

Psalms 19-02-21

Good evening, this is the 21st of February 2019. We continue our study in the book of Psalms. Tonight we are going to be looking at something we have seen three times before, or twice before, depending on how you want to count it.

We're going to look at an acrostic psalm. Looking at your New King James, you wouldn't know it's an acrostic psalm, but it is. And I'm for the moment enamored and fascinated by and with these acrostic psalms.

And it is next in line to the ones we want to look at. So we will be examining together tonight, Psalm 37. Psalm 37.

You will remember that we have seen the double acrostic psalm in Psalm 9 and 10. That was our first. We then saw Psalm 25, which was our second.

Last time we looked at Psalm 34, which was our third. And we saw the connections of Psalm 34 back to Psalm 25 because of the acrostic construction and the cross connection between the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the concepts. In some cases it restates a principle.

In others, there is a question that is asked and answered. And we're going to see in Psalm 37 tonight that the utility and the beauty of this acrostic structure is going to be pressed into service to help us understand and remember the content that is in this beautiful song. Let's take a moment as we begin our study to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll get started.

Father, we do thank you for the time of fellowship that we enjoy, the various provisions that you have made, whether it is logistics, technology, all of the factors that you have woven together so that each of us spending this time together tonight can look together at the truth of your word and hope to understand it better and to have it incorporated into our thinking, into our decisions and actions, into the way we view life and the way we exercise our stewardship over the time that remains to us here on earth. We pray that your Holy Spirit will guide us and teach us in the way, help us to find these truths memorable, that they will stick in our souls in a way that will be useful and pertinent as we seek to live our lives to please you and to glorify our Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name.

Amen. Psalm 37. I read an interesting article about acrostic psalms this past week because I'm fascinated by the structure and I'm trying to educate myself about the investigations of others and what grayer heads than mine have come to conclude about why we even have acrostic psalms.

Think about this. I'm sure you've heard, as I have, that people in the ancient world were largely illiterate. What's the use of an acrostic psalm if people are illiterate? If you're illiterate, you can't write.

And if you can't write, you don't know the alphabet, right? That's right with a W, right? For an alphabetical A-B-C-D-E-F-G pattern to have any traction in your mind, you'd have to know the alphabet, right? And David has put out now these psalms. This is going to be the fourth one. If you count 9 and 10 as one psalm, and 25 is the second, and 34 is the third, and here's number 37, the fourth in this first book of psalms, what does this tell you about David's estimate of the literacy of his people? He's giving these to the choir director.

He's having them read out to all of the people. And if they don't know the alphabet, what's the point? So, I can tell you the point. The point is that we have grossly underestimated the intelligence and the general level of literacy among the ancient people of Israel.

They knew how to write. David was a shepherd, and he wrote down these psalms. And he composed them.

You could say, well, maybe he just made them up and somebody set them down as an amanuensis. How are they acrostics if he was illiterate? He knew the alphabet. He knew how to write.

And so that's my first point. Acrostic psalms are for literate people. Now, not everybody has to be literate, and not everybody is going to appreciate the acrostic.

When they come across into English, it's difficult to reflect a Hebrew alphabet in English. So, there have been people who have taken some of the more famous acrostic psalms in the last book. Remember I told you all of the acrostics are either in book 1, psalms 1 through 40, or in the final book, psalm 111 and 119, for example, are acrostic psalms.

It's actually 111 and 112. It's another set of psalms. And then 145.

There's a total of seven acrostic psalms in the book of psalms. Not six, not eight, seven. So, psalm 91 is the first, psalm 25 is the second, psalm 34 is the third, psalm 37 we're looking at tonight is the fourth.

These are all in book 1 of the psalms, psalms 1 through 40. Remember, we studied the division into five books, and that five is going to be important here in just a minute. Then you have psalms 111 and 112, which is sort of a double acrostic.

Our psalm tonight is something of a double acrostic. Then you have psalm 119, that's number six. And then finally, psalm 145 is number seven.

Now, what's the big deal about acrostics? We say, okay, a lot of people must have known their alphabet because they've been put in this form. But what else does this tell us? A second point that is communicated to us before we ever even get into the content of the psalm is something I read in this article, I told you I ran across this last week. And there was a quote in it by Rabbi Yalkut Shimoni.

And I want to give him full credit because I think it's a great quote. It was from an article in the journal Old Testament Exegesis from back in 2004. And he was opining about acrostics and their value.

And this is what Rabbi Yalkut Shimoni had to say. True faith is to move on the path of intellect, intellectual search, and foundational knowledge of God's almighty being. In other words, acrostics, this is an intellectual level of communication.

We say, oh, there's a pattern here. There's an alphabetical pattern. It aids memory, if you know Hebrew, because you know that if you've quoted a verse that begins with Aleph, the next one is going to start with Beit, and then Gimel, and then Dalet, and Hey, and Wow, Zion, Hey, Tate, Yod, Kaf, Lamed, May, Nun, Ayin, Pesamik, and so on, all the way through the alphabet to Tav.

He is the Aleph and he is the Tav. God is the Alpha and he is the Omega. And for that title of God to make sense, people had to know their alphabet.

They had to understand the comprehensiveness of it. So acrostic psalms communicate at the form level an idea of completeness. We've got the A to Z on this subject, right? And if we have an incomplete acrostic, as we saw back in Psalm 910, remember there were several missing letters, it tells you, well, there's something more to come.

And I suggested to you when we covered those psalms that there is this interregnum, there is this missing section in there. And it's probably, you know, a little deep for a Sunday morning sermon or something, but there is a suggestion there of the intercalation idea of the church age in that acrostic. Because acrostics normally, as we're going to see tonight, as we saw in Psalm 34 and Psalm 25, will have a complete alphabet, maybe one letter missing or one letter doubled, but the pattern is the thing.

And it goes from Aleph to Tav. It's a comprehensive treatment. And you know that you've got God's word and God's full revelation when you get that.

So you think about Psalm 119. It's a gonzo, gigantic acrostic. And it's all about the word of God.

You remember that in English, all but two of the verses make an allusion or reference to the word of God, his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, his precepts, all the way through. Everything you want to know about the word of God is in Psalm 119. Everything you need to know about its qualities and its attributes.

No other subject in the entire Bible gets that treatment, the word of God talking about itself in Psalm 119. It's complete. It's comprehensive.

It's all we need. So do you see the point here that in addition to the content and what is being said in the subjects and the verbs and the objects, here I am in my need. Here is God in his power.

Here is my deliverance. I will praise him. Common theme throughout the Psalms.

We have another message. And so if you're like me, I ask myself, why is God giving me this other message? Why isn't what the text says enough? Well, this is a kind of message that is broadcast on another channel, isn't it? We see this form and God doesn't say, all right, now watch, I'm about to use a different form. He just uses it and encourages us to think.

And our faith engages not only at the level of feelings and not only at the level of raw content and substance, but intellect. We are supposed to think. We're supposed to be smart about this.

And our head governs our heart in the same way that the acrostic pattern governs the content that is in it. It is subject to, it is organized and ordered and patterned. It's a disciplined presentation.

So again, the rabbi here says true faith is to move on the path of intellect, intellectual search. This is why we do word studies. This is why we compare scripture with scripture.

This is why we investigate context. This is why we don't draw big doctrines out of a single passage or a single verse. We want to find the full witness of God on a topic.

And that is an intellectual exercise. Reflection and meditation and review and digesting what we've learned in the word of God is an intellectual process. I observe, I interpret, I apply.

Now, why am I riding this hobby horse? Why am I standing on this soapbox? Well, the acrostic psalm invites us to figure out why it is acrostic, all of these psalms. But also there is a divergence of orthodoxy, if you will, in Christianity today. In other words, people think they're being good Christians and they're doing wildly different things from one another.

Some parts of Christianity have gone off the emotional diving board. They walked out there, they bounced up and down three or four times, got a good amount of height and just did a big twisting back double path gain or somersault and are landing in an empty pool. It's all emotional.

How do I feel when I go to church? How can we make people feel when they come to church? Let's get the worship team together and create feelings. And there is a lack of intellectual content. There is a lack of intellectual discipline.

There is a lack of rigor and care and thought organizing and dominating and disciplining what is perfectly legitimate. It's great to feel. The psalmist all through this book, David and the others, emote a lot, but it's disciplined.

It is within boundaries. There's nothing wrong with a man crying, but you don't want to see men crying all the time. There's a time and a place.

It's generally of short duration and you express what's in your heart and then you move on. There is discipline. This is a quality of the life of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Old Testament saints, New Testament believers have their intellect engaged. I say again, true faith is to move on the path of intellect, intellectual search and foundational knowledge of God's almighty being, intellectual knowledge of God's all powerful being. Now, I'll tell you why he says this, because he's talking about the first five letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Aleph communicated in the ancient day and to rabbis and modern believing Jews, even down to the present time. Aleph as a letter suggests to study. It's kind of like if you say somebody is an A student, we know without filling in the blanks here that A is a grade and that that's the highest level of performance.

Well, in the Hebrew paradigm, Aleph was like being an A student. You have studied, you have looked at this closely. So Aleph means to study.

If you're going to write this in your notes, just put Aleph, A-L-E-P-H, to study. Beit, the second letter, means understanding. Understanding.

Gimel, the third letter, is path. Dalet is door. Aleph is study, Beit is understanding, Gimel is path, Gimel is G-I-M-E-L.

Beit, of course, is like Elizabeth, B-E-T-H. Aleph, Beit, Gimel, study, understanding, path. Dalet, D, is door, D-A-L-E-T-H, Dalet.

And the fifth letter in the Hebrew alphabet is He, H-E, or you can spell it H-A-Y if you don't want to be mispronouncing it later. In Claremont, you could get away with that in no trouble. But He is the fifth, and the number five, since Moses wrote the Torah, has been a reference to the Torah, the five books.

You've got five books of the Torah. You've got five books in the Psalms. The number five, as an organizing principle, is as primitive as your hand, being able to count to five.

And it is the foundation. It is the beginning. It is what underlies everything.

So, if you put that together, Aleph, Beit, Gimel, Dalet, He, what do you get? To study leads to understanding, shows us the path that leads through the door of life, life everlasting. And God's word is the foundation. The Torah, God's law, is the foundation.

So, to study, Aleph, leads to understanding, Beit, and it shows the path, Gimel, that leads to the door, Dalet, of life, all on the foundation of He, number five, God's law, God's revealed word. All of this comes in as context, as background, as foundation, when we come to an acrostic psalm. We're looking at the Gospel of Matthew on Sunday, and last time, looking at the first two chapters, we saw that the genealogy is not just a listing of Jesus' ancestors on his adoptive father's side, giving him legal claim to the throne of David.

It serves a purpose. It communicates at a structural level. It's sets of 14 generations, from Abraham to David, 14 generations.

David to the captivity, 14 generations. Captivity to the Lord Jesus, 14 generations. And you have those six 14s, and you end up with the spanning of time from David to the coming of the Lord Jesus, the captivity, and so on to the coming of the Lord Jesus, that last 14 generations, the 490 years idea.

But what does it tell us? If somebody only had the Gospel of Matthew in the early days of the church, maybe that's the only gospel. They didn't have Luke, didn't have Mark, didn't have John. Acts might not be finished yet.

Epistles might be circulating here and there, but you've got one account of the life of the Lord Jesus, and it's Matthew. Those first chapters that give the genealogy and show order and structure and planning ahead on God's part, communicates what Paul is going to distill later on when he says, at the fullness of times, Christ came. At just the right time, Christ came and died for the ungodly.

It was a time chosen by God. God ordered the generations and waited until just the right time to send his son. Then you have the birth narrative, and you have the coming of the wise men, and you have the dreams by which God communicates to Joseph, Jesus' adopted father.

All of those first two chapters is structure that tells you that God was working behind the scenes through these generations. He appears now and again, but if you look at all of the names in those genealogies and then ask, how many of them did God speak to directly? He spoke to Abraham. He spoke to David.

He spoke to Solomon. There are individuals in there where God was active, but there's also big stretches of generations where Haley begat this guy, and Salmon begat Boaz. It doesn't say God spoke to Salmon.

It doesn't say God spoke to Boaz. God is working largely behind the scenes, and then he manifests himself at key points and directs the course of history to ensure that his will is fulfilled and that his people are provided for and that his goodness and righteousness and salvation are reflected. All of that is the foundation for the Gospel of Matthew.

All of that precedes John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus. What does an acrostic do for us? It immediately reminds us God is in his heaven. There is a supernatural order that has been imposed on what could be chaos.

I saw a funny quote because there is a tradition in the Jewish rabbinical literature about the Day of Atonement, and when everybody comes in to confess their sins, and at Passover and other times, there's an idea of confession of sin, and they do it acrostically. They do it alphabetically. So they'll start with Aleph and name sins, and then Beit, and then Gimel, and then Dalet, all the way through to Tau.

Why? The rabbi said, well, our sins are so infinite that if we didn't impose some kind of order on it, there's no end to our sins, but there is an end to the alphabet, and so we can come to a

stopping place. There's order. There's limitation.

Well, that brings us to our psalm tonight, and if you look at it in your New King James, you will see nothing suggesting that it's an acrostic. This one has two verses for each letter. So verse 1 is our Aleph.

Verse 3, basically, you're going to have Aleph, Beit, Gimel, and Dalet on the odd numbers, 1, 3, 5, and 7. Aleph, Beit, Gimel, and Dalet. Then He is going to begin at verse 8, and then we go on the even numbers. 10 is Wau, 12 is Zion, 16 is Tate, 18 is Yod, 20 is Koph, and so on.

22 is Lamed, 24 is Mame, 25 then, we have another slippage in our numbering, 25 is going to be Nun, 27 is Psalmic, and so on. We'll talk about these when we get to them, but it's important. God put it in His Word for a reason, and this is another one of the ways we lose information in translation, and one of the reasons it's so helpful to be able to dig back into the original, because this acrostic tells us something.

Well, let's read the psalm. It says simply, A Psalm of David. This is just Le Dawid in Hebrew.

Actually, it's probably Mizmor Dawid. Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of Him who prospers in His way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger and forsake wrath.

Do not fret, it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. Now, that's as far as we're going to go tonight.

That's Aleph, Beit, Gimel, Dalet, and Hay. Did you write down that wonderful quote about those five letters? What does it say again? To study, Aleph, leads to understanding, Beit, so that it shows us the path, Gimel, that leads to the door of life, Dalet, founded on God's word, Hay, the five. Remember that? So what do we have here? In verse one, all the way through to verse seven, did you notice the frequency of exhortations to not fret? Verse one, do not fret because of evildoers.

Don't be envious because of workers of iniquity. Verse seven, rest in the Lord and wait patiently. Do not fret because of Him who prospers in His way.

Verse eight, cease from anger, forsake wrath. Do not fret, it leads to harm. So, don't fret, don't

fret, don't fret.

If you quit fretting, it leaves more for me. What are we talking about here? Again, it's an acrostic psalm, so what is one of the most common situations we get into? We fret. Something is not going our way.

Things are not laying down like a nice, smoothly rolled out red carpet. We're not getting out of the limousine and striding down in all of our finery and glory, feeling great. Flash bulb's going off, everybody thinking that it's just a great person doing great things, walking a smooth path to reward and blessing.

It doesn't work that way. Almost every day there is something about which we can and sometimes do fret, right? Something you're relying on breaks. I've got a car sitting in the driveway with a bad battery.

I've got to do something about that. Tried jumping it, wouldn't jump. So, I don't know.

Dirty contacts, that's a fretation. It's a problem I've got to address. Get in the car, ready to go somewhere, click, click, click, click, click.

That's an occasion to fret. Health issue. You want to feel good and you don't.

I know lots of people that want to feel good and don't. I often don't feel like I wished I felt. It's a fretting episode.

So now, I'm going to try to live my life as a believer equipped with the sword of the spirit and the shield of faith and the word of God, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel. What do I do? I'm in a fretting situation. I need something to come into my heart.

I need the Holy Spirit to speak a word in my soul. I don't just need to feel better. I need my intellect to engage and grab the resources God has provided.

I have to think my way out of my wet paper bag. So, what am I going to think of? I'm fretting. Well, if I'm a Hebrew speaking person and I have listened to the songs that are sung down at the temple and I know my alphabet, I am going to immediately think of a song that David wrote that's all about fretting.

It's right here in front of us. Fret not thyself. So, this is like a tool that's got a convenient handle to grab.

If you've got arrows in your quiver, you don't want the quiver longer than the arrows, do you? If you've got a golf bag, that top unzips so that you flip it back and you can see the clubs and which one you want to get. Do you need your driver? Do you need your putter? Do you need your wedge? Are you going to chip? What are you going to do? Well, you need something you can grab as soon as you look at it so that you can do what needs to be done. Now, golf is not necessarily a high pressure situation for most of us or not a situation for most of us, but you

get the idea.

You need something you can grab hold of quickly. We've got a drawer where we keep all of our little quick tools, scissors, tape measure, screwdriver of each kind, some tape. Everybody's got a little throw at it drawer where you've got thumbtacks and scotch tape and stuff in there.

When you open that drawer, you expect to be able to put your hand in and get the thing you need right now. I need it right now. If I fail to put something away and open that drawer and it's not there, that's going to make me fret.

I need something I can get a hold of. You're fretting. You go to your mind.

What have you got? Well, now that we know the key here, we know that Psalm 37 is the Do Not Fret Psalm. That's where it starts. And it's got structure.

And what are we going to do? The study that we're doing of this Psalm, Aleph, is going to give us understanding, bait, that is going to put us on a path. Notice a path is movement. You know, if you stand in the way of sinners, you're not moving in the way of sinners.

You're just standing there. You're not advancing or retreating. You're just standing there being bumped into by people who are trying to get somewhere.

Try that at the airport sometime. Try that in a busy store. Stand right in the way of people that are all trying to get somewhere.

A path is movement. A path is progress. A path has an origin and a destination.

So, we study to gain an understanding that will put us on a path that leads to a door. That's opportunity. We're going to go to a new place.

We're going to enter into a new status. It's a door. It's the door of life.

It's ultimately the door of everlasting life. Aleph, bait, gimel, dalet. Hey, the answer is in the Word of God.

That's where this system comes from. So, verse one, do not fret because of evildoers. Do not be envious of workers of iniquity.

This is not the only source of fretting, but it is certainly a common one. People are amazingly brazen in traffic. They're amazingly brazen when they are anonymous on the internet, or when they are out of reach on the internet.

Even if they have an identity, they will say things because they can get away with it. And it's just evil. There are people who promote agendas, and it's just evil.

Brainwashing children in education, promoting indolence and indigence, and lack of a work ethic in our culture. There's a whole bunch of people starting to run for president now in 2020.

It's already underway.

People are declaring their candidacy and putting out their platforms, and this is what they're going to do. Well, to the extent that these things they advocate are evil, that makes them an evildoer. And it's easy to listen to the news, to listen to the culture, to listen to what's going on in the realms of Christianity itself, and fret.

And we have to have an intelligent response to fretting. I'm going to tell you a quick story here, because I've been re-digitizing our Genesis study from way back in the 90s, and listening to our coverage through the Creation Week. And it reminded me of, you have to go back and revisit, at least from my point of view, what science knows about the world around us frequently, because we learn things.

And since we did the Genesis study, a whole bunch of new things have come out, or things that may have been known that I didn't know because they were so recently discovered. And I saw a debate this past week between two individuals. One is Hugh Ross, who has written several books that I like, and I always like it when somebody is in agreement with what I think.

And I like Hugh Ross greatly in these areas. He is an astrophysicist. He knows his science backwards and forwards, especially when it comes to the universe at large, and physics in general.

And so Hugh Ross is on one side, and Ken Ham. Remember Ken Ham? Never see a banana. You know, God designed it for people to eat, and that kind of thing.

Ken Ham has the gift of evangelism. He has a heart for evangelism. His desire is to win the lost.

And God bless him. I think he has accomplished that in large part. But Ken Ham is a young earth creationist.

He isn't a young earth creationist, and then imposing that on the Bible. And he will be the first one to tell you, he will pick up his Bible and wave it at you and say, I believe this Bible. And because I believe the Bible, I am classified as a young earth creationist, because the Bible doesn't say millions of years.

And he'll wave that thing over and over again. Where do you get millions of years out of this? It says days. Evening and morning is days.

24 hour days. God did it in six days. Day means day, means day.

You know, it's not figurative, and et cetera. And you know, God bless him. I applaud his stance on the integrity of scripture.

And he, you know, let God be true, and every man a liar. Science has to be wrong, because my Bible says six 24 hour days, 6,000 years ago. But there is an element of rigidity of feeling, I would call it, in that.

And you've got people on the other side saying, you know, God has given us more than one witness, and in the mouth of two or three witnesses, a thing is established. But here's my point. The reason Ken Ham is so adamant, the reason he's willing to debate Hugh Ross and anybody else that will talk to him about young earth, 6,000 years old, just the old traditional view is kind of like people that are King James only.

Don't need any of these new translations. If God wanted another Bible, he wouldn't have inspired the King James. It's their view.

Good enough for the Apostle Paul, good enough for me. Well, the interpretation that persisted for a long time about that has prevailed. And people are change resistant.

But here's Ken Ham's point. It is, he says, it is undermining the faith of young people. The church is losing young people in droves because by trying to shoehorn in millions of years, in his view, into the scriptures, it is destroying the authority of the Bible.

Well, if the Bible is wrong about 6,000 years ago in 24 hour days, what else is it wrong about? And so we're losing, you know, the new generation. This is the reason Christianity is declining, is that we've eroded and we've allowed the word of man to intrude into the word of God. Sounds like a plausible argument, right? And the feeling is that we've got to stick to scripture no matter what.

The science has been wrong so many times. They'll be wrong about this. Well, there are plenty of Christian men in science who look at the record of the rocks, who look at evidence, and there's new evidence just in the last 20 years about the age of the earth.

And we have to be intellectually engaged in our faith. Does that sound familiar? That was part of my introduction. Intellectual, academic, we need to be scientific.

We need to have a feel for God's order and God's structure. I'll tell you something really fascinating. There's several lines of evidence.

I'm only going to give you a couple. But the tree rings and dendrochronology, where they've taken trees and gone back and lined up the rings, and there is one ring for every year. You can't get multiple tree rings in a single year unless God made them grow multiple rings in the same year.

And then God is trying to deceive us with the evidence, which doesn't make any sense. But we have got dendrochronology going back about 10,000 years. Just trees with their rings going back that far.

Here's what's interesting. This is what I did not know until this past week. There is also a science of looking at lakes and lake beds and sediment that falls in them.

And there's an annual pattern for lakes that freeze, especially, where when it freezes over,

there's fine layers of sediment that are deposited in the wintertime. And then when it thaws and the erosion from the creeks that feed the lakes and so on comes down, there is coarse sand that is deposited on top. And then it slows down and freezes and goes quiescent for the winter.

And so you get the equivalent of tree rings in the bottom of a lake. There's also lakes that have diatoms, microscopic life that creates hard shells. It's like little miniature individual corals, so to speak.

And there will be a diatomaceous bloom every summer. And then these little critters die and their skeletons fall to the bottom. And that makes a pattern of rings.

And this goes forward year after year after year. Well, there's a steel lake in Michigan that has got these layers going back over 4,000 years. And they match with the dendrochronology that goes back 4,000 years.

And what they've done is not just look at those and say, wow, look how long this has been going on. They did carbon-14 dating. You've heard me say in the past that maybe the carbon-14 dating is off because it could have been a canopy.

It could have been different levels in the atmosphere. That's what we knew at the time. What they've done, though, is taken each of these layers of sediment, which is a completely independent witness of the trees that have got rings.

But they'll take a little bit of this organic sediment and they'll measure the carbon-14 level. They'll measure the carbon-14 level in each of the rings. And they verified, they went back and measured the carbon-14 in some of the timber that was used in a tunnel that was built by King Hezekiah back in 700 BC.

And the amount of carbon-14 in those trees that were used to build those tunnel braces was exactly the same as what they found in the tree rings from dendrochronology. The carbon-14 level was identical. That's how much it had decayed in 2,700 years.

They measured the carbon-14 levels in the Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll. And they found it to be 2,100 years old. And it matches exactly the 2,100-year tree ring carbon-14 level.

The levels match exactly. Which, by the way, there was a lot of liberal scholars saying that Isaiah was written after Jesus because of the suffering servant. And it seems to be so graphic in the description of Jesus' sufferings that, well, it was written after the fact.

Well, sorry, we've got a scroll that's been conclusively scientifically dated before Christ for that and Daniel and a lot of others. But my point is that the levels match. And if you graph it, it is a straight line.

Well, in Japan, there is a lake. And that lake, they did a 250-foot core sample in this lake. And

they had those rings, those year-by-year layers going back 100,000 years, more than 100,000 years.

I say again, lake annual sediment levels consistent without change 100,000 years. Plus, they broke off when they had 250 feet of core sample and there were more layers below that. But in those core layers, the carbon-14 that they sampled in the most recent 4,000 years matches the stuff from Steel Lake, Michigan, exactly.

And they have overlaid these and the plot is linear and goes all the way back to the point where they can't even measure that all of it has decayed and there's no carbon-14 left. And it goes well past 6,000 years, well past 10,000 years, well past 50,000 years, 75,000 years, 100,000 years, the carbon-14 levels are in a straight line, no deviation. And so what it tells us is God's Earth has been here a long time.

And that's a witness. There's only two ways to construe this intellectually. Either God has accelerated rates of decay or has done some fancy sleight of hand to make it look like the Earth is old when it's really not.

People that have tried to say, well, these layers were laid down by tides from the flood. It doesn't work that way. You can't get tides to lay down these sediments.

These things are as regular as clockwork year by year. There's no difference. And by the way, there is no flood layer in there either.

But I say that to say this. We have an intelligent faith. And Ken Ham's concern is that by not blindly adhering to the authority of scripture and ignoring whatever science has to say, if it doesn't agree with my understanding of the Bible, it's wrong.

On the same debate, there was a youth pastor sitting next to Ken Ham. And he said, well, I want to speak to Ken's point here. And he said, I'm working with youth every day.

I work with young people in their late teens and 20s every day. And he said, I'll tell you the reason we're losing them is that science appeals to their intellect. And Christianity doesn't have an effective answer.

When a Christian says, oh, in their minds, it's no different than saying the Earth is balanced on the back of a turtle than to say that nothing is older than 6,000 years. Everything in science, multiple lines of evidence. I saw an example given where if you've got a child that's lethargically on the couch, and you go over and you feel their brow, and they feel warm, and they've got the signs that they're not well, and then you use an ear thermometer, and you get a reading of 101.2. And then you use an oral thermometer, and you get a reading of 101.4. Any one of those lines of evidence might be questionable.

But when you put them all together, you conclude my child's got a fever. I've got multiple independent lines of evidence here that suggest that they're not well. Well, we've got dozens of

lines of evidence that tell us that this Earth, whether you're looking at the Grand Canyon, whether you're looking at salt deposits in the Gulf of Mexico that could not have been laid down by the flood.

In fact, the layer of silt that young Earth creationists say was laid down by the flood is on top of the salt. Well, the salt can only be there by evaporation, and it's thousands of feet thick. And you can't get there with a young Earth, and you can't get that much salt to deposit.

It can only be deposited as water evaporates. Well, the amount of time it takes for that water to come and go and evaporate and lay down these layers of salt, you can't get there in tens of thousands of years. This stuff has been there a long, long time.

And then the silt has been laid on top of it, and that is very old. That's the 6,000 to 8,000 to 10,000 years old silt on top of these thousands of feet of salt in the Gulf of Mexico. There's multiple lines of evidence that God has left in the record of the rocks, in the record of the fossils.

You cannot get the flood to explain it. Why am I talking about that? We're in an acrostic psalm, and God does not expect you to sacrifice your intellect on the altar of You don't get stupid because you trust God. We have an intelligent faith.

The authors of Scripture were some of the most intelligent men that ever lived. Paul was not a duffer. The Apostle Peter was not a duffer.

John the Apostle was not just a mere fisherman. These men were literate. They were intelligent.

They were used by God to communicate in effective ways. The Apostle Peter reminds me a little bit of J. Vernon McGee. At first blush when you listen to him, you might think he sounds like a country guy.

If you remember McGee's accent, he didn't sound like a PhD. But when you listen to him teach, he had tremendous insight, tremendous organizational and communicative skills. His folksy presentation was disarming and at the same time deceiving because he really knew how to teach.

I can always go back and get something out of McGee, anything he has to say. I think the Apostle Peter was that way. He appealed to the common man, but he wasn't a common man intellectually.

Jesus didn't pick him because he was a dummy. He was smart. We need to be smart in our faith and we need to think our way through our problems.

It is great in the Psalms to feel what the psalmist felt, to have a kinship and to identify with what he feels and what he's going through. We have our downs and we have our ups. We rejoice and we say, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me and

from the cries of my groaning as the Lord Jesus himself did? But we have this pattern.

We have this order. We have this procedure. We have these tools from God and you open the drawer, you lift the lid, and here's the handle.

Grab it. Take hold of it. So in conclusion for this session, just remember, if it's a fretting time, we've got an answer right here in Scripture.

Fret not yourself. Start with understanding. That's aleph.

And get your path. You study to get that understanding. Aleph and bait.

Study. Understanding. There's a path that leads through the door and that's the door of opportunity.

Jesus is the door of the sheep. It's an opportunity for everlasting life. Jesus stands at the door and knocks.

You need to open it so that he can come through. It's a two-way door. You can leave or he can come in, one or the other.

But we have a responsibility to think and to be thinking people. And when it comes to the challenges to faith in this modern day and generations coming up that have been indoctrinated, some would say brainwashed, in education, you as a Christian need to have answers. You can't just say, well, God did it.

I believe it. That settles it. If you want to be useful, if you want to be a blessing, if you want to be able to demonstrate that you're not just oblivious, you're not unthinking.

That's how cults get started. People have blind trust in a doctrine or in a leader or in a group and they don't think. They don't analyze.

They don't criticize. You need to have critical thinking to be a good, faithful believer. The Old Testament tells us this.

That's why we have these acrostics. David is telling us it's fine to feel. It is fine to experience.

It's fine to look to the Lord. It's fine to face enemies and opposition in this life. But you've got to think.

Think. Think. Christianity is a thinking person's faith.

And we will get the furthest in our faith when we begin with study, understanding, path, door, God's word. Well, we'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll see if we can get all the way tonight in our psalm.