

I'm Gene Edwards, and this is a book entitled Unleashing the Word of God. Somehow it has come into your hands; it's in your possession, and in the back of it should be a DVD. This is that DVD. It is the story of the biggest disaster in all of church history. Furthermore, it is a disaster that's never been observed, never been discussed, never been cured. It sits here today. If this disaster had not occurred, there's a good possibility that Catholicism would not exist, Protestantism would not exist, and no, not even evangelical Christianity as we presently practice, probably would also not exist. So, I'd like to tell you a little story, and that story gives us an idea of the greatness of this disaster.

We're going to say it's the year 330. It's Rome. It's the emperor himself, and walking beside him is a man named Eusebius, who happens to be from Antioch, Syria. They're in the palace in Rome, but the emperor is about to leave Italy completely and move to a new city he has built, and it's going to be called Constantinople, meaning the city of Constantine. He turns to Eusebius. He has been a Christian for about 20 years. He is misreading a great deal of the Christian faith because he has a pagan mind, but feels very definitely sure he is a believer in Christ and a devout follower of Christ. That is still being discussed.

He turns to Eusebius and makes the most interesting statement. Listen to it. He says to Eusebius, Eusebius, what are your mystery writings? Now that's a pagan mind using pagan language. Eusebius is a Christian. He immediately reinterprets it. He says, Oh, he's speaking about the letters and the Gospels that were written by the apostles. So, he carries on a discussion with Constantine for a moment, and Constantine says, and you're going to be amazed at this, because this is the year 330. It is historically accurate; you can find this if you'd like to read it in any good history of the Bible. A New Testament in its totality had never been placed together.

Paul's letters were circulating. Revelation had just begun to be circulated fairly well. One or two of the Gospels, usually Matthew and Luke or Mark and Luke, and totally separated in other places, the Gospel of John. But because of the incredible cost of making a copy of anything written, it would take literally the coffers of the Roman Empire to put out several copies of the New Testament, and that was exactly what was about to happen at this very moment.

And this is what Constantine said after they had been completely finished discussing this: "I want complete copies of..." (what we would call the New Testament.) Now these writings, these holy, sacred writings, and using the term still, the mystery writings, which were a term used out of paganism...he said, "I want to have copies of them made." Well, that would be so astronomically expensive. Even one copy.

You see, for a man to sit down with parchment or vellum and to hire a man to write all that out very slowly and beautifully with ink and quill would take an enormous amount of time when the average person in the Roman Empire was making ten cents a day. Where would you get the money? He commissioned Eusebius to put them together - what we today call the 27 books of the New Covenant or the New Agreement or the New Testament - and then he left for Constantinople; it's one of the last things he did.

Now, nobody knows if all of those complete New Testaments were ever finished. The general agreement is that not all of them got finished, but some were completed. What happened to them? We don't know, but everyone feels very certain that one of them survived, and that is a story...that is a tale worth telling.

The oldest Christian monastery in the world was built in the Sinai Desert just before the time of Constantine. Pretty well forgotten. By the time of the 1800s, it was being sponsored by, underwritten by, the Eastern Orthodox Church during the days of the building of St. Peter's Cathedral under Peter the Great. A man, an Englishman, by the name of, believe it or not, Constantine Tischendorf, was traveling all over the Middle East, trying to collect ancient New Testament scraps. In one of the most unbelievable coincidences in all of human history. He came to the Mount Sinai monastery, and that week, those monks, all illiterate, had some scrolls of absolutely no significance to them whatsoever, and they had just begun to use those scrolls, those strips being taken off of, in order to kindle or to start the morning fire for breakfast, when Tischendorf arrived. He was mortified. He knew exactly what it was. Finally, they had found one of those 50 manuscripts, probably the original one, and there is a reason for believing that. It was in four columns. Everything else that had ever been found as scraps was in three columns or two columns, and usually the words would sort of come like this. There would be some misspellings. This is absolute perfection. Four columns. Clear. Neat. Thirteen, fourteen hundred years old.

Tischendorf played it cool. It didn't work. They figured out there was something special about those. They would not let him take them away to be examined. He left. He came back ten years later, went to the monastery, and nobody at the monastery knew anything about those scrolls, and he assumed that they were lost.

The story goes, as Tischendorf tells it, that as he rode away, he stopped about ten miles out in a town to eat and was telling the proprietor there all about his woes and his problems and what had happened. The man said, "Sir, it's a possibility I have those," and went back into a closet or some storage place and came out with what has come to be known as the Saniyia, or the Sinai, manuscripts. He got them to Cairo. They were examined. Everybody who saw it had a fit. It was purchased by the Russian government and taken to St. Peter's Museum. And the more they looked, the more they were amazed.

Beautiful story, isn't it? But I left out one little part of it, and that's the disaster. A 1700-year-old disaster. I say this emphatically, and I say it historically, and I say it accurately. Out of that accident, that disaster, that catastrophe of the highest order, you and I, or anyone else who's ever lived on this earth since then, we cannot possibly know. We cannot. We cannot. We cannot understand the New Testament. Put a period at the end of that. I will prove that in just a moment.

Here's what happened. Somewhere, someone took that codex, that manuscript of a complete New Testament, to a binder. Well, the binder was, we assume, a pagan. Whether he was a pagan or not, it doesn't really matter. He was thinking like a pagan, and he was thinking like a bookbinder. So, there were laid out in front of him the letters of Paul of

Tarsus. We have no idea what order they were in at that moment, but I can tell you exactly what order they were in by the time that bookbinder had bound those letters of Paul. The bookbinder sat there and figured out each of those letters by length. Not in the order that they were written. Not in the chronological sequence in which Paul wrote them. But by length. And there they stand. There, they have never been moved.

No one has thought about this fact, and they are in such chaotic, jumbled order that it has given rise to Christianity, incomprehensible in the great panoramic scenery, but all messed up. Men were driven to look upon the New Testament in a totally logical, totally intellectual way, and we became not a people of the New Testament in its proper setting, but we finally degenerated down to where we are right now. We are a people of verses, and we have never seen that beautiful story. We have never seen those books of Paul in the proper order, nor have we ever filled in the spaces, and there were spaces sometimes when Paul, for as much as five years, went without writing a single word. There it is. We don't know what goes on in between them.

We treated Paul's letters as though they were the same as the writings of Aristotle; Aristotle, who lived 300 years before Christ, before Paul, who wrote treatises, each on a totally different subject, 210 subjects, none of them matching one another. Uniquely different subjects. And he wrote on just about everything that could be imagined. He was a man of pure logic. He taught the Western world to reason. To think. To debate. To take this thought and that thought and put them together.

And that was the mind of man. In the 1st century, 2nd, 3rd century, and 4th century, little by little, it faded away to become Roman Catholicism, but the logic, the studying, the speculation, the guesswork; I don't know how to say this to you, but there were so many men who were students of Aristotle and those 210 totally separate thoughts, who got saved, became Christians, and the best of them, best known, and maybe the worst of them, was a gentleman named Augustine. If you're Roman Catholic, he's referred to as St. Augustine. We'll come back to that in a moment.

Now, Paul's letters are in total chaos, and the Christian who has been a student of Aristotle looks at the letters of Paul, and they have no sequence; they have no relationship with one another whatsoever; there's no story there. Now, Acts is a story, but Paul's 13 letters are not a story, not in the order they're in now. And if you put them in their proper order, then a story will emerge, but we don't know that story. We do not know that story. And that's why the little pamphlet is entitled *Unleashing the Word of God*.

So, the man who bound the books...ah, well, let's see. Paul's longest letter is...and this is the way he was thinking. I just bound the writings of Aristotle, and I put the longest of his 210 treatises together, and then the second longest, and the third longest, and then shorter and shorter, and the shortest one of all is put at the end, and I bound them all. People bought them, and people studied them; those are the works of Aristotle.

And now, you and I, for 1700 years, have done exactly the same thing. Romans is not Paul's first letter, but we have been treating it like a treatise. We have been treating it like a treatise. It has no father, it has no mother, it has no brother, no sister, no cousins; it is on "an" subject, excuse my English, a subject all by itself. And when we preach through the New Testament, I'm going to preach through the Word of God. No, you're not; you're going to preach through a jungle of jumbled-up chaos. It's not his first letter; it's his sixth. And it is in real circumstances, under real conditions, written in the year 58 A.D., whereas the first letter Paul ever penned was written in the year 50.

And most people, even scholars, ignore the fact. I didn't say they didn't know. They ignore the fact. It was the first letter, and it had history, and it had setting, and it had circumstances. It had surroundings. It had people present. There were conflicts. There were problems that provoked that letter, and when you put it in its proper setting, a story emerges.

The second letter that Paul wrote was First Thessalonians; same thing. A setting, circumstances, problems, provocations, and if you begin continuing on, suddenly there emerges a large part of the first-century story. And it reads so beautifully, it's breathtaking. And you know something else? Simple. It's beautiful. And you can understand it without going to a seminary or Bible school, and you don't have to sit for the rest of your life while a preacher picks on this verse over here, and then the next week on that one, and another one here, and another one there. And the next week this one, and another one that one, and you always appreciate pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, but you never see the puzzle put together.

I'm going to show you the order in which Paul's letter should have been bound, and I am inviting you to be in a new generation of Christians who read the New Testament and the words written and come to become acquainted with, to know, to understand, to fathom the story. The story. The story. The dramatic story, and every verse in the New Testament must yield to the story. The story is what happened, and you can't take a verse here and say, Ah, it says this. Therefore, that in itself changes the story. The story doesn't change. The verse must yield to the story. The story will not yield to the verse. And pretty soon, you come to the point that there are no verses in you at all, and you can feel the thoughts that flow from Paul's mind and his pen. And there is drama, beauty; you can feel the pain, and you can also understand.

So, our bookbinder messed us up royally for the last 1700 years, and now you and I are going to change that, because this is the first time any of this has ever been addressed, tackled, and beautifully presented to us. This is page one of the rest of your life's understanding of the New Testament.

Let me put it in a sentence. Let's know the story. Let's read the books of the New Testament in the order in which their events took place, and let's start a revolution and get back to things as they really were. And you can't do that without that story, and not without reading it in its order.

Now, here we are. Sitting beside me are Paul's letters in the order in which they should be in your New Testament.

The first letter Paul wrote was Galatians.

The second is 1 Thessalonians.

The third one is 2 Thessalonians.

The next one is 1 Corinthians.

Then 2 Corinthians.

Romans.

Colossians.

Ephesians.

Philemon.

Philippians.

And if you look down at the rest of it, you will see all of Paul's letters. Four of them are clustered here together. First and Second Timothy and Titus. And that's the end of it.

Now look at the years: how beautifully the years go. Galatians 50; 1 Thessalonians 51; 2 Thessalonians 52. Look at this jump between 52 and 57; that's five years. The largest stadium in the world is in Rio de Janeiro; it seats 250,000 people. If you took every great scholar who ever lived on this earth for the last 1700 years, and all those that are living today, and put them in that stadium and ask them what happened during those five years, not one of them could answer that question because they don't know the story.

Paul's letter to the Romans, which is first in your New Testament, was written in 58... as the sixth book, not the first. Galatians is the first. There it is. Now, hold on to... take a deep breath. Paul's letters: in their chaos. The order of Paul's letters by length.

Romans. His sixth letter, written in 58.

Then 1 Corinthians, written in 57. That's the year before 58.

And then 2 Corinthians, written in the same year as Romans, but that's not the way we read it. We read it... this... this book was actually written before it. This book was written at the same time. Look at the rest of it and way down here at the very bottom, because it is the shortest book of Paul's letters, is Philemon. So far out of place, it's staggering. That's not where Philemon belongs. Philemon belongs exactly where Colossians and Ephesians belong, as we saw here on this other chart.

Take a look at this. 58, 57, 58, 50, 63, 63, 63, back all the way to 51, 52, then 65, and finally, you have a little order here. 67, and then back to 65. That's your New Testament and every New Testament that's been printed for the last 1700 years.

Now, let's show you. I'm going to ask you to be really honest with yourself, as I will try to be honest as well. I'm going to pick this up and let the camera look at it for a moment. This is to illustrate the mess we're in. Here's American history in the order in which it took place.

American history. We have to imagine a 13-volume history. In fact, this is pretty much what any American history scholar would know.

Alright. This is the beginning of the story. 1492 - Columbus discovers the New World. Then there are the earliest settlers. We've got a date, and the dates just keep growing nice and neatly. Then the colonies. Then the Revolutionary War. The War of 1812. All of this is in perfect order. The Western Movement. The Civil War. The Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. The Korean War. The Cold War. And then the Vietnamese War. All of those dates are in perfect sequence. You can pick up that book and read it. It's a full, complete story.

But let's rearrange it according to Paul's letters today. Keep in mind that this column represents the way Paul's letters are jumbled. You would start off with the sixth book. You're going to read American history. The first book you read, you're going to read about the Westward Movement, from the East Coast to the West Coast, because that's book number 6 over here. It represents Romans as the sixth book of Paul's letters.

After you have read that, you will be reading the Revolutionary War. And then after that, you'll be reading the War of 1812. And then you will read about Columbus discovering America, because that's book number one. That's the Galatians of American history. That's the first book that would start America's history.

Spanish-American War. World War II before World War I. Then the Civil War. Then we'll be reading the early settlements of the early 1600s. Then you would jump over to the colonies, and then the Korean War. And then the Cold War. And then you would be reading the Vietnamese War. And then you would come, and you would end with World War I.

If you studied American history in the same order that the epistles of Paul are in their sequence, you could study American history for your entire lifetime and never have any, even the most remote idea, of what American history was.

Let's do it in sequence. Let's study the Lord's life in the order he lived them, not in the redundancy of four books, but blend them together. Then let us flow into Acts, and then when you get to chapter 13 of Acts, stop right there. Pentecost began on the day of 30 AD. We've come to Acts 13:1, and you begin to read the background of the first piece of Christian literature ever penned, and you get the background to it. And when you come to Chapter 15:40, right there, Paul writes Galatians. And then by the time you get to Acts 18, you have the writing of 1 Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians. You're covering the years 50, 51, and 52.

All of that, to the very end, you will find in this book, if you will take this DVD. Read this book and then take into your hands: *Revolutionary Bible study*. Revolutionary Bible study. It will guide you through every step of reading the New Testament, and when you have finished, you'll come to the same conclusion that I came to.

You come to a very simple conclusion: so that's what they had in century 1. It doesn't at all look like what we have in century 21.

Then, with a clear conscience, you begin to go back to the first motions: century 1. A lot of times, you'll hear people telling you about "we have a New Testament church". No, sir, you have a New Testament arranged in absolute chaos, and every one of Paul's letters and all the other letters of the New Testament are presented to you as a stand-alone treatise, an analysis, something to be studied, looked upon, and then go to whatever is next listed in the index of your New Testament.

My name is Gene Edwards. Welcome to a whole new world and join that few number of people who say breathlessly, Wow. I got a brand-new New Testament. I got a brand-new Lord. I know what happened in century 1, and I'm beginning to get a glimpse of the church as it is supposed to be.

(SEE BELOW FOR CHART)

PAUL'S LETTERS

IN CHAOS

PAUL'S LETTERS The Letters of Paul in <i>your</i> New Testament are hopelessly jumbled.	In letter #	Written in the year [*]
ROMANS	his 6 th	58
I CORINTHIANS	his 4 th	57
II CORINTHIANS	his 5 th	58
GALATIANS	his 1 st	50
EPHESIANS	his 8 th	63
PHILIPPIANS	his 10 th	63
COLOSSIANS	his 7 th	63
I THESSALONIANS	his 2 nd	51
II THESSALONIANS	his 3 rd	52
I TIMOTHY	his 11 th	65
II TIMOTHY	his 13 th	67
TITUS	his 12 th	65
PHILEMON	his 9 th	63