

Understanding

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[0 : 0 0] A Pastor's Reflections, Understanding, Genesis 35, 1. And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Psalms 29, 4. The voice of the Lord is powerful. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. John 16, 13. Howbeit, when he, the spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come.

When the voice of the Lord came to Jacob, instructing him to return to Bethel, Jacob did not hesitate to respond in obedience to that voice. He knew God's word when he heard it, and he knew what that word was asking of him. The question wasn't, what did God say, but, would Jacob respond in obedience to what God had said? In that moment of decision, Jacob was all alone. There was no one else who had received God's word, and there was no one for him to turn to, who could instruct him in its meaning. He had to make a decision based upon the information and understanding that was given him by God. In John 14, 26, Jesus is instructing his disciples on the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives. He tells them that the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. We also know, from 1 John 2, 27, that the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. We have a promise from God that the words of

God will be available to all who have the Spirit of God. Just as Jacob did not need another man to interpret or understand what God had spoken to him, neither do we need any man to teach us.

Does that mean that there is no value in being taught? No, not at all. But the reason for teaching in the body of Christ is for edification, not interpretation. The pastor or teacher's role is not to interpret God's will for someone else's life. They are not to tell someone what God's word is specifically speaking to that person, but to instead help that person better understand what God's word is speaking to all, so that each individual can then hear what God's word is speaking to them. You see, today there are many who would try to convince the church that no one can know what the Bible really means without their specific knowledge or interpretation of Scripture. There are those who would set themselves up as the gateway by which man can know and understand God. Thankfully, we have not only God's word, but also God's Spirit, which allows us to receive, understand, and respond to God's living word for our lives. The problem in our world today is not that God's word cannot be understood, but that there are people who refuse to respond to what they do understand, and in so doing have chosen to ignore the voice of God and replace it with the voice of a man. Matthew 7, 24 and 25. Therefore, whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. Jesus, thank you for giving us the rock of your word.

Not only do we have the remarkable privilege of God speaking to us, but we have the promise that we will also understand what is spoken. Thank you for the Holy Spirit of truth that keeps us from the lies of man. Give us greater understanding, and give us a greater desire to respond to and obey what we have understood. Amen.