

The Authority of the Bible

Let us turn to our Bibles to 2nd Timothy, 2nd Timothy chapter 3, 2nd Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 to 17. Doing a multi-part series on the Word of God as we're going through 2nd Timothy. Let us listen attentively to the Word, to the Holy Scripture.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. Let us pray. Spirit of life and light, guide us here through your Word and the various passages that we will cover of the importance of the Bible, of the Holy Scripture, of what you have given us, the Word of God.

It's authority in our life, and how it's based upon you and your authority. It does not stand on its own. But nevertheless, God, we are told and guided and directed by the Word to find you therein, and it's through the Word, and thus its importance in the Christian life.

Help us, therefore, God, to take it more seriously, we have not, and to be encouraged and strengthened to carry on, to follow the written Word, and not our own fancies or the opinions of men. And to this end, may your name be glorified. Amen.

Last sermon I preached on the nature and origin of the Bible. The Bible's origin is not natural only, of course, men wrote it, but there were holy men, what? Moved by the Spirit of God, therefore it's a supernatural origin. With a supernatural topic and teaching, for it is the breath of God that has formed it for us, and as supernatural, gives us the supernatural truth of Jesus Christ, who comes from heaven for us.

The nature of the Bible as supernatural implies that it has moral authority beyond the natural. Indeed, it would be divine from God himself. And indeed it is.

It is central to our lives as believers until we are received into heaven, wherein we will have the Word of God for eternity, Jesus Christ. To understand the authority of the Bible, I will explain that authority as residing in God, and evidenced in various characteristics of the Word of God, and lastly by the Bible's status as the supreme judge in all religious conflict. The basis of the authority of the Bible is God himself.

We are going through and using the structure, but all the Bible, the structure, the way it's organized, the biblical topics, through the catechism specifically and largely here through the confession. Chapter 1, as I mentioned last week, our forefathers thought it important to have the very first chapter of a public profession and confession of what the church has believed in Great Britain. And they believed in the Bible, in the 66 books of the Bible.

Because without that supernatural revelation and truth, we'd be lost in the natural revelation of sin and judgment that we see all around us. This is why it's important for believers. God gave it to us.

He doesn't need it. We need the Bible, but of course always secondary to God himself. He gave it as a tool for us.

So we read, and we read part of chapter 1. Here we have chapter 1, paragraph 4 of the confession. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, who is truth itself, the author thereof, and therefore it is to be received because it is the word of God, the breath of God. As this text tells us, all Scripture is given by God breathed.

It is God breathed of God. Inspiration. Inspiration of God is literally, theos is there.

It's a compound word. God breathed. It is that close and intimate to him.

Basis of the Authority of the Bible

So firstly, the Holy Bible is a public book for all. It is not just for Christians, but everyone is called to believe and to submit to it. We're not to hide it under a bush.

Christianity is not a private religion. We don't purposely try to run off and hide somewhere and hide our baptism. We only do that under persecution.

Otherwise, it is public. These doors are open to people to hear the truth. The public moral authority of the Holy Scripture, however, is not founded upon man or even the church.

As much as we are part of it, of course, and we make copies and men make printouts of the Bible and pass it around. I preach it. You talk about it to one another.

But we don't urge people to believe and stand upon its authority by our own words, but because it's from God himself, because it is the word of God. 2 Peter 1.19-21, as we read before, for prophecy, that is supernatural speaking, never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The word spirit can be translated breath or wind.

The breath of God. It's not an accident. And so that text, just as much as this text, speaks of divine inspiration immediately from God and not hampered by man.

The men of old prophesied, but they were, of course, but mouthpieces. That's the point of Peter. You hear it.

You may read it. The question is, do you believe it because I say it or because it's the word of God, the breath of God given to you, his truth, his revelation based upon his words? And of course, Peter says it's because of his words. That's why we believe it.

Not just prophets, of course. We hear a prophet was saying, well, is it in accordance to God's word? We believe because the prophet or because he points to the Bible. So I use the word because in two different ways.

One is instrumental. It's good to hear. It's good to read.

Your children hear it from you. But they shouldn't believe because your parents say it merely and only, but ultimately because God said it. That's the difference.

You're just an instrument. God is in his word is what we are pointing to. We'll talk a little bit about that later.

It's not just prophets, but even preachers and ourselves are mere vehicles of God's truth. And you should not believe it because I said it. Pastor Mathis, he's a reliable guy.

Everything he says is wonderful and true. You haven't known me very long. It's not the case at all.

But to the extent that I faithfully preach and teach and apply the word of God to that extent, you listen to me, but not to me as such, because I'm merely a mouthpiece. That's the point. And we get this in First Thessalonians 2.13. A mouthpiece of God.

The authority of the Bible depends upon God. First Thessalonians 2.13 we read. This is Paul writing to the Christians there at Thessalonica.

And Paul has other men with him as we know. He traveled about. Part of his travels he had a pastor like Timothy.

In fact, he actually had that here in First Thessalonians. He mentions Timothy as with him. So he writes to them, For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you receive the word of God which you heard from us, you welcome it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God.

The Bible, its authority is not because I wrote it or someone else wrote it or we preached it, but it's because it is the word of God. From his mouth, if he had a mouth. But he has the spirit.

Which is even more significant. Which you heard from us. Why is this proof text a proof text? I remember reading this many, many years ago.

I'm like, how does this fit and defend the authority of the Bible? Because there's a contrast here. Paul is saying, you receive the word of God, and we rejoice in this, which you heard from us. Who's the us? Paul.

Who else did I mention? Timothy. Now from Paul, you're like, well of course it's the word of God from Paul. He's an apostle.

He's a prophet. When he speaks, it's supernatural stuff coming out of his mouth. This is wonderful.

But he also says, Timothy, he's not a prophet. He's an ordinary everyday pastor like I am. Did nothing spectacular, no miracles.

But he says both of us. Why? Because they're just what? Mouthpieces. They're not the ultimate authority.

You received it and welcomed it, not as the word of men. It's not just simply Paul's word, or Timothy's word, or Sean's word. But the word of God.

The truth. That's why it's used. And lastly, 1 John 5, 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.

For this is the witness of God, which he testified of his son. And so, as the confession mentions in the same chapter 1 of the confession, paragraph 5, we may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to a high reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. Yes, there are witnesses, as 1 John 5, 9 says.

If we receive the witness of men, when indeed that's the case, the witness of God is greater. We are but witnesses that we're just pointing to and telling you, this is what we see here. You can look at it yourself.

Read the Bible yourself. And see that indeed it is God's holy, breathed word for us. And so we can be moved by secondary testimonies, as it were.

The primary, of course, is God's authority. As humans, we believe people, often. And usually, especially, I hope, those close to us.

But even so, it's helpful for us, of course, to have additional evidence to show up our trust for one another. Indications and signs and the like. In Christianity, God has given us the church as a witness to the truth.

To point, there but a point, a sign. This is the way to salvation. Not me, not you, but the word of God, which points to Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3.15, we read, But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know, Paul is writing here to Timothy, I write that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Now that's some pretty strong language. I preached to that earlier, because I've gone through 1 Timothy.

The church is described here as the pillar and ground of the truth. Now, of course, it's a metaphor, and so it has limits. It clearly doesn't mean that without the church, we won't have anything.

In fact, the church is formed by the word of God, Jesus Christ, through the preaching and the word, specifically, the Bible. Because the truths are found therein. God has given what we are reading here in 1 Timothy 3.15, the church a privileged position above other institutions as the pillar and ground of the truth.

In this sense, it's a support and a witness of the Bible, where it's preached and propagated throughout the world. It's going to be found here, not in the pagan nations, but in the church of God. And as such, she is a public witness to the veracity of the Bible.

And so, there is a place for your testimonies. We talk about testimonies usually in evangelical circles, not as much in our Reformed circles. But you have a testimony, a sense of your story, of how God has worked in your life, converted you, and even beyond your conversion, your sanctification, taking more and more seriously the word of God instead of running around living your own life, because you know it's an authority in your life.

Evidence of the Authority of the Bible

Now, the evidence for the authority and divine origin of the word of God is the second point. We have multiple of them. And it's listed there in the Confession, Chapter 1. But I want to read here, in particular, because it's written a little differently here, Larger Catechism, Question 4, Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 4. How does it appear that the scriptures are the word of God? Because I said so? We just talked about that before.

It's not enough. It's helpful. It's good that you have witnesses in that sense.

But at the end of the day, you want to see, what do we see in the Bible itself? The answer is, the scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty, purity, by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God, by their lights and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation. Both what we read and see therein, and its effect upon others. That's probably the two basic ways to describe the categories here, and this evidence that it appears, that it is known, that the scriptures are the word of God.

The Majesty and Wonder, Psalm 119. Open my eyes, that I may see the wondrous things from your law. Now, Psalm 119, of course, emphasizes the law more narrowly, in the sense of the Ten Commandments, the holy demands of God, and rejoices and shows the beauties of that law.

But a number of times in the Old Testament, law is sometimes shorthand for just what God has given you, what He commands of you, and guides you. So it's not just the Ten Commandments nearly conceived. Whatever the case may be, it is certainly true, that we see wondrous things in the majesty and glories of the word of God, both in content and in form.

Content is the easy one, that's the gospel, that's the good news, that's the trinity, we'll talk about that. But I want to talk about the form. That is, the written words themselves.

For they indeed were written by men of old, holy men of God, both prophets and apostles and the like. And they all wrote in their own way and form. God did not snuff out their personality.

And so you can find, even unbelievers can see, Paul has a certain way of writing that stands out, that even if you didn't know it was Paul at the beginning, you'd be like, this sort of writes and sounds like Paul. And we do this in our own human lives. We're like, well, that kind of sounds like my cousin, it sounds like my husband, it sounds like my brother or sister.

Or the way they write has a certain pattern and way of doing things. And God maintained all of that. And so all these 66 books of the Bible have different forms and ways of structuring what they write and what they express.

Different metaphors that are more used by one author than another, for example. All this is the human part, because God didn't not use, he obviously used humans, but he made sure that what they wrote was perfect, without error. Otherwise, it couldn't be an authority for us.

We'd be left in the dark. And this human side stuck in my head from an incident I learned and heard of and was part of many years ago, maybe 20 years ago, I don't remember. I was at a friend's party here in Denver.

More precisely, his parents' party. So we're friends with him, and they're having a party, his parents, who were not believers, with their other friends. And we're just kind of tagging along.

And I sat there, and I listened to, I believe it was the mother. It was the mother. The husband might have been there as well, but she was a professor of literature.

Had a PhD, has a PhD in it. She's still alive. And she was describing the differences between the Bible and the Koran from a purely human perspective.

It was very fascinating. I remember being dark in the backyard and some dark little lights, and I guess my wife's not again. I think she was there.

It was all dark. I couldn't tell. And I'm listening.

What's she going to say? Someone brought it up. I don't remember who brought it up. What's she going to say about the Bible versus the Koran? And she was explaining the literary and writing differences, the writing styles, and how beautiful it was of the Bible.

Even though there are 66 books, she's like, all this diversity, but you see so much unity in it, even though she doesn't believe any of it. But you read the Koran, and she said it was sterile, stiff, clunky. Those are my words.

I don't remember specifically what she said. And I've learned since then, that's certainly the case. I didn't have access to the Koran back there.

She said it was like night and day. And this is exactly why, at least when I grew up in school, I think it's changed now, and I know the older generation, you had Bibles sometime in literature class. At the very least, they taught it as literature.

They're saying, look, here's some glorious things. As it is the foundation, in many ways, with respect to words, and formations, and poetry, and the like, and phrases of our Western civilization. There's allusions to these incidents and stories.

So that's the majesty and wonder. Even unbelievers see it, and see the contrast to false religions, but don't draw the right conclusions, sadly. The purity of teaching.

Again, Psalm 119. Your word is very pure. Therefore, your servant loves it, has not any error or mistakes in it.

And it covers a lot of ground. There's a lot going on in the Bible, and every part of it. And the teaching, especially of Jesus Christ and of salvation, is indeed pure and without error.

Harmony of the parts, Acts 1043. To him, all the prophets witnessed that, through his name, whoever believes in him will receive remission of sins. The point of this text is, to him, all the prophets.

It's a variety of prophets, all having what? The same harmonious message. Sometimes said differently. We are finishing up.

We finished, in fact, Hosea. And he starts out at the beginning there, giving a message through marriage. His big fame that we remember him as marrying an unfaithful woman.

We'll put it that way. And that's used as a public message to teach them God's mercy and compassion. That is the gospel for them.

Other prophets said other things. It's said it different ways. And so, in spite of all the diversity, as I mentioned before, when you take the grand picture of this and put it all together, all 66 books, you see a constant message from the Old Testament pointing to the promise of the Messiah, already in Chapter 3. In the fall of man, the first thing God does is not wipe him out and send him to hell.

But rather, he gives them the good news of the promised seed, who will come with a woman. The very woman who brought about the fall will now bring about, I speak as a man, the redemption of all mankind. God's going to use this fallen vessel for a greater good, in other words.

And all the prophets bringing more and more detail. And it all coalesces together, a great tapestry of threads into rope, and a rope into a great, beautiful picture of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The unity of the various parts.

No contradictions. And it all magnifies the Lord God Almighty. That's part of the evidence.

The general purpose, of course, for God's glory, Romans 3.19. Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God. Because it's about God, not us. That's what you see in the Bible.

What we have done is messed it up. What should have been harmonious, and everything about God and glorifying him through Adam, we would have done the same thing. We messed it up, and our sins and our transgressions.

But the Bible gives us the way to rectify that, and that's Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, for God's glory. That every mouth may be stopped. They cannot brag and say how wonderful I am, but rather they are convicted.

And that bleeds into the other point they make, the effect upon sinners, that we see that they are converted and convicted. Hebrews 4.12, For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Which is why it's not being taught in the schools as much anymore.

Because there is an effect upon it. They'll teach the Koran, they'll teach other lies, but they don't want to teach the Bible. By God's grace, some places still kind of do something like that, just out of tradition.

That's better than nothing sometimes, but be that as may, we see in history, also again, the conviction of the Bible upon, we see it by the effects of so many trying to snuff out the Bible. They don't want it anywhere near them. Because they feel that guilt, they feel that conviction.

And that's more evidence that it is from God, because ordinary human books don't bring about such strong reactions. And nowadays it's even considered a hate book. More and more.

You believe what? You find that in the Bible? You spout hate, and therefore your book must be full of hate. That's the direction we're going, sadly. And there's also a generational witness.

I've mentioned this before. Isaiah 59-21. In Isaiah 59-21 we read, He asked for me, says the Lord.

This is my covenant with them. My spirit who is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants, says the Lord, from this time and forevermore. The spirit and the word of God are here, hand in hand, my spirit who is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth.

Words, he's speaking of the truth, of the gospel, here, through the prophet, and he ties it to the spirit. And he says it goes on, generation after generation. And it's a picture of how, unlike any other book in history, because the book is what? The word of God.

It's the word. In written form. Unlike any other book in history, has survived and has sustained and grown as the mustard seed throughout the face of the entire world where we are sitting today.

The apostles would be in absolute amazement that we have it down in Argentina, that we have it in Siberia, that we have the truth in Alaska and Australia. And not just geographically, but over 2,000 years. And the church is still here.

And all other institutions, entire nations and empires have collapsed, but the church, which is based upon the word of God, still survives because it is the word of God. That's one of the great effects that it has. And of course, the greatest of all this is being born again.

That's part of the conviction and conversion of sinners, that we in our own lives can show forth that God has indeed, through the truth of his word, changed us. Those are the various evidences and facts that evidence point to and prove that this is indeed the very word of God. We also have a description of further evidence that it's the word of God by the entire perfection thereof.

We read elsewhere in the Confession that it's such as the accuracy of the manuscripts, compared, as I mentioned before, to even the oldest stuff that's around. We only have maybe a few hundred of these pieces of fragments of books and the like from Aristotle and whoever else, whereas we have thousands upon thousands of the word of God itself. And the facts in the Bible itself as well.

There are no historical errors. I don't know how many months I would go through, I think Tripp would know, have an idea at least, of all the claims that the Bible hasn't made an error here about this king, the Bible made an error here about this date, the Bible made an error here about this, the name of this procounselor or this governor. We have all these different words, mayors and like, on the island of Cyprus, for example.

We can't find that, so the Bible's full of errors. And then five years later, 50 years later, we find it. And nobody's like, oh, I guess I was wrong, I'm embarrassed, I'm gonna withdraw my PhD because my whole thesis was based upon this premise.

And here we have like an ax. That particular title and name of that mayor or procounsel on the island of Cyprus fits exactly at that time frame. It was a very narrow window in which they used that name, and Luke used it.

Chance? No, of course it's not chance. How many times do you have to go through this stuff before you realize the Bible has no error? Now, the confession makes a point here. It's quite interesting.

Yes, you have all this evidence pointing to the divine origins and authority of the Bible, the Holy Writ. But, it says, the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scripture in the heart of man is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God. Persuasion ultimately comes by the Spirit, is what it's saying.

So factually, the Bible is the Word of God in written form. But accepting that fact is not the same as being convinced and convicted and born again. It's like believing in God, and there are people who believe in God but don't really care much beyond that.

God will let me just do what I need to do. I'm trying to be an upstanding citizen. I don't need anything else.

I don't need his Bible. There are people like that. So what changes? What's the difference between them and us? The Holy Spirit convicted us.

He brought the full illumination. He was alone able to fully persuade us that it is the very Word of God. You use the arguments.

You must. That's how God designed it. You use the facts.

You talk. You open your mouth. But at the end of the day, it is the Spirit of the Lord God Almighty who changes hearts.

That's what it's saying. Which is another way to remind us, don't get frustrated. You do what you can.

Because what happens, atheists are a very good example of this. You talk to them. You seem very sincere.

I have talked to them. I've been on the campus, as you recall. I was down at the college campus for a couple of years.

Besides graduating there. And, you know, they'll tell you right to their face, I don't believe in God. And that, at least visible sincerity, depending on who you are, may hit you the wrong way and you're like, my arguments must be erroneous.

Because it hasn't changed his mind. You see that? That's not true. Your arguments are just fine.

He has a hardened heart. He doesn't want to change. But you have to realize.

So don't give up. Don't give up. We have this in 1 Corinthians 2.10. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.

For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. It's the Spirit of God who ultimately has changed our hearts and opened our minds because we had hardened hearts. And we need the Spirit to open the hearts of all around us.

Supreme Authority of the Bible

So we pray to the Spirit. Third point. The first one was the authority of the Word of God is indeed real and it's based upon God Himself.

The second one is evidence that it is the Word of God that is divine and therefore of God and has that kind of authority. And here we drill down more specifically and it's the supreme authority of the Bible that we are speaking of here. Now authority in general, real authority in life and in the church exists.

We have parents, we have teachers, we have bosses, we have pastors. And hence I use the word supreme authority. The authority above all authorities.

We do that with the Supreme Court. You're going to make an appeal. You know this is absolutely wrong.

It's causing damage and harm. It's unjust. You're going to go through the entire appellate court to the Supreme Court.

The Bible is that Supreme Court for us this side of eternity. All their authority of course when I speak of parents and teachers and the like comes from God. And is to be checked by the Word of God if they ever contradict it.

That's what it means to be the supreme authority. Verse 17 of course here in our text before us. That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Therefore describing to us the kind of authority that it has as moral authority to speak of correction and doctrine for reproof, for instruction, for good works. That's the kind of authority it has. It's not just very narrow in the sense of well there's Jesus and he died for me and that's about all I need to learn.

That's all the Bible is going to guide me for. That's kind of this minimalistic I suppose approach to the Bible. There's a maximalistic approach in which you can't do anything unless I find a Bible text for it.

I've already talked about that a number of times. I won't repeat myself. It's neither one.

It is morally binding. That's what this text is telling us. Even if you don't feel like it, it is morally, objectively binding.

It's universal again. It's for everyone. But in specific here by universal I mean within the church.

All believers. No one's exempted from the biblical authority. Leaders are not exempted.

Oh, you know, I'm the Pope. I don't need to take it so seriously. And of course all the particulars are there for us.

The teaching and the practices as well guide us as believers. And so we go to the Bible and we know this. We've grown up this way, many of us, to learn and to become better Christians and followers of Jesus Christ.

We appeal to the word of God to settle debates. Let's say it the Lord. And we live by its every word.

Specifically here, it's religious authority. And I mentioned this before. And this is significant.

It's not a geographical authority. Although what it says about geography is correct. There was a mountain there.

There was a city there. But it's not its purpose. You don't go there and say, how do I get to Wyoming? I'm going to get my Bible out.

I'm not going to tell you anything about that. That's not its purpose. It's a religious authority.

The Confession, Chapter 1, in Paragraph 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. It's a long list of things basically saying nothing else is the supreme and final authority in religious matters except the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

I like that turn of phrase there because it highlights the significance of the Bible, not just the Holy Scripture, but the Holy Spirit speaking through the Scriptures. How do we know this? Why do we go to the Bible? What evidence would you have against... I say Roman Catholics. Part of that is because, like in politics and social matters, there are a lot of them.

There's a lot of conservatives. So you're going to run across them. You're going to hear them on the radio, perhaps, or perhaps not.

On the other hand, you're going to run across maybe in your Christian circles charismatics, and I talked a little bit about that as well. But, whatever the case may be, it is good to go to the Bible to understand why we go to the Bible. Christ quotes and alludes to and assumes the Bible in his preaching and his teaching.

He appeals directly to the Bible to settle debates. The Son of God, the second member of the Trinity, doesn't quote himself. I mean, that's what I would do.

I'm King Mathis, and I tell you what to do. This is my law. But, rather, he points to the Bible.

Are we better than Jesus? I don't think so. Particularly in Matthew 22, 29 we read, And Jesus answered and said to them, You are mistaken, in this debate, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. Isn't that interesting? You don't know your Bible.

He appeals to the Bible. For the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given a marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what is spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He quotes literally the Old Testament, Genesis, and uses that as an argument against the Jews.

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And thus we see, I don't know what else we really need. I think it's pretty sufficient to me.

Quoting the Bible by Jesus himself is good enough for me. Again, we read in the Confession, Paragraph 8 of Chapter 1, And so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal to them. We appeal to them.

We can have arguments and debates about certain matters, but if we cannot agree, at the end of the day, we have to appeal to the Bible itself. And the apostles themselves, who have what? They're walking prophets. They have the Spirit of God.

What they speak often is literally the words of God written down, we have them, in the Bible. So they gather together at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. They have to deal with this question of what do we do with the Gentiles? Because some of the converts, Jewish converts, are like, well, they need to follow Moses and be circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law.

And others are like, no, they don't have to do that anymore. It's a brand new debate for them because everyone used to be Jewish before in the Church. It was a Jewish Church.

And now it's an international Church. And they get together and they have this debate that go back and forth and it's finished, and you already know the answer to this, how do they finish it? By appealing to the Word of God. That's how they finish it.

They don't appeal to the apostle. Hey, apostle, you're a prophet. Ask God.

That's what I would do. No, you appeal to the Bible. And after they had become silent, James answered and said, men and brethren, listen to me.

Simon has declared our God at the first visit of the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name and with the words of the prophet agree just as it is written. After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen down and I will rebuild its ruins and I will set it up. And the Jerusalem Council gathered and they agreed.

Yes, therefore, verse 19, I judge that we should not trouble those among the Gentiles who are turning to God. They don't have to become Jews. And they sent out letters to the churches telling them this.

Brothers and sisters, the Word of God is that significant that church councils appeal to it. Jesus Christ, the head of the church appeals to the scriptures. May the Spirit impress upon your hearts, young and old alike, the Bible is supernatural with a heavenly truth and grace of salvation and it is only here that we take our final stand in the matters of the soul and never let anyone tell you otherwise.

Let us pray. Spirit of truth, Spirit of might, be upon us, God, and strengthen our weakness that we be further convicted about the importance of the Bible, its glories and its grandeur and its message of Jesus Christ and that we are called to follow him all the days of our life. Strengthen us, therefore, to that end that we may honour you by taking seriously the Word of God.

In your name alone we pray, by the blood of Christ Jesus. Amen.