

1“I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”(1 Corinthians 2:1-2)

Definition of False Teacher: One who presumes to teach in the Name of the Lord when God has not sent him.

False Teacher - Berit Kjos

Moralizing Minister of Death

Here is a classic example of the blindness of those who serve the letter of the Word rather than the Word of the letter. Such teach an illicit worship of the Scriptures, breeding self-righteousness and violence against the Truth, Jesus Christ. Yet these moralizers sincerely believe they are conforming to Him as they labor in delusion, God having consigned them to it for their judgment (correction).

"The letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive."

Paul wrote to Berit Kjos, proprietor of Kjos Ministries (www.crossroad.to):

The following letter was written in reply to one complaining to us about our occasional use of *The Message* in our writings and letters. The woman complaining sent us a link to your site as support material for her argument, so I am forwarding our responses as instructive also for you, as you err in your thinking and anal retentive analysis that misses the forest for the trees.

Paul Cohen

To see what was sent, read the first letter from [Debra Lynn](#) and Victor's and Paul's responses to that letter.

Berit's reply:

Thank you, Victor. I have been reading some of the reports on your website trying to understand your views.

By the way, I am not a KJV-only person - and not just because King James persecuted separatists and puritans and (eventually) caused the pilgrims to flee to America. I, too, check various translations - including the "original" Greek. And I trust that our sovereign God led the translators and continue to lead those who translate it into far more difficult languages around the world. But Peterson's paraphrase is so far from the original that I cannot see how that can be considered a Bible version, which is what both he and Nav Press originally called it.

By His grace alone,
Berit

Paul's reply:

Hi Berit,

Paul here. I am the one who wrote you the note below. [Victor Hafichuk](#) has written much of what appears on [thepathoftruth.com](#). We are brothers in the Lord. If you have not already, read [Paul Cohen](#), too.

I am glad to hear you have taken the initiative to read from our website, and I hope you will read attentively, as few do, those things the Lord has given us, particularly those directed towards you. I see much work and sincerity of intention on your site, but I also see a burdensome legalism that depends on your intellect and diligence to be right before God. That is not Christianity, the true and only kind that worships God in spirit and truth. It is self-righteous religion, man making God in his or her image. Your religiosity has led you to “throw the baby out with the bathwater,” as in this matter with *The Message*.

It is not that you need to read or use *The Message*, but that you must come out of your carnal categorization and control of everything in your world, feeding it to others as if it were the gospel of Christ. It is not. I feel sorry for your children. I am not being facetious or unkind. You are all under a great bondage. Yes, there is a place for the Law, and we know how to use it lawfully. I am not talking about lawlessness. You will see this if you read our site and your eyes are opened to see.

Actually, your control and dictation of what is good and evil comes by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is the true heart of lawlessness. It is not the drunkards and whores that the Lord addressed as workers of iniquity (lawlessness). It was the law-keeping Pharisees. But yes, they can be reformed. Look at Saul of Tarsus. God is greater, as is His grace.

Our site is not like anything you will have read before. That is because it is Jesus Christ in the flesh, Who has redeemed us from our sins and sin nature, Who is manifest there, and not the imitation, man-made works that serve as substitute for His Presence everywhere else, including your site.

Sincerity is not enough, Berit. Saul too was very sincere. Your day of turning will also come, and it will be good.

I have copied a portion of your writing about *The Message* with some comments to help explain further how to apply what we are saying. Your writing is in green, and my comments are in red.

Berit: What does Eugene Peterson himself say? In his introduction to *The Message*, he tells us that “This version of the New Testament in a contemporary idiom keeps the language of the Message and fresh and understandable in the same language in which we do our shopping, talk with our friends, worry about world affairs, and teach our children their table manners....”

This sounds like a good idea, but what if essential Biblical concepts are not part of our everyday conversation? Should we then rewrite God's holy Scriptures to fit today's more shallow and worldly communications?

Paul: Did Jesus speak in religious language and concepts? How can the unlearned be saved if it requires “essential Biblical concept” language skills? Is it shallow to not understand

such terminology? Is there anything wrong with the language of the world? Did not God give us these languages to communicate? Is the world divided into religious and secular, that we communicate with one language for the mundane and another for the religious, or is all His? These are some questions you need ponder.

Berit: Remember, we are dealing with God's holy unchangeable Word - not an ordinary book. God owns His message, we don't. Only His own, well-guarded words can be presented as absolute truth. Yet, readers who trust NavPress and the endorsement of Christian leaders such Warren Wiersbe and J. I. Packer view this book as an authentic translation of the Bible rather than as Peterson's personal, politically correct interpretation.

Paul: You are assuming that Peterson was trying to be politically correct, and that he was not trying his best to honor the intent of the inspired words of the writers of Scripture. He does not say that the book is a translation. You should read the introduction again. We read it today and were quite thankful to hear many things he said there. We did not at all see a man set on corrupting others with a New Age agenda or something to please the politically correct. Quite the contrary, Peterson was emphasizing that God's requirements were far greater and more encompassing than man's worldly and religious ways allow for. He said that if anyone were to speak the Word of God he would not be popular. He is right.

Berit: Throughout both Old and New Testaments, God forbids us to distort His Word. Additions and deletions are strictly forbidden in Scriptures like Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32, Proverbs 30:6, Galatians 1:8-9 and Revelation 22:19. Acts 17:11 exhorts us to learn from the Bereans who "examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

Paul: What Peterson did is the same thing as if I were to take the Scriptures and explain them to someone else in my own words. Doing that does not automatically mean I am adding or deleting from them. That has to do with intent. I do not perceive that you are discerning this man's heart, and see no evidence that you are correct in your opinions.

We often hear people talk about doing as the Bereans did, thinking themselves to be great searchers of truth in Scripture, while exhorting others to do the same. The one crucial detail they miss, as you do here, is that the Bereans received the gospel from men of God, whom they believed. They received the Word preached to them "with all readiness of mind." They received the testimony of the Lord (John 13:20). Will you do the same here? If not, then all your searching is in vain, because you do not receive the Son of God.

The Bereans searched in faith, to confirm the Word of God that they heard of those sent of Him. Multitudes today read the Scriptures, every person doing what is right in his or her own sight, thinking they are all "Bereans."

Berit: Eugene Peterson would probably agree. His own interpretation of 2 Corinthians 4:2 holds him accountable to this timeless standard:

"We don't maneuver and manipulate behind the scenes. And we don't twist God's Word to suit ourselves. Rather we keep everything we do and say out in the open, the whole truth on display, so that those who want to can see and judge for themselves in the presence of God."

While the above verse corresponds to the original Greek, many other passages do just what The Message promises not to do: they "twist God's word to suit" human inclinations. In

fact, the very next sentence (verses 3-4), fails the test. It does not “keep... the whole truth on display.” Instead, it deletes the original references both to “those who are perishing” and to the glory of “Christ, who is the image of God.”

Paul: I quote the appropriate verses from *The Message*:

“If our Message is obscure to anyone, it’s not because we’re holding back in any way. No, it’s because these other people are looking or going the wrong way and refuse to give it serious attention. All they have eyes for is the fashionable god of darkness. They think he can give them what they want, and that they won’t have to bother believing a Truth they can’t see. They’re stone-blind to the dayspring brightness of the Message that shines with Christ, who gives us the best picture of God we’ll ever get” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4 MSG).

You are splitting hairs here. I have underlined the portions where Peterson essentially says the things you say he has left out. Are not those who are going the wrong way, following the god of darkness, perishing? Is not Christ the best picture of God we will ever get, and is that not glorious? Can you not read a bit between the lines? Again, this is not a translation. We often prefer and use other Bibles’ renderings of verses, and, in some cases, as we have stated elsewhere, Peterson is all wet in what he presents. Unless we have spiritual discernment, we will not know this strictly by the letter, as you presume to do.

Berit: It doesn’t take a Greek scholar to recognize the appalling distortions of God’s holy Word. Any Bible student willing to compare Peterson’s Message with a Greek/English Interlinear Lexicon and take time to look up key words in a credible New Testament Bible dictionary will discover alarming deletions, distortions and additions to the original text. If Peterson is right, then all our other Bibles - the KJV, NASV, NIV, Greek-English interlinear Bibles - are false.

Paul: Again, you are judging after the appearance. The NIV, which has some terrific errors born of false doctrinal influence, may be much closer to the original languages than *The Message*, but it is much further, in those instances of doctrinal contamination, from the spiritual intent and meaning of God. You need to receive the baptism of the Spirit, that you too may learn to discern, along with learning many other things that you presently do not know or comply with, which robs you of the things of the Kingdom. It is not a lack of Bibles that is hurting you.

That is all for now, Berit. We can, Lord willing, say more, if you so desire it.

Paul

Berit’s reply:

Paul and Victor,

Would you please summarize for me your view of God’s Word?

What is your stand on Biblical inerrancy, neo-orthodoxy, Karl Barth and the emerging church?

What is your view of the “authority of the Scriptures”?

Gratefully,
Berit

Victor's reply:

Berit, the very simple, yet profound and complete or perfect answer to your first question, "Would you please summarize for me your view of God's Word?" is that Jesus Christ is God's Word. That may sound trite or as a copout to you, but with all my heart and soul, I can joyfully testify to you that no better answer can possibly be given.

Yes, I believe you are referring to the Bible and various versions. Our faith is not in any Bible but in the One of Whom the Bible testifies, in whatever way each translation attempts to represent the original records of Him as delivered by the Hebrew prophets and saints. If we know the Word, then we are automatically able to judge all things because we have the Word within (do not read the following passages with familiarity and consequent carelessness or presumption, but prayerfully and meditatively):

"He was the true Light; He enlightens every man coming into the world" (John 1:9 MKJV). Still IS.

"But as it is written, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,' nor has it entered into the heart of man, 'the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:9-16 MKJV).

Many err concerning the Word, even as did those to whom Jesus spoke these words:

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. And they are the ones witnessing of Me, and you will not come to Me that you might have life. I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, you who receive honor from one another and do not seek the honor that comes from God only?" (John 5:39-44 MKJV).

They had the most original documents of Scripture, Berit. Jesus quoted from them. Yet those did the wise no good. They were caught in a trap of their own, the carnal mind, which feeds and depends on knowledge of good and evil. They did not know that their way was death, and in that way, they despised and reviled THE Way, the Truth and the Life. They did not have or know The Word.

Knowing Him, we can know the Truth anywhere, and the false. Without Him, we know nothing. The Scriptures declare that He is the light of men, do they not?"

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4 MKJV).

And: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Stubborn fools despise wisdom and discipline" (Proverbs 1:7 GW).

There can be no fear of God without the Word, Jesus Christ. Before Moses, before Abraham, Noah, Enoch, or Adam, He, Jesus Christ, the Word, Was. And they all knew Him, without Paul the apostle, or Jerome, Douay, King James, Luther, Calvin, or any other man or translation. They knew not the letter, but the Living Word. It is no different today, except that God has made more known in this day, not to the carnal mind, which can know nothing of Him, but to the spirit of man in Christ.

You ask, “What is your stand on Biblical inerrancy, neo-orthodoxy, Karl Barth and the emerging church?” Concerning inerrancy, Paul will send you what we have written, if what I have already said does not occur to you by deduction and you infer what we know.

“Neo-orthodoxy”? Who cares? Thousands are the categories and classifications of man, and none are worthy of our time and energies as children of God. That goes for “the emerging church” as well. Having said that, we have fought against these falsehoods as they have confronted us, not so much on a doctrinal basis (though that too) as on a personal basis, for the sakes of those involved.

Berit, it is not about doctrine but about the heart. One can even have error and still be accepted by God, until that soul chooses to cling to error in direct disobedience to God. People can also have all the right doctrine, yet be in perfect enmity with the One Whom they presume to worship and to Whom the doctrine pertains. The Pharisees are a good example of such. They had the “right translation” and the right doctrines - afterlife, resurrection, spirits, prayer, fasting, the Law of Moses, almsgiving, tithing, the Sabbath, knowing the Scriptures (“the Word”) and more. What good did it do them?

And who cares about Karl Barth? Why would you measure me by him or ask me to examine him to rate myself by him for you? Read our site. You need to know that it is not a Christian’s job to analyze every creature that comes by in the name of theology. Studying each man’s religion is totally impossible. And who is to say that Barth’s works are more worthy of consideration than that of any other, even of a child that believes?

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the sophisticated and cunning, and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight” (Matthew 11:25-26 MKJV).

So who then is Barth but a “wise and prudent” (KJV) one, a man honored among men, no matter how much right doctrine he had (or did not have)?

“And He said to them, You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15 MKJV).

Paul will link you to a correspondence we had with a fellow on the very subject you bring forth in this third question: “What is your view of the authority of the Scriptures?”

Berit, I will tell you that the women of “End Time Ministries” (Despatch magazine) have been nothing short of brute beasts with which to do battle. Lest you should think it “unChristian” of us to say so, many are the Biblically recorded instances of holy men of God doing the very same that I just did...Paul and John to name two. You can divulge my comments to them if you wish. We do not speak secretly about these things; neither did the saints and prophets of old. “Christianity” is not what they and so many others think it to be. In them, there is no truth, knowledge or love of God.

Very honored to be granted the grace to represent the most holy faith of the fathers, though utterly unworthy of such a privilege,

Victor

Paul's reply:

Berit,

The following writing might be helpful in answer to your questions here. I say might, not because it is not appropriate or substantive, but because you are set in such a way that I am not sure you can hear anything we say. You are trusting in your knowledge rather than the Lord, which makes you deaf and blind. Nevertheless, we are here, in the Lord, to turn people to Him, bringing sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and judgment to all by His Word.

Read [How We View and Use the Scriptures](#).

We are not meant to analyze the Scriptures as if dissecting a cadaver, looking for the secret of life or thinking we can please God by so doing. None thus far have discovered how to create life by examining the dead, and neither have any brought the Lord down from Heaven, or up from the earth, by examining the Scriptures. The Word of God is living, and He dissects us:

“For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12 MKJV).

The author of Hebrews was not testifying of the Bible, which as paper and ink is not alive, but of the Word of God made flesh, as he immediately shows in the next verse:

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13 MKJV).

So we speak particularly, as do the Scriptures, of the Word of God made flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Truth testified of in Scripture:

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. And they are the ones witnessing of Me, and you will not come to Me that you might have life” (John 5:39-40 MKJV).

A document you could read about how God judges the “emergent” church, such as was represented by Kyle Lake:

[What Happened to Kyle Lake](#)

Here is a document Victor was recommending to you:

[False Christianity Unmasked](#) (Bible Inerrancy - in a nutshell, the Author of the Bible is inerrant, but men are errant.)

Here is one I add, because it demonstrates, by the Bible, what God approves, and what He does not, for those that would follow Him. I should think this would be very important to you, as it should be:

The True Marks of a Cult

Will you be answering us about what we have written to you and the others about your analysis and conclusions regarding *The Message*? It seems you are playing your cards close to the vest, having much at stake here. Do not think you can remain neutral. Your decision in this matter will indicate if you choose to retain your little empire for a time, or lose it for the Kingdom that will never perish.

Paul

Berit's response:

Victor and Paul,

I have read several of your articles, but your writing is very confusing to me. Yes, I totally agree that our wonderful Lord is also the living Word. The Bible makes that perfectly clear. And we are to come to Him. One of my favorite verses is Gal. 2:20. In fact when people are struggling with various problems, I usually suggest that verse as a constant reminder that we indeed have "been crucified with Christ." It's no longer I who live but He lives in me!!! He and I are one, and He has lifted me up into the heavenly places. I just delight in that knowledge. My aim is to walk with Him each moment of the day, doing what His Spirit prompts me to do - which is often what my flesh would rather not do at the moment—but oh what joy it is to follow Him. He makes each little thing a source of joy with Him!

And I love His Word - the living Word! I memorize it, say it to myself when I go for my daily mile-long (not very far) walk, listen to tapes of Scriptures where He daily reminds me of His ways, and delight in His presence. Were it not for His precious Word, I wouldn't know what pleased Him, how to counsel others, what is truly happening in this world created by our sovereign God.

I take His Word to heart, His Spirit makes it alive to me. I realize that the Old Testament Levitical laws were fulfilled in Christ and are no longer applicable to His people. But they still show me the deeper significance of what He has accomplished on my behalf.

My confusion then, is that I agree with love for Jesus Christ our Lord, but I cannot agree with your views of His written Word. After all, Jesus Himself quoted or referred to Old Testament truth that He fulfilled in chapter after chapter.

One of the topics in our Scripture Index section is His Word. Would you please review that page? Since I view His Word as being inerrant, written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit, I cannot ignore the Scriptures that warn us never to change any part of His Word. I know we need to translate His Word into the world's various languages, but I also believe that He is more than capable of leading faithful translators in fulfilling that assignment as best it can be communicated in limited tribal languages. (I know that's a challenge and we pray for several missionary friends involved in such a task)

What we are not to do is to subjectively change lots of words and titles in order to intentionally reinterpret His written word to fit our culture and please man. Jesus never tried to please the public. He didn't hesitate to speak words that offended His listeners and

evoked murderous rage. I know the Bible is misused, misunderstood, and studied in ways that cause a pretense at faith without Spirit-given faith. But that's no reason to change or adapt or dismiss it. When God uses His Word to draw people to Himself, He brings about a joyful transformation that the world can never understand.

Here is the link to our Scripture page:

<http://www.crossroad.to/HisWord/verses/topics/Word.htm>

By His grace alone,
Berit

PS: After reading some of your articles, I did some Internet searching for theologians who might have the same views of Scriptures that you do. I was trying to understand. I didn't know much about Barth or neo-orthodoxy, nor am I a student of theology, but his views seemed similar.

Paul's reply:

Good day Berit,

I sent my reply to you (below) to Victor for him to have a look over and he sent it back with this note. I include his note for your sake, as it has some helpful explanation and direction for you. My reply follows. Paul

Victor: I see that Berit has yet to read the articles we sent her. She writes as though she has never even heard of them. She needs to read them first, preferably many times, instead of asking us to read anything just because she is trying to understand us. Her problem is that she is familiar with several "Christian" boxes out there and wondering which one we fit or which fits us. She has not encountered reality. Being resurrected, we are free of ornate coffins and rock-hard tombs.

Secondly, I see a great dependence on externals. It has not been fulfilled reality to her. No wonder the Hebrews writer says "Let us fear lest..." Unfinished clay is not acceptable for any use except perhaps for appearance in limited form. God did not create us for mere appearances; He created us to be used, fulfilled in Him.

Berit,

Do you know why our writing is confusing to you? It is for the same reason that the Jews found Jesus' message confusing:

"Why do you not understand what I say? Because you are unable to hear My Word" (John 8:43 EMTV).

Why can you not hear our Word? We are sent by the Lord to preach Him, the One you profess to believe in:

"And Jesus said to them again, May peace be with you! As the Father sent Me, even so I now send you" (John 20:21 BBE).

We say what He gives us to speak, just as He did:

“For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John 12:49 MKJV).

Why do you not hear what we say from Him? Why do you find it confusing? How is it you think to understand and go by the Holy Scriptures, but cannot hear the Voice of the One Who authored them and yet speaks by His servants who embody them? There is an answer. You are worshiping the god you imagine from the Scriptures, and not the One Who inspired them. Your focus is on the letter of the Word, and not the Word of the letter. You are serving the letter of the Word, not the Word made flesh, and therefore “...you don’t have the Father’s message within you, because you don’t believe in the person He has sent” (John 5:38 GW).

We, in Christ, are the Word made flesh, “the person He has sent,” but you do not see Him. You listen and judge us by your understanding of the Scriptures, and not with His understanding about Whom the Scriptures testify. You need to repent of making an idol of Scripture, and turn to the living God Whom we preach to you.

I will give you an excellent real-life example of where your idolatry takes you, wrongly. In this last letter you write:

“One of my favorite verses is Gal. 2:20. In fact when people are struggling with various problems, I usually suggest that verse as a constant reminder that we indeed have ‘been crucified with Christ.’ It’s no longer I who live but He lives in me!!! He and I are one, and He has lifted me up into the heavenly places. I just delight in that knowledge.”

You treat the Scripture as though you have everything there simply by affirming that the words are true. That is not the case. Otherwise, for example, the writer of Hebrews would not exhort believers to labor to enter into rest (Heb. 4:11). He would have said, “I am in rest,” and you would believe you are too, wrongly again.

In your example Paul was, in fact, writing to the Galatians who, though Spirit-filled believers, had not yet been crucified with Christ, as he was. He was leading and teaching them so they would also come to that place. You cannot assume those Scriptures have been fulfilled in you, and we tell you plainly they have not. That is not a condemnation, from us or from the Lord. He would not have us writing you and telling you these things if that were the case. You are being alerted to your true state, for your good.

If you were to be lifted up into the heavenly places, you would also hear our words and understand the Scriptures. You cannot give Galatians 2:20 to others struggling with various problems as a comfortable reminder when, in fact, their problems are often the result of a vain profession of Christ and a lack of the application of the cross in their lives.

Do you believe the pope can take those words to heart, and take comfort in his problems and challenges that he too is crucified with Christ? How can that be, when he is the agent of persecution of true believers? Is Christ divided? We can go down the list of many that profess to believe Christ and the Scriptures, yet are found in truth to be antiChrist, usurpers and liars. “Yea, let God be true but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4).

You also write:

“My confusion then, is that I agree with love for Jesus Christ our Lord, but I cannot agree with your views of His written Word. After all, Jesus Himself quoted or referred to Old Testament truth that He fulfilled in chapter after chapter.”

Are we not also often quoting the Scriptures? Have you read the writings we have sent you? How are we different than the Lord in this regard, that is, in confirming what we say by the authority of the Scriptural Record of God?

Contrary to what you say, God does not draw men to Himself by the written Word. According to the Scriptures He draws men to the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, Who raises them up at the last day (John 6:44). We are witnesses that these words are true. We affirm that the Scriptures are true because the Lord has fulfilled them in us. Again, your position is evidence of your substitution of the Bible for Jesus Christ, and an illicit worship of the Scriptures.

You say, somewhat self-righteously:

“I cannot ignore the Scriptures that warn us never to change any part of His Word.”

You do not see that you are changing the meaning of His Word all the time, by your carnal nature and interpretation of verses such as those I have already mentioned in this letter and others in previous letters. Your problem is positional, not intentional. You need to be born again, baptized in His Spirit, enabled to commune with His Spirit and receive the things of God.

You write:

“What we are not to do is to subjectively change lots of words and titles in order to intentionally reinterpret His written word to fit our culture and please man.”

Neither are you to change the meanings and application of those words, which is what you are doing, subconscious or not. You have been denying yourself life and bringing on plagues by how you treat the Word of God.

As for Peterson, I wrote you previously that we do not see intentional reinterpretation in his rendering of Scriptures. What we have seen, and appreciated, where it works, is an immediacy of meaning and original intent that is quite refreshing and accessible to many whereas other versions are not quite the same. Are you not in favor of people being able to hear more clearly what God is saying?

But we use it judiciously, and do not recommend *The Message* as the only or first Bible. What is more important than Bibles, though, is that people have the guidance of God-ordained shepherds. Did Jesus say, when He saw all the fields ripe for harvest, “Pray the Lord of harvest that He sends many laborers into His harvest”? No, He said to pray for many laborers. The laborers will show themselves approved, rightly dividing the Word of God. After all, does God fail?

He provides, even as He did for the Ethiopian to whom Philip was sent. The eunuch received, because he wasn't depending upon his own understanding, but sought understanding from God, Who provided a shepherd to lead him:

“Philip ran over and heard him reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah. He asked him, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ The official replied, ‘How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?’ And he invited Philip to climb up and sit in the carriage with him” (Acts 8:30-31 GNB).

You asked us about the section “His Word” under your Topical Index of Scriptures. What I

see there is a compilation of Scriptures, which of course are all true, but assembled in ways that really say nothing or impart any meaningful guidance. The pieces are there, but the understanding to arrange them is not.

Many of the Scriptures you quote are speaking strictly or primarily of the spoken Word of God as coming from men of God, speaking by His Spirit, and not simply reciting Scripture. Reciting Scripture is not preaching the Gospel. Preaching the Gospel is the testimony of the living Christ. Some examples of your postings confirming the preaching of the Gospel by men of God sent to speak His living Word:

“Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things...” 2 Timothy 4:2-5

“...our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance...” 1 Thessalonians 1:5

“I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” Acts 26:17-18

“...if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.” Galatians 1:9-10

“I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. “ Acts 20:28

“You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse...” Ezekiel 2:7

“ ...we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 2:17

“...Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:25-27

“He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Luke 24:45

Let her that has ears to hear, hear. Let her that does not, be judged so that she might some day.

Paul

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