity will pass us by. You might be sitting on an airplane, on a bus, whatever, and the question comes up, someone makes a statement and if you're confident and you're ready, you take off. If you're going, "Oh, I'm not sure how I'd...how should I put this?" Then it's not going to work very well.

So as you watch this PSA...wait a minute. I'm sitting here thinking going, "You know what? I play this thing and we're gonna get, we're gonna get nailed." I'll bet you dollars to donuts if we actually play this thing, they're gonna hit us and lock this whole episode up forever. So let me see. Yup, there's an agreement from the powers that be. So I'm not

going to do this. I'm going to direct you...here's how we'll do this, okay? I will direct you to YouTube, this is posted by GLAAD, this is a long-term pro-sexual perversion organization, and this is called "PSA: Protect Our Families." Now doesn't that sound wonderful? Who could possibly be against protecting our families? Well, if you're not against GLAAD then you're not trying to protect the family. That's the problem. And what it is, it starts off, "Do you want to meet a family with a transgender kid? Here we are," and here's this wonderful loving family and they have a little girl that thinks that she's a boy. Now how that happens, there are many many questions that could be raised about all of that, but they are obviously doing everything they can, I don't know if there's already been top surgery or if there are puberty blockers and all the other things that, let's just be honest, are obvious red flags for future health issues and cancers and everything, and we don't care because the culture of death wants death and therefore if the people are so blind and if you refuse to love the truth, you'll be caused to love a lie. That is scripture. And the truth of who you are is right in front of you, so if you can be so rebellious and so in love with deception and so in love with sin as to embrace these things, the results should not be shocking to us in any way, shape or form.

So I was going to play it and then point out the assumptions that it makes, the assumption that transgenderism just is a thing and that it cannot be changed, and that it's a good thing, and that you just have to go with it and you have to support it. There is an entire worldview underneath it and instead of arguing for it, this 60 second PSA emotes it. And many many people for decades have been saying that the grave danger we face in the West is the shift from thought to emotion as the foundation of our way of life and here's a good example. Here's a good example.

Wow, that guy's entire driver's side window is missing and it's wrapped in plastic. I'm not sure how you see your rearview mirror.

But anyway this is what's there. That's what I was going to play and I'm like, "Yeah, no." We know about groups like GLAAD and we know what GLAAD will do and GLAAD will nail us for doing that. So there you go. I'm not going to play those games.

Okay, it is funny, by the way, to be watching all of the screaming going on on Twitter about Elon Musk and what's going on there in the world. What can I say? I'm just sort of watching it from afar. I would love to see Twitter remain, well not remain, but become again a place of free speech, but Elon Musk is not a believer and doesn't have a Christian worldview, and so I would love to see him more directly challenged than he has been on those particular issues, especially in regards to transhumanism and things like that. But it is funny watching the leftists just losing their minds at the very prospect of free speech. It's interesting.

So okay, let me take you back many many moons and I'm not sure how this is going to work but I'll figure it out when we get to it actually. Let me take you back to a deep dark day of the past when if you wanted to listen to debates, you had to carry a large thing that contained something called a cassette tape, and you had to put AA batteries in it and batteries didn't last as long back then, in fact, batteries could do this thing where they'd

explode and all this goo comes out of them and stuff like that. It was really fun, and they'd do it much more often than they do today. This was how I was listening when I first in the late late, I think it was like '89, maybe, well, no, I'll take that back, it would have been '87-88 actually now that I think about it, really started digging into Roman Catholicism. It was because of something called the bulletin board system and I had encountered Roman Catholics there and having been raised in more of a fundamentalist context, I was anti-Catholic because that's what you were. It's not because you really understood anything about Catholicism, you didn't know the theology but just look how they're dressed, look at how they do their worship. I mean, it's different than how you do it and therefore it must be wrong.

So when you first have those encounters, I had already been studying Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses and all, even Seventh Day Adventism by that point, and so I had already adopted the idea that, well, the way you deal with this is you study original sources. So you get the documents of Vatican II and you get Council of Trent and there are certain introductory books that you obtain, and I had been reading all of those things but I was also listening, I was listening a lot to Roman Catholic apologists as they would ply their trade, and especially back in those days Gerry Matatics, Scott Hahn, that was right around the time they converted and you had Catholic Answers and Karl Keating and Patrick Madrid and Marc Brumley, a few years later Jimmy Akin, this was around the same time he converted too. And so I would go on these rides and I would be listening to these things and I remember somewhere in the early '90s, I think it was, I had already come to recognize that no matter what debate you're doing with Rome it will logically devolve back to your source of authority. And the first debate that I did in August of 1990 with Catholic Answers was on Sola Scriptura, and I've lost track of how many of those debates over the years we've done. I think probably the best was with Mitch Pacwa because Mitch doesn't play games and he sticks to the subject obviously. The more fiery ones with Gerry Matatics, we did that more than once actually. And I had chosen to start listening to some a little bit more not popular level but a little bit more academic people in their arguing for...well, it wasn't so much an argument for, positively, the papacy, the magisterium, the whole Roman Catholic perspective as it was the fine art of attack Sola Scriptura because every Roman Catholic apologist when you push them on an area of concern for them they don't feel like they're doing real well, they will default back to attacking Sola Scripture in the same way a Jehovah's Witness will default back to attacking the Trinity because that's home base, that's where you go back to when things aren't going well.

And I've told the story before how I went out on a bike ride and I can't remember right now if I was actually listening to something at the time or if I had just finished listening to something at that time, but I was dealing with the argument that was being presented by Rome and has been presented over and over and over again by Rome that the table of contents of your Bible is the product of the tradition of the Church, and since the magisterium of the Church defines that tradition, then the content of the canon, in other words, table of contents just another way of saying the canon of scripture, is not something that comes from scripture but is necessary for scripture to function, and if it therefore is a tradition of the Church, then Sola Scriptura cannot be true because there is

an absolutely necessary definitional aspect of the scriptures that comes from the Church and the scriptures cannot function without that tradition and therefore Sola Scriptura is not true. And I went out on that ride that day and somewhere along 51st Avenue up toward, I would say, Bell Road, somewhere around there, maybe out to where I think they were just building 101 at that time period, had just begun construction on it, I realized what the problem was and I was so excited that I was concerned that by the time I got back home I'd forget what I had just figured out. So I turned around, booked it home, wrote it all out as quickly as I could on a piece of paper and then went back to finish my ride.

Now what I came to understand at that point and time was original to me. I had not read anyone that had suggested this to me. Thankfully in the years that followed, I found that brilliant folks like Michael Kruger, who's actually younger than I am, was saying the same thing, Warfield had said similar things, you could trace things back. I had just never encountered it because the subject of the canon, and especially the relationship with the subject of tradition especially as Rome uses the subject of tradition, is not the type of thing you're going to care a whole lot about in most seminary educations because it's a rather specialized and obscure area. And so what I came to understand that day and have written about and spoken about for quite a period of time now, and you can hear this expanded out more fully in the G3 session that Dr. Kruger and I did on the issue of the canon and then I'll go yesterday on Twitter also linked to an early Dividing Line video when we just first started doing video where we had Michael Kruger on, and we also not only discussed that, we discussed a lot of the Roman Catholic aspects that more than we did in the G3 thing. So those are available out there as well.

The fundamental issue that we got to was the thing that I recognized was that when most Evangelicals think about the canon, hence the table of contents of your Bible, we've been taught to think about it not as what it is, a theological question, but as how it is seen in history as a historical question. And so the vast majority of books, if you read F. F. Bruce or most introductory texts, what you have is a discussion of what the early church said about these things and the criterium that were utilized in various early discussions about what constitutes the text of the New Testament. So the canon is seen as the end result of a historical process but obviously it can't be an aspect of divine revelation unless you're going to expand divine revelation. There is no inspired table of contents. There's no angel that came down, you know, right after the Apostle John died with the golden tablets containing the index. And so Rome especially has made great hay, shall we say, with the idea that, "Hey, you can talk Sola Scriptura all you want but you can't define what the scriptura is without us."

So if you want to hear how this worked, in fact, if I recall correctly, I didn't take the time to go back, I'm not even sure I have the recording, in fact, I'm sure I don't, it's probably somewhere online, but listen to the debate between Karl Keating, Patrick Madrid and two fundamentalists, Bill Jackson and Ron Nemecek, from Dallas, not Dallas, Denver in 1993, I think it was. I was debating Gerry Matatics that time, they debated these two guys and this issue came up and they asked a fundamentalist, they said, "How do you know Matthew wrote Matthew?" He said, "Well, it says the gospel according to Matthew."

"Well, okay, but where did that come from?" And if I recall correctly, I think they specifically made reference to the table of contents and said, "How do you know that what is in the table of contents in your Bible accurately represents what is actually scripture? And the fact is you have to depend upon us." Now the men that they were debating didn't know how to respond to that, historically didn't know how to respond to the fact that this whole argument from Rome's perspective is really self-defeating because there is no dogmatic definition of the canon of the Bible as a whole by Roman Catholicism until the Council of Trent in April of 1546, and we know the vast majority of all of Christian theology was firmly established and well-known long before 1546. And so if you need to have an infallible dogmatic statement from a council, then the church couldn't function from the death of the last apostles until 1546 unless you're willing to elevate the papacy to a position that, in essence, renders scripture irrelevant which in some ways is sort of how Rome functions, especially when you look at something like the definition of the bodily assumption of Mary. There is no divine revelation of that. That almost makes the modern church, they are claiming divine revelation at that point. But it's a self-defeating argument.

From a historical perspective, you know, people point to the early councils and you've got, you know, Carthage and Hippo but even Rome says those were provincial councils, they were not "ecumenical" councils. And so the first ecumenical statement is in 1546 and everybody knows who've studied it that there were two streams existing side-by-side through the entire history of the church up until that point. You can cite popes who rejected the canonicity of the Maccabees, of the Maccabean literature, for example, which is now dogmatically, at least, a part of the deuterocanonical books. You've got Jerome. You've got Melito of Sardis. And there's a whole lot to look at when it comes to the issue of the canon of scripture and the differing traditions primarily in regards to what we call the apocryphal books, deuterocanonical books. There isn't nearly as much discussion of the New Testament though, you know, Ethiopian canon, a few really really minor things that most people have never heard about but they're out there.

So anyway, those arguments were out there and the argument of, well, if you want your canon, if you want the scriptura to have sola, then you have to explain why the table of contents isn't inspired. If it is inspired, then where did it come from? So, you know, they're literally trying to push you to go, "Well, if the..." You know, they want you to end up defending the idea that maybe the last apostle, your know, gave an inspired table of contents or something like that because once you admit that it develops later, once you look at the Muratorian fragment, once you recognize that there was a process historically in the recognition of the New Testament books just as there was with the Old Testament books for that matter, then the idea is, okay, so much for scripture, you're now looking outside of scripture, so now there are other authorities you're going to have to be bringing in and as soon as you do that, Sola Scriptura is over and I think for many Roman Catholics, like, "We're the default answer." Well, there are Eastern Orthodox who say they're the default answer and so on and so forth. But you end up having to look to some type of an ecclesiastical source for your traditions because once you have a tradition that is not theopneustos but is necessary for the scriptures to function in the church, what's the origin of that tradition? Where did it come from? If it did not come from the apostles,

then where does it come from and can something new come from those same sources? These are all some of the major issues.

So I'm going to try to make this work. No, that's not gonna work. Uh, let me see if I can make it this way and, Rich, you're gonna have to let me know whether this functions. At first there's going to be a nice pretty picture and then it should disappear fairly quickly. So let's see if... It says "participants can now see your screen." I think that means, from what I'm seeing on my screen you are now seeing the canon of scripture and nothing else, I hope. So let me look at my phone here and it says, correct, looks good, yup, okay, all right.

So let's use this, look at just this one section. I'm feeling sorry for anybody at the church in Payson, Utah. This is part of what I'm going to be talking about tonight so you're getting a little bit of a preview. Sorry but it just so happened that we needed to address this.

Why do we have the books of the Bible that we do given that the Bible covers 1,500 years and over 40 different authors and three different languages? Lots of other books were written during that time that are not included in the Bible, should they be included as well? Now here's the issue. The canon of scripture is the theological topic that is almost never treated theologically and that's what I realized on my bike ride is that the canon, and I'm not going to bother switching back and forth to me, I'm sitting here in my strip mall seminary hoodie and that's all there is to it, we don't need to worry about it. If you approach the issue of the canon of scripture with the idea that the contents of the canon are a tradition that then controls the scripture, if you look at the issue of canonicity as a historical analysis, you will never be able to defend the doctrine of Sola Scriptura. You must realize that the canon is a theological assertion, it's a theological topic before it can be a historical topic. In general, we approach this from the wrong direction. We go at it in the wrong way. You must begin with the recognition of the nature of what the canon is before you can then differentiate between the reality that it exists without any historical or traditional element in light of the fact that it is an artifact of inspiration. Once you recognize that, then you can have all the conversations you want to have about historical development and everything else because you can do so in the light of what the canon actually is.

So what is the canon? Well, we all know that canon means a rule or standard against which something is judged or measured, and so the term can be used of like a measuring stick or something along those lines, and the term came to mean an authoritative listing of books or works by an individual. So anyone who has written and published books has a canon and so there is a canon of my books, and the instance that I finished writing my first book which was called "The Fatal Flaw," when I saved the file of that last chapter which undoubtedly was on a floppy disk, well, no, maybe not but I was using probably a word processor. Anyway, as soon as I finished that, that means that there was a canon of my books. I did not have to open up a separate file and type "Canon of James Robert White," and type in "The Fatal Flaw" for that to come into existence. It came into existence because of the action of my having finished a book. It means I had written one

book, that means I had written more than one book but I had not written all books and therefore there is a canon of my books that differs from anybody else's. And I have infallible knowledge of that canon because I'm the one that did the work to write the books. No one else can have an infallible knowledge of the canon of my works even if they've read all my books because they weren't there when I wrote them. They don't know if I used a ghostwriter or what was the name of that thing that all the Southern Baptists were using? Ended with a "dent." Anyway, you know, maybe I had a ghostwriter writing my books as well as sermons, you know, you never know. I know what the canon of my books are because I'm the one that sat there and wiggled these fingers and typed all those words for those hours and hours on end. And so I have infallible knowledge of my canon.

Now the Protestant canon contains 66 books and depending on how you count things, the Roman Catholic one is about 73-74. Part of the question about that is, you know, some of the deuterocanonical books, the apocryphal books, are extension of, additions to canonical books and so do you count them as separate books or do you add them into, you know, to Daniel or whatever else, and so, you know, depends on how you count those things as to how you go from there. Now basically the Protestant canon of the Old Testament is simply the Jewish canon without the addition of the apocryphal books, and I'm not going to go into defense of all that right now. You can go listen to the two debates that I've done on that subject, one with Gerry Matatics at Boston College long long ago, and then the other one with Gary Machuta as part of the Great Debate series on Long Island somewhere in the 2000s, that area.

Now the question, of course, is how is the canon determined? This is what everybody wants to know, this is what people ask in every Bible study class and everything else. Vital distinction and fact is often lost when this topic is discussed. What is it? God creates canon by inspiring some writings and not others. Canon, then, is a part of revelation itself. It is an artifact of revelation, not an object of revelation itself. So in other words, God creates canon by inspiring some writings and not others. Just as I said, just as I finished writing my first book, a canon came into existence whether anyone opened up a file or printed out a page or anything else because I had engaged in the activity of writing a book. And so the canon is an artifact of revelation. It necessarily comes into existence because God inspires some writings and not other writings. There are many many many books that have been written that God did not inspire. This is not God speaking.

So there is a limitation by the nature of the action and the intentionality of the action so that the canon is not an object of revelation, the table of contents is not the object of revelation, it is not the 28th book of the New Testament where it's inspired the same way the text of scripture is inspired but it comes to us a couple of hundred years later. This one consideration alone completely changes the nature of argumentation one must use to respond to claims regarding the canon. Man's knowledge of canon is passive, not active. Man or church does not create canon but seeks to recognize it.

Now there are various people, in fact, someone yesterday on Twitter in response to a tweet that I posted in regards to this program said, "Well, you're confusing epistemology and ontology." And I just respond by going, "And you don't seem to understand that if scripture is theopneustos which is an ontological statement, of necessity because it is theopneustos, that determines epistemology and overrules any type of external epistemological claims to analyze the authority of that which is theopneustos." So so much for that simplistic response. It doesn't really do anything at all.

Man's knowledge of the canon is passive not active. It's not the idea of a council coming together and this is the constant story, and putting all these books on a table and then voting on one and voting on the next one and voting on the next one. It just simply never happened. It never took place. There was no, you know, dark smoke-filled room with people we don't know in cowled robes voting on Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Thomas, Philip, Gospel of the Egyptians, blah, blah, blah, blah. It just didn't happen. It makes for popular YouTube videos but it just simply is not what happened in history at all. Man or church does not create canon but seeks to recognize it and the only way you can recognize it is to recognize that it has come into existence by the act of inspiration. God knows what it is because God's the one that engaged in the action. The passive action of the church is recognition of what God has done. There is nothing in the nature of the church that allows the church to have the ability to make something theopneustos, to create something that is a canon, to create an authoritative binding tradition that is necessary for that which is theopneustos even function in the church.

Hence we have two views of canon which we will designate Canon 1 and Canon 1, the 1, the 2, if you're listening by audio. If you're listening by audio, I'm projecting a keynote presentation. Hence we have two views of canon which we will designate Canon 1 and Canon 2, the 1 and the 2 are superscript next to the word "canon." So Canon 1 is the canon as created by God's act of inspiration. It is infallibly known by God. It comes into existence of necessity in light of the unique nature of what God does in giving us scripture in the first place. So it is an artifact of revelation and it is the definitional ontological form of the canon. It is infallible because God has perfect knowledge of what he does and it has real existence because inspiration began at one point and ended at another point. That's Canon 1. Canon 2 is the canon that is passively recognized by God's people led by God's Spirit over time and beyond geographical boundaries. Disputes about Canon 2 do not in any way destroy the existence of Canon 1 anymore than doctrinal disputes prove there is no objective revelation of doctrinal truth. So anyone who studies church history and especially looks at this particular subject, has to be aware of the reality that there have been disputes over various books of the Bible both in the Old and the New Testament, and so there is a need for the church to know what the content of scripture is. Why? Because God says there is a purpose for scripture.

So if there is a reason for God to make sure his people know his word, then it would follow that he would exert the same power used to bring the scriptures into existence to bring about that knowledge and I don't want to just read that and you don't have time to think about it. If the whole reason that God is giving us his word is to glorify himself, to give us an understanding of his will and to be a light to our path and to our feet and so on

and so forth, if there is a reason for God to make sure his people know his word, then it would follow that he would exert the same power used to bring the scriptures into existence to bring about that knowledge. Is there reason to believe that God would lead his people to know his word? Well, there is some good reason to think so. Isaiah 55:9-11 says, ""For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

So God is sending his word and it has a purpose. It will not return to him empty. This word that goes forth from his mouth will not return to him empty without accomplishing "what I desire." So there is intentionality in scriptural revelation and that's recognized by the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:4. He says, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." So for Paul there were things written in earlier times that those in earlier times did not actually experience the fulfillment of what those scriptures were saying but they were written with God's knowledge via his decree of the building of the church, the construction of the church so that through perseverance and encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. That is Paul's promise to us and likewise in 1 Corinthians 10:11 he says, "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." And so there is understanding that in the great act of the Incarnation and death and burial and resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and now the building of the body of Christ, these scriptures which had originally been for a small group of people actually contain examples of encouragement for us for the building of the body of Christ itself.

So, yes, there is that intentionality that comes with that, so from that point I go into a discussion in that presentation on the issue of the apocrypha and more in regards to the canon of scripture and things along those lines, but the distinction between Canon 1 and Canon 2 is vitally important and the recognition that the canon is a theological reality, that it exists because of the action of inspiration itself. Without that recognition, if you embrace the idea that the table of contents of your Bible is authoritative but it is not theopneustos and it is developed out of tradition, I just hope that you don't engage in any debates with Roman Catholic apologists because you're going to be asked, "All right, where did that tradition come from? If it's authoritative and it does not come from the scriptures themselves, then what do you mean by Sola Scriptura?" And this is why you will see in some non-Roman Catholic denominations a less than compelling and strong understanding of Sola Scriptura. "Well, you know, we believe that scripture is primary but there are these other sources that, you know, in the providence of God are provided to us and so we've got a stool with three legs and we've got reason and logic and we've got scripture," and you see what happens historically in all of those situations and where those denominations end up once you start trying to mix something else into the mix, shall we say, in regards to scripture.

So let's talk a little bit about the...well, let me do this, let me pull this up and let's do this first because a couple of things that I think that are important to look at. You need to remember something. Let me use a whiteboard here real quickly. In Roman Catholic theology, the ultimate category that we need to look at is sacred tradition. Those little dots don't like to become dots. There you go, sacred tradition. And in the Roman Catholic understanding sacred tradition is broken down into subgroups where you have written tradition and then you have oral tradition, okay? So these are subcategories. You can't have all of sacred tradition if you don't have both written tradition and the oral tradition. The written tradition would be the scriptures and, of course, the canon being determined by the magisterium of the Church. The oral tradition is this wonderfully nebulous who knows what it actually contains concept, and so you've probably if you've watched any of the debates that we do on Roman Catholicism, you have heard me challenging the use of oral tradition by Roman Catholics because they have no objective means of identifying what is and what is not. So they will identify a statement by an early church father that sounds like it's supportive of the teaching of the Roman Catholic magisterium and then I'll quote from the same church father saying something completely different and they'll say, "Well, but the Church determines what our tradition is." And so if it supports us it's tradition, if it doesn't support us it's not tradition which is mighty convenient obviously but also completely unworkable and really meaningless.

The key text that has been used over and over again and I remember very very clearly at the North Phoenix Baptist Church on a Monday night, and I know I've gone over this before but a lot of people are watching that haven't watched before so there you go. On a Monday night we're going out to outreach and someone came up to me and they asked me, they said, "We had been, we went out and visited a family or something last week and they brought up this text and how would you respond to this?" And so let's look at it together. It is well-known and this time, Lord willing, I'll be able to write on the screen. 2 Thessalonians 2:15, "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us," is the LSV rendering. So let's look at the specifics.

"Stand firm, hold to, stand firm," okay? So stekete is stand firm, krateite... looks good, okay? Thank you. Kratete to hold to something, hold closely to something. What are you supposed to, these brothers are supposed to do? "The traditions which they were taught," please notice that, they were taught these traditions. The believers, this isn't written just to the bishops, this is written to the church at Thessalonica and the church, the adelphoi, the brethren in the church, had been taught certain traditions. And how had they been taught these traditions? Dia logou, that is, by word, we assume by word of mouth, speaking, epistles hemon, by epistle or letter from us. So we know this is 2 Thessalonians, there's some argument was there even a middle one, might this be third Thessalonians, but this is the second letter so there was at least 1 Thessalonians.

So what is Paul saying? Now what Rome says and remember just in passing, this was the text we looked at and I've never seen anyone, it's interesting, I'm not sure why this is, but when we were back in the big studio, I went through a section from Thomas Aquinas

where he used this text and he used this text exactly as Roman Catholics use this text. He made a distinction between "word of mouth" as oral tradition and "di epistoles hemon" as the written tradition. So sacred tradition broken down into two parts and that's exactly how Thomas understood this and that's why he felt that this traditional thing about Luke drawing a picture of the nativity or something, whatever it was, was true. And of course, at this particular point in time in church history, the medieval period, fantastic things were believed, you know, the house that Mary had been in was picked up by angels and carried to Italy and stuff like that. Well, these were oral traditions so dia logou in 2 Thessalonians 2.

So we saw that Aquinas bought into this interpretation, well, but the problem is that is not what Paul was saying in any way, shape or form. When we look at the text in its context, and I remember that thankfully I had not worked through these things that night at visitation but I had already learned at that point always look at the context. Always look at the context. And so what is that context? Well, here it is again. 2 Thessalonians 2:13, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you as the firstfruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." Now there's a textual variant there. You'll notice in the NA28 it's *aparchein*, that's firstfruits, but can also be *ap archein*, from the beginning for salvation, and remember the original writing, well, the New Testament was transmitted as a single line of capital letters for 900 years so you can see that's an interesting issue. But what were we talking about here? We were talking about God choosing salvation, sanctification, faith, truth, and, "It was for this He called you through our gospel," *euangeliou*, our gospel, "that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So what is the context, what is the immediate context? The gospel. That's what comes before verse 15. Therefore, because of the gospel and obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught in two ways. Well, what were they taught by word of mouth and by letter? What had Paul taught them when he was with them? What had Paul taught them in 1 Thessalonians? The very gospel that is being discussed here and that's why Paul says elsewhere, for example, in 1 Corinthians that we are to *stekete*, hold fast to the gospel. Do not be pushed aside. Stand firm in the gospel. Hold fast to the gospel. That's what 2 Thessalonians 2:15 is talking about and it is one body of traditions communicated in two ways. It's not two different bodies being delivered because, you see, in the Roman Catholic system, once you have the idea, once you accept the idea of tradition as a container and a communicator of divine revelation, you're stuck. You're going to have to choose whose ultimate authority you're going to follow because they get to determine what tradition is and how tradition functions and everything else. You're stuck.

But you see, the problem with the Roman Catholic claim is, as we pointed out, verse 15 says everyone in the church at Thessalonica had already received these traditions in the preaching of the Apostle Paul when he was with them, and in 1 Thessalonians. And one thing that Rome will never be able to prove is that any of the doctrines that She has based upon tradition were delivered to the Thessalonians. The Thessalonians were not taught about the bodily assumption of Mary. Now some will say, "Well, of course not because

she wasn't dead yet." Okay, they weren't taught about the Immaculate Conception either. They certainly weren't taught about the infallibility of the pope because there wasn't one.

So all this idea of oral tradition is actually based upon, what Paul was actually saying was, "It's what I taught you before. When I was with you, I taught you. I taught you for hours and then I sent you a letter. Hold firm to these things. Do not be moved away from these things," is what he's saying to the Thessalonians. It's not some paradigm for sacred tradition being broken down into oral and written components at all. In fact, when we looked at what the New Testament says about tradition, there are only a couple of times when tradition is used in a positive way. In all of Jesus' discussions, and it's interesting they are limited to Matthew and Mark, in all of Jesus' references, the traditions of the elders, the traditions of your fathers, they're all negative and they're all placed in contrast to the word of God. So in Matthew 15, the korban rule which the Jews believed had divine origin, the Mishnah reveals to us, Tractate Aboth reveals to us that that was passed down through the rabbis so it's an oral tradition, passed down through the rabbis and Jesus says, "No, you're destroying the scriptures by your tradition." And so you must test your traditions by scripture.

In 1 Corinthians 11, however, Paul talks about "maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you." Now again, are these traditions something that is outside of scripture? Rome says yes and the Reformed say no, so you have to be very careful when you use the word "tradition" because if you make the canon part of tradition, you're now saying, "Yes, there is something that's outside of scripture but it's still part of the tradition that needs to be passed down." You have to be very...once you go there, you're done. You've just given into the other side. That's where you go. But he also uses tradition negatively. We well know in Colossians 2:8, "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to the human tradition, according to the elementary experience of the world and not according to Christ."

So there are multiple uses of the term and, of course, the verbal form people have accurately and rightly pointed out that, for example, in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul says, "I passed on to you," and that is traditional language for tradition. So there are traditions that are just simply nothing more than the teaching that is based upon the scripture but then there are the traditions that are traditions of men, traditions that do not have their origin in that which is theopneustos.

So hopefully all of that is useful because what prompted this, make sure I've got the right screen showing there. There is a lot of multitasking that goes on with this. Yesterday, let me get to the thread in a second but all right, I mentioned yesterday that I was going to be responding to a thread by Steve Meister that starts off on theological tradition and your Bible's table of contents. To illustrate how inescapable received theological presuppositions i.e. tradition are, I'll ask Christians to open their Bible to the table of contents and to behold their tradition. So I mentioned I was going to be responding to this. How could you not? I've responded to the very same language what has been used as a means of undercutting Sola Scriptura, so it's in my books, it's in scripture alone, it's sort of, kind of hinted at in "Letters to a Mormon Elder," but it's there and I've defended these

things in debates. So when someone in my own camp is using the language of the other side, then we need to take a look at that.

So I made the announcement I was going to do that and a fellow by the name of Josh Summer...why didn't that come up? Well, there's a nice picture of my truck, that's not what I was looking for. Let's see what that is. No, that's my truck again. Well, that's a very popular picture all of a sudden.

There was a statement made, I think this morning, it was in Twitter and so my Twitter thing has refreshed 47,000 times over the past hour. Here it is, okay, I just had to click on a few things and ding, ding, ding. Here's the statement, "Textual critical methodology is conditioned by tradition." That's the statement of Josh Summer. Textual critical methodology is conditioned by tradition. Now single sentences like that without defining what terminology you're using are just intended to be confusing. It introduces real categorical confusion because even Rome wouldn't say that. Rome once said it, Rome doesn't say it anymore. So in other words, there was a time Clement V as I recall, there was some joke about which Clement it was V or VI from some debate, Algo always thought that was a funny joke but I've forgotten which one is which. Anyway. There was a period of time where a pope named Sixtus and there were a number of them, let's go with that one, presented an infallibility Vulgate, the final edition of the Vulgate, and his successors had to very quickly hide that away because it was filled with errors. It was just filled with errors. And so there was a time when Rome was fighting against the Reformation's emphasis upon the original languages because She had established especially over against the Greeks, the text of the Latin Vulgate as the final version of the scriptures because that's what God had used in the Latin West. And so there would have been a traditional element to the argumentation for Sixtus but Rome has abandoned that. They don't make that argument any longer and would say, "No, the original language of the New Testament is Greek and the Old Testament with a few exceptions of Aramaic is Hebrew," and therefore you analyze the manuscripts and you go with the, I supposed you could say because, again, it's the utilization of the term tradition to mean many different things, you go with the readings of the manuscript tradition but that's not referring to a tradition like a tradition that somehow is the basis of the canon of scripture. Those are two completely different things. That's why I said categorical confusion, are we talking about oral traditions? There are so many different uses of the term "tradition" here.

So the idea of textual critical methodology, I'm not even sure what textual critical methodology he uses. Is he a TR guy? I don't know. So it just refreshed and moved everything out of the way. But he did respond to me. I didn't see his response, I'm just now reading it. Interesting, "The English alphabet is conditioned by tradition. Looking forward to seeing how a Methodist gives traditional conditioning." So I guess everything's tradition. All of science, all of literature, everything is tradition, so everything's conditioned by tradition. That's a meaningless statement. Meaningless. Empty. It's sophism, pure sophism. If you can't define your words don't bother wasting the bytes to type it on the computer. It's just like what is that all about?

So anyway, so getting to this thread. There's a nice picture of the table of contents. Let's think about this because I don't want this to go forever, I've already gone an hour and 15 minutes and I've got some other things I've got to do today. On theological tradition and your Bible's table of contents, to illustrate how inescapable received theological presuppositions are and that's the definition given of tradition, well, that's the problem because received theological presuppositions, how would an accurate knowledge of the canon as being an artifact of revelation, how would that be a tradition? Is the Trinity a tradition? Because it's a received theological presupposition. Just as Rome cannot provide us with an exhaustive list of oral tradition, it can't even though it claims it comes from the apostles, what are these inescapable received theological presuppositions? Received from whom? By what mechanism? What is the relationship between the origin of these theological presuppositions and inspiration, for example? How did we receive them?

So these are inescapable. Infant baptism was a theological presupposition received by the Reformers, was it inescapable? Steve Meister wouldn't think it was. Neither do I. So what are these things and why not differentiate the use of tradition here from the very dangerous use of tradition by Roman Catholicism, found in scripture, Colossians 2, whatever you do with philosophia in Colossians 2, tradition is there too and it is rather than according to Christ. So there are traditions of men rather than according to Christ in Colossians 2:8 just as there is philosophy that is not according to Christ, and these are things that we can be entrapped by according to Colossians 2:8 no matter how many times people laugh about it or turn it into a joke. It's there. Have to deal with, it's scripture.

So we are told if you look at the table of contents, behold your tradition. Behold your tradition. Well, if all we mean by that is that people before us have recognized the canon of scripture, okay, but why does that make it a tradition? Behold your tradition. Okay, the second one, Judaism doesn't accept the New Testament as authoritative. Roman Catholicism adds books after the Old Testament. Well, they dispute that obviously. And Mormonism adds books after the New Testament, okay? Your theological tradition begins with what books are bound in what you call Bible, and then there's the citation of the London Baptist Confession 2:2 under the name of holy scripture or the word of God written are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament which are these. And so you have the standard 66 book canon.

Now if all you're saying is this is a tradition that has historical documentation to it and we can look back at people who believed this, we can trace, you can go back to Melito of Sardis, you can go back to Jerome and Jerome's argumentation with Augustine, if you want to just simply say, "Well, tradition equals stuff Christians have talked about in the past," well, okay but that's not enough to actually identify the canon. That's not enough to answer the question is this authoritative and why is it authoritative. It's not authoritative because you attach the word "tradition" to it. It's authoritative because of its relationship to the act of inspiration. It's the act of inspiration and the limitation of that active inspiration to just the books of scripture that creates the canon, that's why we spent the first 40 minutes talking about that. So, yes, there are people who do not accept that canon because they have, what? Well, Judaism's rejection of the Messiah, Rome's claims of

external authority above scripture, and Mormonism entire books of scripture. So what do they all hold in common? A rejection of Sola Scriptura and Tota Scriptura, all right?

Next statement. So your theological tradition begins with what books are bound in what you call Bible. Okay, but that's delimited by God's action of inspiration. That's not the creation of a tradition. "And you can read it in English. You know there was a time when some Christians opposed that very thing." I guess you're referring to Rome opposing Wycliffe and the Lollards? Maybe, who knows? It had to be demonstrated and defended that scripture is, I think the word "be" got lost, to be translated into the vulgar language so that all the people of God could read it. So it must be in reference to the opposition to the translation of scripture into English by the Lollards and Wycliffe and stuff like that. Okay.

You see, Christians who object to tradition having any subordinate authority but who use an English Bible with the Protestant canon are simply parasitic on what they claim to deny. Further their tradition is more dangerous because it's only unconsciously assumed. Received theological tradition is inescapable and it functions in its proper place when it's self-consciously chastened by scripture and publicly confessed. To argue otherwise is to miss the point of your Bible's table of contents.

All right, so let's try to put the most gracious spin we possibly can on these words, to try to read them in the most amenable fashion possible. You see, Christians who object to tradition having any subordinate authority, if we talk about the authority of the church as it is subordinate to Christ and subordinate to Christ's voice in scripture, then we can talk about the church engaging in discipline and having authority therein, we can talk about the church having authority to proclaim God's word to the nations, to rebuke kings and those in authority in their madness as John the Baptist did and as Paul did. And so is that an appropriate or meaningful use of the term "tradition"? I'm not sure who it is. Who is it who is...now I know people who absolutely reject that they have any traditions at all. Everybody remembers my, it wasn't a debate, I was actually filling in for a radio host on KPXQ radio in Phoenix, Arizona, and I interviewed Dave Hunt and when we got to John 6, everybody remembers the rather famous exchange that we had when he gave me a traditional interpretation of John 6:37 as I recall, it was either 6:37 or 6:44, and I said to him, I said, "Dave, that's your tradition talking." And Dave Hunt's response was, "James, I have no tradition." And either I said then or I've said since then, I said those who are blind to their own traditions are those who are enslaved to their own traditions, and I'm not the only one that said that. People have said a variant of that over and over and over again and so I've said for years and years and years everybody has traditions and everybody needs to analyze their traditions in light of scripture, and when they elevate your traditions to the point of scripture, that's when that becomes the word of God and their traditions can no longer be analyzed and they can no longer be refuted from scripture and scripture becomes irrelevant at that point, scripture no longer speaks in an authoritative voice in that context.

So I've said that for a long long time, and so maybe that's when it says received theological tradition is inescapable and it functions in its proper place when it's self-

consciously chastened by scripture and publicly confessed. Chastened by scripture. Well, if that means delimited by, corrected by, the only authority it can have is when it's echoing the content of scripture, chastening is more like correction, paideia or something like that. So self-consciously chastened by scripture, that just means that you are recognizing that scripture has an authority because it's theopneustos that no tradition ever can which doesn't have anything to do with the table of contents, though. It doesn't have anything to do with the canon. The canon has to be, that's a different category. If we want to talk about traditions within the church due to our engaging in church discipline, in our teaching, traditions of how we do the Lord's Supper, for example, how and when we do baptism, there's been a lot of different understandings of that down through history, you know, trying baptism was really popular for a long time. That's one way of using the term "tradition" that is neutral basically I think would be the term that you could use for it, rather than the negative that we have in scripture about the traditions of the elders and things like that, human traditions, or even positive, the things I've taught you, gospel, in 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

So, you see, Christians who object to tradition having any subordinate authority but who use an English Bible....just a second, someone is doing something with my unit outside. Sorry. Hold on a second. Unusual to see someone walk right up to your unit like that and I'm not sure exactly what in the world it is. My apologies. Let me see if I can get back on here.

Christians who object to tradition having any support and authority but they use an English Bible with the Protestant canon are simply parasitic in what they claim to deny. That is, in essence, saying that the canon is an authoritative tradition and I do recognize that someone like a Dave Hunt who says, "I have no traditions," is claiming that he's a tabula rosa, he's received something and there's no history to it and there's no means by which it's come to him. If that's all that's being said is that, "Hey, guess what? God worked in history in the church." If that's all this use of tradition is, fine, no one's going to argue with that. The problem is that tradition is used by Roman Catholicism in the subject of the canon in its attack on Sola Scriptura in a much more specific way and there's no recognition of a distinction at this point.

Received theological tradition is inescapable. Obviously, no one when they are converted is a tabula rosa and everyone imbibes tradition from those who introduced them to the faith. Of course it's inescapable. And it functions in its proper place when it's self-consciously chastened by scripture and publicly confessed. Are we simply saying that a statement of faith is an example of one use of the term "tradition"? Is that all that's being said here? Because the question always the tendency of mankind is to be imbalanced and so with the Dave Hunt's of the world, you have a rejection of all the history that has come and has conditioned the language that he uses but it's far more common, at least historically, in ecclesiastical context, for people to invest in the term "tradition" an authority that eventually leads to the abandonment or at least the redefinition of Sola Scriptura, and certainly we can look at denomination after denomination after denomination, the three legged stool folks that do that.

And so the final phrase is to argue otherwise is to miss the point of your Bible's table of contents. There were a dozen better examples that would have not led to confusion than that. That's the one example that's the most dangerous. If the canon of scripture is dependent upon an authoritative tradition that is external to scripture, you've got a real problem but that's not what he's saying, at least in the sense of... So how could, for example, just on this one tweet, this is the same tweet, it's the last one, how can the tradition that forms the table of contents be chastened by scripture? Whatever chastening means there, I don't know but whatever it means, how could it be chastened by scripture because it's defining scripture? Do you see why that's the worst possible example you ever could have used?

So there's category issues here and, of course, as everybody knows, anybody who has read, who has had to suffer through Yves Congar and recognizes the plethora of definitions that have been used for tradition, it's a topic fraught with miscommunication and difficulty. No question about it. But from my perspective, the real question here is what is the source of authority for what is being claimed to be a tradition? That always has to be the first thing in our minds. That has to be it.

And so there's some thoughts in response that hopefully will be useful to everyone. There was no railing in this conversation. There was no anger in this conversation. Anyone who dismisses the substance of the response through the utilization of the false assertion of emotionalism or anger or anything like that, I just, you need to check your heart. You just need to check your heart. These are vitally important subjects. I have been in conversation with people on these issues for decades and within the past week, so not just in the '80s and '90s but all these things remain absolutely relevant to us today as well.

So anyways, went really really long there. Maybe we can cut that one part out where...it's just really weird. I mean, literally they were standing within two feet of the window of my unit. Never saw me. It's a little strange there. But anyway, so, hey, these programs are live. We are not sitting in a studio someplace. I'm listening to beep, beep, beep, beep because they're doing a concrete pour here at the KOA. Right over there I can see the thing turning, you know, the cement mixer as it's doing its thing.

So anyhow, thanks for watching the program today. Hopefully it was useful to you. Next week's schedule, I have no earthly idea. No earthly idea and we're going to have to be flexible like Gumby to sneak stuff in. It could be 7 o'clock in the morning. It could be 7 o'clock at night. I don't know, just no way of knowing once I get up to Moscow, I just don't know what the schedule, how it's going to work out. I don't even yet know where I'm going to be staying. So I may have to be traveling, I may have to stay at another city and travel, I don't know yet. So I can't give you any real guidance along those lines, just keep the app up and running and we'll do our best to let people know with enough time that we can get together and we'll go from there. Thanks for watching. We'll see you next time. God bless.