

4. A Commanding Word

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Date: 09 October 2011

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[0 : 01] We're going to read now together in the scriptures. You'll find the reading in Paul's second letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy chapter 3, page 996, I think, if you have one of our visitor's Bibles.

And we're thinking again of this question, what is the Bible? And another aspect of that tonight, that it is a commanding word, it is an authoritative word of God to be obeyed, to be done, as the Bible would put it, as well as to be heard.

And I'm going to read actually from the beginning of 2 Timothy 3, just to put in context the later verses, which are so familiar. But Paul begins thus, but understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty, terrible times, as the NIV translates it.

Why? Well, for people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure, lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.

For among them are those who creep into households, sorry, denying its power, avoid such people. I don't want to miss that out, avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning, always learning, and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

[1 : 57] Just as Janice and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also opposed the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

You, however, you, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my perseverance, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, which persecutions I endured.

Yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. While evil people and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you've learned and firmly believe, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you've been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

[3 : 23] I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word. Be ready, in season and out of season.

Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

And as for you, always be sober-minded. Endure suffering. Do the work of an evangelist or do the work of an evangelical.

That's how I like to translate that. And so fulfill your ministry. Amen. May God bless us. This is word. Well, we're back to our question again. What is the Bible? What is this remarkable book that spans the world, that was translated those 400 years ago into the famous authorized version, the King James Version?

[4 : 45] What is this book that we have open in front of us tonight? Well, we've seen, first of all, that it is a covenant word, that it is, first and foremost, a personal revelation of God to us, that we may know him.

That this personal revelation of God may lead us into a personal relationship with God. It's the primary purpose of Scripture. And we've seen that it's not a confused word. It's a clear word. It is an accessible revelation. That is, it's been interpreted by God to us and for us, so that we can know God clearly, not in a fog of mystery and confusion. It's a clear word. Last time we thought about it being a coherent word. That is, it's not a random collection of texts, just in a hodgepodge together to be pulled out and used. But no, it's a comprehensive revelation. It's a whole word. God's whole word for God's whole world. God's whole world.

[6 : 23] God's whole world. God's whole world. It is a word of authoritative revelation. The Bible is the full and the final and the clear authority, which is given by God, to direct every single aspect of our lives.

And therefore, because it is this, it must be obeyed. And that means that the true Christian, the true Christian disciple, will gladly submit themselves to God's commanding word.

And will do so in its entirety. And God's word in scripture will be the rule of our lives. That's our personal life, our family life, our business life, our church life, everything.

God's word is a commanding word. Jesus said, Jesus said, John 10, verse 35, the scripture cannot be broken. Heaven and earth will pass away, he said, but my words will never pass away.

And the great commission in Matthew 28, when Jesus, just before Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, Jesus said, said, you're to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, that is bringing them into the orbit of the authority of Christ's church, and teaching them to obey, he said, all that I have commanded you.

[7 : 41] Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. That's why the apostle Peter commands the church, in 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 2, and says, remember the commands of our Lord and Savior, through your apostles.

Teach them to do everything I have commanded you, says Jesus. Remember the commands of our Lord and Savior, given to you through your apostles, says Peter.

Why? Because, because you know that, as Timothy says here, so says Peter, in the last days, scoffers will come, many who reject the authority of the apostolic gospel.

But no, just as Paul says here to Timothy, in 2 Timothy chapter 4, in just these circumstances, when people will certainly reject biblical truth, what are you to do, Timothy?

You are to preach this word. You are to do the work of an evangelist, or an evangelical. You are to do the work of one who truly believes, and holds to the truth of scripture.

[8 : 47] You're not just to believe it in theory, he means. You're not just to say, oh yes, I believe the Bible, but no, you're actually to do it, says Paul. You're actually to live in line with this teaching.

You're to obey it. You teach others to obey it, because, because God's word in scripture is a commanding word. It's a word of authoritative revelation, and it is to be obeyed, as God's sovereign will for our lives, in every aspect.

Now notice the difference, the difference between merely accepting the notion of the authority of scripture, in theory, as your doctrine, as your theology, the difference between that, and actually living out that reality in practice, because that's a crucial thing, and that's what Paul is really speaking about here, in this chapter.

Not just what you say you believe in your theology, it's what you actually do in your life. That's important, because there are, there are many, many Christians, who would call themselves evangelical Christians, Bible Christians, people who take the Bible seriously, as God's inspired word, just as 2 Timothy 3 verse 16 says, it's inspired by God, they'd be happy to say, yes, I believe God's word is infallible.

Maybe even, I believe God's word is inerrant. They're happy to honor the Bible. But, at the same time, it's possible, to believe all of those things, but not actually to live, under the authority of scripture, in your life.

[10 : 26] There are many churches also, that would likewise call themselves, Bible churches, evangelical churches, but in practice, it's just the same. They honor the Bible, they talk a lot about the Bible, they preach the Bible, but the question really is, what do you do, with the Bible?

Where in the vehicle of your life, is the Bible? Where in the vehicle, of our church's life, is the Bible? Is the Bible, really driving everything, as a commanding word, from God?

Or is the Bible, just along in the vehicle, for the ride? It's the illustration, that David Jackman, is sometimes used. Where in the car, is the Bible? Now for some, the Bible is absolutely there, for certain.

It's always there. It's there in the passenger seat. It's useful, for frequent reference. But it's not, in the ultimate control, of the pedals, of the vehicle.

For some it's there, but it's, it's been moved nowadays, to the back seat. Or even sometimes, in the boot. So it's always there, whenever the vehicle, goes out on a journey.

[11 : 35] It's very good to know, that it's around. It's happy, happy to have the Bible there, and so on. We speak about it, we refer to it, in an emergency, it's like a spare tire. You can go into the boot, and get it out, and see what it says.

But increasingly, it becomes marginalized, and unnecessary, in all the ordinary, day to day journeys. It is, it is, it is, surprisingly easy, in an evangelical church, to think that the Bible, is in control, but, in reality, when push comes to shove, it's very easy, for that not to be so.

I was speaking to, a Cornell student, just last year, who just within, the first few weeks, of doing their course, realized, that the evangelical church, that they had belonged to, didn't really, have the Bible, central at all, in the church's life.

It was not, driving everything, it was there, but it wasn't in control. But no, you see, the Bible, is God's, commanding word.

It must be, in the driving seat, always. That's the only place, for it. In our lives, in our church life, in everything. It's not just, that the Bible, is in control, of our ultimate destination.

[12 : 50] The Bible, must be in control, of the route, and the pedals, and the steering wheel, and every single aspect, of the whole journey. So let me ask you, is that true of you?

Is that true of your personal life? Is it true, in our church? Is the Bible, God's, commanding word? Is it our, commanding officer, if you like?

James chapter 1, verse 22 says, be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

He wouldn't have to say that, would he? Unless he knew, that it was easy, for us to deceive ourselves. Because we can, easily think, that the Bible, is the ultimate authority, but in practice, when the chips are down, it's something else, in the end, that really has the ultimate say.

And here's where a diagram, helps, and many of you, have seen this diagram before, but I'm not going to apologize, for showing it again, because, it'll be new to some of you. And anyway, I want you to have this, burned into your brains.

[14 : 03] It's, something that I've developed, originally from something, I got from, Philip Jensen. But it tells us, that if the Bible, is not, our full, and final, and clear authority, in all of life, that's not so, then, almost always, it will be one of three other things, that is actually, the ultimate authority, in our life.

And, it'll be something, beginning with, B, R, I, or E. B is for Bible, and I'm not talking about cheese, but, Brie is a handy acronym.

But, if the Bible is not, your full, and your final, and your clear authority, for everything in life, it'll be one of these, three other things. It'll be, reason, or it will be, an institution, or it will be, experience. Either reason, or institution, or experience. Let's start with, R for reason. There are many people, who would say, that the Bible, is the final authority, in all matters of faith, and life.

And, even that the Bible, is a clear authority. But, at least in practice, they deny, functionally, even if they don't admit it, they will deny, the Bible's full authority.

[15 : 23] That means that, they will remove, effectively, parts of the Bible, which can no longer be held, to be authoritative, in our lives. The classical example of this, is that of, the older liberal theology.

Liberal theologians, of say, a century ago, were very happy, to accept the Bible, as clear, clear words from God, as a final authority, from God.

But, they could not accept, certain things in scripture. So, the age of, rationalism, and reason, they could not hold, to the miracles, for example, of Jesus.

Although, they would hold, very, very strongly, to Jesus' ethical teaching. Likewise, they, increasingly, rejected, the idea, of, the cross, as an atonement, for sin.

Couldn't stomach that. So, they rejected, any call, for a, a new birth, through repentance, and faith. And, the Lord Jesus, becomes, really, an example, a teacher, a friend, a mentor, sure, but, not a savior, from sin.

[16:36] If you read, the, the, Bible scholars, of that, liberal persuasion, you take, if you take, one of the commentaries, and you open it, and look at some of the miracles, of Jesus. Say, the feeding of the 5,000.

Then, very typically, they'll say something like this. Well, of course, Jesus was such an inspiring teacher, that all these people, who followed him, sat down, and they were so wrapped, in the attention, of what he was saying, that, you know, they clean forgot, that they were hungry. And, that's really the explanation, behind the feeding of the 5,000. It's not about, loaves and fishes, being multiplied, but, a few people had their picnics, and, everybody just forgot, about being hungry. Or else, they were so inspired, by the message, that actually, everybody found, that they all had a packed lunch, with them anyway, and they remembered, and they got out, and they shared, with one another, and, there was no miracle, at all. I remember my teacher, at primary school, giving us that explanation.

I put my hand up, and said, well, what about the 12 baskets, of food left over? How does that fit in? And, I got a rather cross look. But, so that's a, rather typical way, of explaining that sort of thing.

[17:39] Well, when Jesus is walking, on the water, well, Jesus had been there earlier, he knew, the way the tides were, in and out, he knew there was a sandbar, under the surface, and so, he walked along, and everybody thought, he was walking on the water.

That would be your, your typical, sort of thing. Now, do you see what that kind of approach is saying? Saying, well, our modern, superior human reason, just can't believe, in things like miracles, in a scientific age.

And, we can't stomach this, nonsense about, atonement for sin, in a modern, sophisticated age, like ours. So, we, we have to excise away, some of these parts of scripture.

We have to explain away, those parts that offend our reason, our understanding of science, or, or sociology, or psychology, or whatever it is. So, yes, of course, the Bible is, is, a clear authority from God.

Of course, the Bible is a final authority. We accept that, but, but in reality, well, it's not a full authority, because it's subordinate, to our reason. There are things, that we, modern people, know better than scripture, and when that happens, obviously, our reason, trumps scripture, and scripture has to be, changed.

[18:56] So, you read somebody like, Willie Barclay, who was a, famous, scholar of the church, here in Scotland, and his daily Bible studies series. He was a good scholar, he had many fine observations, on the text, but, he was somebody, who rejected scripture, as a full authority, in that way.

So, he rejected the miraculous, he rejected, the atonement, as I've said, but, at the same time, he argued very strongly, for Jesus' ethical teaching, about all sorts of things, divorce, adultery, he argued very strongly, against homosexual practice, for example.

But, you see, once you start, to reject the Bible's, full authority, once you start, to cut out the bits, that offend your reason, well, then, lots of other people, feel, equally liberated, to cut out the bits, that offend them, as well.

And, there may be many bits, like that, that you favor, but they don't. And, so, it's, it's very interesting, isn't it, today, how in our, more post-modern, society, I find that people, don't nearly have, so much problem, with some of the things, that they did a generation, or two ago, the miraculous, and so on.

Many people, can accept that. But, what they really, take issue with, is Jesus ethical teaching. Which, people like Willie Barclay, were absolutely, rock solid, in favor of.

[20:15] What people reject, today, above all, is, Jesus ethical teaching, about, well, particularly, sexual matters. Well, we can't have that. But, you see, Willie Barclay, and others, like him, should have seen, where their, liberal rejection, of the Bible's, full authority, was bound to lead.

Once you start, doing that, there's no control, anywhere. Somebody's always, going to have a reason, a rationale, for saying, well, this can't be true, it offends our, reason, our rational outlook. Even some of the other, great ones of the past, people like James Denny, who were absolutely, rock solid, in their doctrine, of the atonement, and I've quoted, from them many times. His doctrine,

of scripture, was somewhat lacking.

He didn't see, where, in a few generations time, the approach, that they were taking, was ultimately, going to lead. So that what he, upheld, and cherished, and the doctrine, of the cross, and Christ's death, as a propitiation, for sins, would ultimately, be thrown out as well, by the very same, progression, of that view.

So that applies, in so many, different ways, today. The authority, of scripture, really comes down, to my own reasoning. My reasoning, colored by science, or philosophy, or sociology, or whatever it is, that our society, takes as the norms, today.

[21 : 40] If the Bible, is not, your full authority, then, reason, may very well be, in the end, where the authority, lies.

The second, alternative authority, I want you to think about, is that, of the institution. There are some, Christians, who are very happy, to take the Bible, as a full authority, not cutting bits out, like that.

Very happy, that it's a clear authority. But in fact, what they do, is they reject it, as the final authority, in their lives. Because that authority, lies with the institution.

A classical example, of that, would be, the church of Rome, or the Eastern Orthodox churches, where the final authority, in all matters, lies with the magisterium, with the Pope, and with the church's tradition.

Because the church, stands over scripture. The church, decides the interpretation, of scripture. And so what really matters, in the end of the day, is not, the Bible itself, but what the church says, about the Bible.

[22 : 46] That's why you find, in these traditions, that many, people don't actually, spend a lot of time, reading their own scriptures, themselves. Because what really matters, is what the priest, is going to tell them matters.

And so why bother, doing all the legwork yourself, when in fact, you can go to the priest, or the magisterium. So they take great, interest in what is pronounced, by the Vatican, in the papal bulls, and encyclicals, for example.

That is the teaching, of the church. That's what really matters. That's where the final, authority lies. But of course, that institutionalism, that institutional authority, can equally easily occur, in any denomination, in any institution, of the church.

Not just the church of Rome, or the orthodox church, and we have to be wise to that. We have to realize that. Because, even if, even if the Bible is clear, when the chips are down, what really holds, the final authority, for many Christians, is, the establishment, that they belong to.

We mustn't rock the boat. We must, bow to the institution. Now it's only ever, controversy, that reveals, the truth, about where your, final authority lies.

[24 : 00] So for example, Peter and John, in Acts chapter 4, they were told, by the religious institution, of their day, to stop preaching, about Jesus. Stop preaching, about Jesus, for the sake of the peace, of the church.

That's effectively, what they were told. But no, they said, we can't do that. We must obey God, rather than men, rather than the institution. He's our final authority, not you.

So if the institution, says one thing, and the Bible commands, another thing, that's the question, isn't it? Which authority, in the end, are you going to buy down to? God, his word, and scripture, or the institution?

Is it B for Bible, or I for institution? So I'm a minister, of the Church of Scotland. I'm under the control, and the discipline, of our denomination, but I am an evangelical.

That means, I take the Bible, as my full, and final, and clear authority, of God. So which of these, two things then, must be the thing, that I can't possibly, sacrifice ever?

[25 : 06] Which of these, two things, will have the final say, in the end, in a matter, of controversy? Well, the Bible, is God's commanding word, his final authority, in all matters, of faith and life, then no loyalty, to any mere institution, can possibly, ever take, precedence, over God's command, in scripture, can it?

Even if that means, that, the result is, I lose my status, as a minister, of this particular, denomination, or my stipend, or my pension, or my home, or anything else. Within a church fellowship, also we need to think, and realize, that institutionalism, can be rife.

Where does the, final authority lie, within any, particular congregation, within our own, congregation, in church life? Is it really, with the word of God, in scripture? Or is it in practice, just with the traditions, of the institution, in that case, this particular congregation? Very often, within a church, his life, it is the latter, isn't it? We say, well this is the way, we do things here. This is what we like to do. This is why we do it. But what about, if the Bible's, command says, we must change, what is our way, of doing things? What if God's word, challenges us, to see, that something we are doing, is actually, contrary, to the command, of scripture?

[26 : 36] Perhaps, perhaps it's going to cause, a great rumpus, if we have to change something. Very tempting, isn't it? To say, oh goodness, I can't stand the thought, of all the hassle of that, let's just forget it, and keep doing what we're doing.

It's a very important question, isn't it, for any church? Because you see, if we don't believe, that the gospel will, and must, constantly be changing, the church, how can we possibly, expect, the gospel, that we preach, to have any impact, and to change the world, outside?

God's word, isn't changing, and shaping the church, it's never going to touch, the world, is it? The church, must, always, constantly, be reforming, and being reformed, according to God's word, that was the watchword, of the reformation, *semper reformando*, the church, must always be, being reformed, according to God's word, that doesn't mean, of course, just constantly changing, for the sake of change, not at all, nor does it mean, certainly, constantly adapting, to the world around us, to fit in with the world, no, it means, always bringing itself, in thought, and in word, and in deed, constantly back, under the authority, of scripture, because our natural propensity, always, is to drift, isn't it, away from scripture, and we, in our own hearts, drift, to the dead ways, of rote, this is just what I do, and habit, and groups of people, in the church, constantly drift, towards the dead ways, of institutionalized religion, where the Bible, yes, is something we honor, yes, is something we give, the highest respect to, but actually, stops shaping, everything that we think, everything that we do, in our lives, how our church life, is organized, how it's prioritized, how it's practiced, so we've always, got to be asking ourselves, haven't we, in the church, what is driving this, is it the commands, of scripture, or is it just, something sentimental, or even worse, is it a, an idolatrous loyalty, to the institution, be it our own congregation, our denomination, our way of doing things, the society we're part of, or whatever it is, is it the Bible, that has the final authority, or is it the institution, the third rival authority, is E for experience, again, there are many people, who are happy to see, the Bible is a full authority, there's no cutting bits out, for us, it is a final authority, we're not going to bow down, to any institution, but in practice, we don't regard it, as quite sufficient, it's not fully clear, as an authority, all by itself, we actually need something, more from God, in a sense really, we're talking about, the opposite, of the liberal position, the liberal if you like, is the Bible minus, whereas this is the Bible plus, and that's characteristic,

I believe, of the charismatic position, the Bible is certainly, authoritative, orthodox in that sense, but really, functionally, and in practice, the Bible is not regarded, as fully sufficient, we need something else, we need further, specific revelation, we need extras from God, if we're to know, particularly in our own lives, in real life, how to be guided, how to make certain decisions, all that kind of thing, so there's a particular emphasis, in that tradition, on words of knowledge, on prophecies, and all of these, kinds of things, I want you just to think, what the implication is, of that emphasis, so the Bible on its own, isn't clear enough, so you have to have, something additional, something extra, in your own experience, to know the way, God wants you to live, now I say it's characteristic, of charismatic churches, I think that's fair to say that, but equally I would say, many, many evangelical Christians, perhaps without knowing it, they think in a very similar way, and act in a similar way, see it in people's approach, to guidance and so on, they want to have, a special word, great prayer for guidance, about a particular issue, perhaps a special Bible verse, to speak to them, some sign or something, something which will, will give them something extra, something in their own experience, that they can say, yes now I know God is telling me, this is what I have to do, that's dangerous, spoke about that last time, because experience is so powerful, it's very easy isn't it, it's natural to favor, these kind of things, which seem so personal, it seems so special, easy to elevate that over, and above the clear word of God, in scripture, you may have come across it many times, it's impossible isn't it, to argue with somebody, who says, well I'm doing this, because God has told me, it's what I must do, the Holy Spirit, has revealed this to me, well that's the end of the conversation, isn't it, very difficult to even, discuss with somebody, or argue with somebody, once

you put up your hand, and say, no no, the Spirit has given me, a direct revelation, this is what I must do, well, there is no higher authority, who am I to contradict God, God, see in practice, it's so easy, for that to trump, God's clear word in scripture, and in practice, it's very, very easy, for these three things, for reason, or for institution, or for our experience, to become the real authority, the real rule, that we look to, but no, you see, the Bible says, itself, and Jesus himself says, that the Bible is, authoritative, and sufficient for us, it has full authority, over all, human rationality, all rationalizing away, of things that we don't like, or things that we find, hard to believe, or hard to accept, and it has final authority, is over above, all human traditions, irrespective of, how much we hold them dear, how hard it is sometimes, for us to let go of those, and the Bible, is a clear authority, not human experience, or feelings, or whatever else it is, that we might feel, [33 : 08] God wants us to do, the Bible, is the full, and final, and clear authority, now don't misunderstand me, some of you may be, wondering, what I mean here, I am not saying, that reason, or our experience, institutions, I am not saying, that these are unimportant, of course not, they all have a place, inevitably, don't they, and all of them, can be, fully submitted, to biblical authority, without denying, a proper place, to all of these things, because, do you see there, the Bible intersects, all of these things, and the truth is, that each of us, by our own natural, temperament, we will be inclined, perhaps more in one direction, or another, some people are more, institutional sort of people, company men, some people are much more, naturally experiential, existential, some are much more, inclined to reason, and rationality, and so on, but that's very different, from saying that, one of these things, actually trumps, the Bible, when the chips are down, none of these, other things, can be the ultimate authority, so that the Bible, is moved away from, none of these, can put the Bible, into second place, because God's word, is a commanding word, it's a full, and final, and clear, authority, our church's, confession of faith, the Westminster Confession, says this, in the first chapter, of the Bible, ought to be believed, and obeyed, it is to be received, because it is, the word of God, and that means, that it's not enough, to believe, 2 Timothy 3 verse 16, to believe, that the whole scripture, is the inspired word of God, it means, we must act, in line with that belief, the whole Bible, must teach us, and reprove us, and correct us, and train us, in righteousness, and then, and then, only then, can we be properly equipped, says Paul, for every good work, listen again, to the Westminster Confession, of faith, in chapter 1, section 10, the supreme judge, by which, all controversies, of religion, are to be determined, and all decrees, of councils, opinions, of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence, we are to rest, can be no other, but the Holy Spirit, speaking, in, the scripture, scripture, see, when we're, when we're thinking, about our church, how to organize ourselves, how to organize church life, how to make decisions, how to set priorities, when we're deciding, what we should be spending money on, or where, when we're deciding, what meetings, we should be having, or stopping, what staff we need, what leaders, should be chosen, everything else, that we're thinking about, in the church, the key question, the key question, is not, well, what's most practical, the key question, is not, what is the church, growth, movement, guru, tell us, the question, is not, what does the media, tell us, will make us more, successful today, no, not that, not any of these things, that the confession mentions, the opinions of ancient, white writers, that's very, very big for some people, oh, we follow Calvin, we follow Augustine, no, not the opinions, of ancient writers, not the doctrines of men, sometimes, people will hold, much, much more store, by their reformed, confession even, than by the scriptures, no, not opinions, of ancient writers, not doctrines of men, not private spirits,

I know that God, has said this to me, so I disagree with you, no, but only, what the Holy Spirit, is saying, in, the scripture, in the scripture, where his words are clear, where his words, are unchangeable, that's the wonderful, safety, and the beauty, of the revelation, that God has given us, it's set down, in black and white, it's unchangeable, so that we can know, clearly, and forever, and without any dispute, at all, the revealed will, and purpose of God, isn't that a great blessing, imagine that you were, arrested by the police, they said to you, well you've broken a law, you said, well, how do I know, I've broken a law, well they say to you, well it's written there, in the statute book, of the law of the land, isn't it, the laws are clear, and public, so that we know, what they are, and we know, how to avoid breaking them, that's why you have, a sign on the motorway, saying 70, but what about, if you were hauled over, by the police, for driving down the motorway, at 52 miles an hour, and they said to you, you've broken the law, you're speeding, you said, well, how do I know,

I was speeding, there was no speed limit, they say, well there isn't one, but we change it every day, and depending on, what God reveals to us, well, that's the speed limit, and today it's 51, you've done 52, you see, if God's law, is not clear, if the law of the land, is not clear, how can we possibly, know where we stand, how can we know, what God wants of us, if the law book, is changeable constantly, and we never know it, we're totally at sea, but God, has given us, his commanding word, of authority, not, in the ancient writers, not, in the opinions of men, not, in somebody claiming, a new revelation today, that changes the whole game, but in the word of God, written by the spirit, in the scriptures, so that we can know, that's what saves us, from all exploitation, from cultism, that's what saves us, from the power of those, who will abuse their position, to control people, that's what liberates us, from all of that, to obey God, rather than mere men, no human being, can hold power over us, to control us, because we have God's, clear, full, final authority, before us, in the words of scripture, and so we're liberated, to obey God, rather than men, because as Peter says, his divine power, has granted us, all things, that we need, for life, and godliness, in his great, and precious promises, in these scriptures, of the Old and New Testament, God's commanding word, of authoritative revelation, that we have fully, and finally, and with great clarity, so let's trust him, and let's obey him, in submitting, in all things, to the Bible, to the word of God written, and let's thank him, for his open word, publicized to everybody, a word that speaks, an unchanging message, of grace, to all of us, who will hear it, and to bless, all of us, who will heed it, thank him, for his open word, let's pray, Lord, we do thank you, for the clarity, of your word, the word, that commands us, in every way, in our lives, but a word, which promises, through those commands, that you're a great, blessing, for those, who trust you, and hold forever, to that word, help us, we pray, to trust, and obey, to love your word, to rejoice in it, and to share it, with all, who would see its light, for we ask it, in Jesus name, Amen.