

Antichrist or next reformation: a Christian appraisal of postmodernism

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Preacher: Chris Watkin

[0 : 00] So, do come take a seat. There's some handouts at the chairs at the front to encourage us to sit at the chairs at the front.!

So, while we're just settling down, can I welcome everybody to this Be Thinking Talk. The Be Thinking Talks are talks we've occasionally run from the church here over the past few years. We started running them because there were students that we knew who were trying to get to grips with the various ideas that are circulating in university and in academic study.

And seeing how those squared up with Christian faith. So, we felt that we didn't know the answers to some of the questions that were being asked, but we thought we knew people who did.

So, we asked them to come and speak on various subjects relevant in that sort of way. And this evening we're carrying on in that tradition.

[1 : 15] So, we're going to have a speaker and then I hope there'll be time for questions afterwards. I think it simply remains for me to tell you the title of the talk.

No, actually what I was going to do was just comment on the fact that this is the first meeting that we have held in this building since all this was finished.

It was finished about three hours ago, I think. So, we're just sort of experiencing the delights of having a mezzanine floor and lights and a door that closes and all things like that.

So, we're really pleased about that. Anyway, the talk is Antichrist or Next Reformation? A Christian Appraisal of Postmodernism.

I'm sure the speaker will explain all about what that title means. But I'm very pleased to welcome Chris Watkin, Dr. Chris Watkin.

[2 : 17] He did his PhD in Contemporary French and Postmodern Philosophy. And he's recently been, as I understood it, he was a philosopher's labourer.

But that's probably not the right way of putting it. It's a research fellowship, it says here. It sounds much more posh. And he's been studying, recently, French philosophers and the fact that they're suddenly taking an interest, although they're atheist philosophers, been taking an interest in this whole matter of God.

So, he obviously knows a lot of things. So, Chris, we're very pleased to have you here. A warm welcome to you and I'd ask you to address us, please. Great. Thank you, Martin.

Given that I'm the first person who's speaking in the building since it's been redone, I feel that I have to say something momentous at this point. But all I can say is that Brighton reminds me of Yorkshire.

I'm working in Cambridge and anyone who's been to Cambridge, one thing you know about it is that it's absolutely flat. There are no hills anywhere. And the first thing that I noticed when I came out of the train station here, which is how they're wonderfully hilly Brightonys, and it did remind me of Barnsley, which is where I come from originally.

[3 : 35] And then the second thing that I noticed was the seagulls, which reminded me of Bridlington, where I used to go on family holidays when I was really little. So forever I'm going to associate Brighton with two wonderful memories of home and of family holidays when I was little.

Thank you, Martin, for your introduction. Thank you for inviting me to give this presentation as well. It gave me the opportunity to work on these thoughts that I hadn't really put together before.

So it's been really useful for me, and I hope I'll be able to share something of what I've gained from preparing this evening with you. The way that I hope it'll work this evening is that I'll try and speak for no more than an hour in total, and we'll have a break in the middle where you'll be able to ask

any questions that you may have or make any comments that you may have on the first half of what I've said, and then I'll plough on through to the end, and then hopefully there'll be an extended time for discussion where we can throw some ideas around between us when we get to the end of what I'm going to say.

Does everyone have one of these handouts? I think it's going to be really useful as we work through. So if you haven't got one, there's loads on the front here. Feel free to grab one. In the late 1880s, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche published what was going to become one of the most famous parables in the whole of 20th century philosophy, introducing one of the most famous concepts in the whole of 20th century philosophy, which was to be the death of God.

The parable is called the Parable of the Madman, and I want to begin what I've got to say this evening by just reading the Parable of the Madman in full. Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the marketplace and cried incessantly, I seek God, I seek God.

[5 : 43] As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? Asked one. Did he lose his way as a child?

Asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage, emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their mist and pierced them with his eyes.

Whither is God? He cried. I will tell you, we have killed him. You and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this?

How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun?

Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward in all directions?

[6 : 45] Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as though in an infinite nothing? And do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder?

Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the grave diggers who are burying God?

Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? God's two decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.

God is dead. How shall we comfort ourselves the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owed has bled to death under our knives.

who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement? What sacred games will we have to invent?

[7 : 51] Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become God simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed.

And whoever is born after us for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto. Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners and they too were silent and stared back at him in astonishment.

At last he threw his lantern on the ground and it broke into pieces and he went out. I have come too early he said. My time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way still wondering.

It has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time. The light of the stars requires time. Deeds though done still require time to be seen and heard.

This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars and yet they have done it themselves. It has been related further Nietzsche continues that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his requiem aeternum Deo.

[9 : 14] Led out and called to account he said to always have replied nothing but what after all are churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchres of God? Well it's typical Nietzsche with his flowing style his huge rhetoric but it was a seminal moment in the history of philosophy and what I want to begin by doing is just trying to unpack what it is that Nietzsche is saying in his own inimitable way in this parable.

Remember that the madman who comes into the marketplace is speaking to non-believers people who already do not believe in God and he warns them he warns them of the consequences of killing God but of course they just laugh at him.

See the madman knows something that the unbelievers don't know they remain relaxed at the news of God's death laughing at this frantic fool in the marketplace but listen again to the madman's

questions do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the grave diggers who are burying God do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition the madman's saying this he's saying God is dead but you haven't faced the consequences of that yet deeds though done still require time to be seen and heard this deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars he says and the process of the 20th century's gradual facing up to those consequences of the death of God was eventually to take the name post-modernism you see

Nietzsche stands on the threshold of post-modernism and in many ways he can be understood as the prophet of post-modernism and what I want to argue in the first half of this presentation is that Nietzsche was right he was actually right we have killed God but not the God of the Bible and the terminal condition of God was actually diagnosed back in the 1600s for anyone who was around to notice it but it was only really from the 1960s onwards that the consequences of the death of God really caught up with us so what we need to do first of all is take a step back in time and discover what it was that led up to Nietzsche's Mad Men and how we got to post-modernism in the first place I need to say as we begin as a matter of personal integrity that much of what I'm going to say is drawing on the work of others and the nature of it being in all the presentation

I can't always acknowledge what I'm drawing on so just let me say up front who I've relied on for a lot of the material that I'm going to be using those of you familiar with the work of Don Carson will see his influence in a lot of what I'm going to be saying and anyone who's listened to or read much by Tim Keller will also see his fingerprints all over this presentation let me take you back to Descartes to begin with the philosopher René Descartes now there have always been skeptics but at the University of Paris in the 1600s the skeptics were a particular pest they were a pest to the Catholic Church above all and the Catholic Church rather thought that it ought to do something about these skeptics so a particular cardinal called Cardinal de Berulle got in touch with a friend of his Descartes and asked Descartes if he wouldn't mind coming up with some philosophy that would refute these skeptics once and for all

[13:17] Descartes being a good Catholic and knowing which side his bread was buttered on decided that he better get to work on this and what he did was he shut himself off in a room in his house and Descartes tried to out-skeptic the skeptics he thought let's doubt everything that I possibly can hyperbolically let's just anything that is there's a minutest possibility that I can doubt let's doubt that and see what I'm left with and then if I'm left with anything I'll use that as the foundation of all my knowledge and I'll build everything on that because that's the thing that I can be sure about so he stepped to work and he found that he could doubt pretty much everything but there was one thing that he noticed even when he was doubting he was thinking that he was doubting so he couldn't really doubt that he thought because in order to doubt he needed to think that he was doubting and then he'd be thinking so he thought okay well let's let's try and use this as a foundation for existence and he came out with his famous phrase

I think therefore I am or in Latin cogito ergo sum and he tried to build the whole edifice of human knowledge on that foundation the one thing that I can't doubt is that I think now philosophers have come up with many arguments against that since but at the time it was pretty revolutionary and it had a huge consequence consequence the consequence was that whereas previously people attended to ground their understanding on God they just said something like this God knows everything and God's chosen to reveal some of what he knows to us and therefore what I know is always a little bit of what God knows and I know that it's true because well God wouldn't lie to me would he but Descartes completely changes that rather than starting with God something outside me

Descartes starts with my thinking something inside my head the thing that I can be most certain of isn't God anymore it's my own thinking so that the first piece in the jigsaw of knowledge is now me my thinking inside my head then I work out from there to everything else that I know and to the extent that you can pinpoint the start of a movement this is as good as any moment to pinpoint the start of what's called modernism modernism the idea that you start with the sure foundation and then you build out from that using a particular method to arrive at the knowledge that you have and for Descartes the foundation was the cogito so with Descartes if you like if you look at the handout you've got the emergence of what you could call a box inside the box is what I'm most certain of i.e. my own thinking and only when I'm certain of that can I then move outside the box to the existence of the world around me building upon the foundation of my own thinking by the time you get to the 18th century and the age of enlightenment modernism's moved on quite a lot and the division

between inner and outer has got more pronounced the philosopher and the author of the modern and the modern age and he went further than Descartes rather than just saying that my thinking is in here and then it works its way out Kant said that it never really gets out at all time and space Kant said they're not really things out there but they're just categories that my understanding has of trying to process trying to understand what's out there time and space are categories in here but the way that I make sense of the world and therefore my experience of the world is always already processed by my mind into certain categories like time and space and causality it's a bit like seeing the world through a kaleidoscope all the shapes and the colours and the movements they're not really out there they're just an effect of the mirrors in the kaleidoscope and so for Kant time and space are not really out there they're ways that my understanding has of making sense of the world the world as it appears to me through this kaleidoscope is called the phenomenal world for Kant and the world as it really is is called the noumenal world so you see for Kant the box has changed inside the box is what I experience the phenomena of space and time and everything else and outside the box there's the noumenal things as they really are but because they're outside the box I don't really have any experience of them as they are I only ever experienced them in the categories of my own mind so whereas for Descartes it was just that I doubted what was outside me until I'd established a foundation for my thinking with Kant well my own thinking is all that I've got access to anymore everything that I experience is always already processed through the categories of my understanding now like Descartes Kant did this with the best of intentions in the second preface to his best known work the critique of pure reason he says that what he's trying to do is to limit reason to make room for faith in other words Kant's thinking was a little bit like this if all that I know are phenomena then well that leaves God a lot of space outside my knowledge that won't be swallowed up by reason and God can quite happily exist out there without bothering me and without me bothering him

[19:53] Kant thought that he was clearing space for God but it leaves us with a bit of a problem and the problem is this what sort of God can fit into Kant's schema well the answer is not very much of one and all you can really say about Kant's God is that it can't really talk about he exists in the final sentence of an article that Kant wrote entitled the only possible support of an argument in favour of the existence of God he writes this it is absolutely necessary that one should convince oneself that God exists that his existence should be demonstrated is not so necessary because God can't be known God is just a useful concept in Kant's system it's a cosmic guarantor of certain laws sort of a

God behind the scenes who's making sure that everything holds together but this God never steps onto the stage and takes a speaking role it's much more of God as an idea than God as a person and this is called the God of the philosophers it's a really helpful term the God of the philosophers because it allows us to distinguish the real God the God of the Bible who reveals himself in the scriptures scriptures and ultimately in the Jesus of the scriptures it allows us to distinguish that God from the philosophical God as a concept now Kant was by no means the first philosopher to think of God in this conceptual way but his thinking did provide an important milestone on the road to postmodernism it's worth pointing out that both Descartes and Kant were confessing Christians Descartes within a catholic tradition and Kant brought up in a pietistic tradition and equally our third milestone on the road to postmodernism

Siochen Kierkegaard was also a committed Christian in fact it was his Christian commitment that drove him to write what he did in his philosophy just like Paul in the Bible in Acts 17 Kierkegaard was distressed he was distressed by the religion that he saw around him in 19th century Danish Protestantism because what he saw around him was essentially a dead religion it was a religion that was only ritual and exterior and that seemed to have no living meaning for the people who claimed to believe it it was some empty shell of a religion that filled people's heads but never changed their lives and with Kierkegaard the box again becomes tighter inside the box now you've got this dry reason this meaningless ritual this exterior show but real meaning true experience of God are outside the box they're outside reason outside rationality now so for Kierkegaard the only way to get a real proper authentic experience of God is to find a way of getting outside the box with all its rationality and its careful thinking to leave all that behind and to embrace a God who can't be contained in any language or in any ritual or in any institution he called this the leap of faith it's worth pointing out that the leap of faith isn't actually a biblical idea it's not a term that's used in the bible at all it's a term that comes from Kierkegaard and it relies on this division

between meaningless reason inside the box and meaningful irrationality outside the box you see anything inside the box can be known but it's trivial and outside the box is what is of great ultimate meaning but it's beyond expressible experience so for

Kierkegaard there's a choice between reason and experience between a ritualistic faith and an existential faith a faith that touches my existence and indeed Kierkegaard is a foreign 20th century existentialist philosopher he's called an existentialist philosopher because he maintained that religion must be something that we experience something that touches our existence not just a dry formal list of facts that fill our heads so once Mark Kierkegaard had the best of intentions he thought that dry ritualistic religion was not true religion and as a Christian I'd want to agree with him he thought that God needed to be experienced not just known as a set of facts and his philosophy is one of how we can have an existential apprehension of God not just a ritual rational knowledge of God and from

[25 : 13] Kierkegaard it's only one small step to Nietzsche Nietzsche's madman just before we take that step let's recap where we've got to we've got to a point where God has become utterly detached from the everyday world for Kant it's because we can't really think about God as he is at all God's reduced to a concept for Kierkegaard at the other extreme it's a God who's an experience beyond words or beyond any reason now all you need now is for a philosopher called Hegel to come along also a professing Christian incidentally and to say that everything is historical and changes with time and what you've got is you've locked this box shut and you've thrown away the key there's nowhere meaningful left for God to be nowhere outside the flow of history for God to reside no way we have could have of communicating with any

God who may or may not be out there and so we get to Jacques Derrida for my money one of the most impressive and formidable postmodern thinkers of the 60s to 2000 he died in 2005 of course Derrida is not the only postmodern thinker but there's so much vague and wishy-washy critique of postmodernism out there in general that I think it's going to be more useful just to focus on one thinker and try and understand what they're saying get to grips with their thoughts rather than trying to cherry pick ideas from lots of different thinkers out of context thinkers who incidentally violently disagreed with each other a lot of the time Derrida buys into this box idea of reality but for him the box is language remember for Kant the box was the structures of our understanding so everything is filtered through my understanding and that meant that we could have no direct experience of what

Kant called the numeral world remember for Kierkegaard the box was rationality well for Derrida the same role is played by language it's language that chops up the world into bite-sized pieces for me to experience but language doesn't reach outside itself to tell me about the world it always looks inwards it's a bit like this the French have two words fleuve and rivière and the English have two words river and stream now the difference between a fleuve and a rivière is that a fleuve flows into the sea and a rivière doesn't but the difference between river and stream in English is just a matter of size so the French poor things have no experience of river or stream the flux of reality just isn't chopped up that way for them by their language it's chopped up differently language just doesn't construct their world in that way now if you accept if you accept that principle and you roll it out to the whole of language you end up with a position where the world of meaningful things in which I live move and have my being is really just a world of meaningful concepts not things concepts that attach to particular words you see there's no meaningful reality out there it's just the way that my language chooses to present things to me it's what

Derrida calls logocentrism he's fond of using long words this is one of them logocentrism logos is a word that's used throughout the whole of the history of philosophy right from the very earliest Greek philosophers it's got a whole range of meanings but the one meaning that's relevant for us now is it means something like the reason or the motive of life so the logos of life is what life is all about as someone's expressed it the logos of an espresso machine is making espresso not popping popcorn so for Derrida logocentrism is the attitude that thinks that life has a meaning there is a logos but that's only because of the meanings that language gives to things for Derrida so logocentrism is a state of being fooled by language into thinking that there really is a meaning and this is one of the consequences of the death of

God in his book the twilight of the idols Nietzsche makes the following observation Nietzsche says I am afraid we are not yet rid of God because we still have faith in grammar I'm afraid we are not yet rid of God because we still have faith in grammar what he means is this once you get rid of the

ultimate logos the ultimate meaning then the other logos little meanings start unraveling as well one of them is the logos of language another is the idea of human nature that there's something that we all share in common another idea would be the meaningfulness of the distinction between good and evil and what Nietzsche is saying is once you start getting rid of God it becomes very difficult indeed to keep hold of these other logos these other ideas of meaning you can understand

[31 : 11] Derrida's predicament in the following terms in terms of the singular and the universal now the singular is that which is unique it's unrepeatable it's a one off like a human being there could never be two use and the universal is that which is repeatable and therefore not unique like language you know I can use a particular word as many times as I want in as many different situations as I want language is repeatable in that way now for Derrida existence if there is such a thing is singular singular but my experience is constructed by language which sort of freezes this singular in a repeatable form and betrays it makes it rigid whereas in fact it's not like that at all it reduces this unknowable reality to a universal form of language if you like it presents a graven image of what can never truly properly be expressed within language now this is the second Derrida word for the day

Derrida calls this totalizing when something inexpressible is presented in language as if it could be exhaustively expressed he calls that totalizing think of it this way imagine that I got two boxes here in front of me one box is for small green squares and there's another box for large blue triangles and then something comes along that's really neither a small blue square nor a large blue triangle and I've got to decide which box to put it in so I choose one or the other depending on which criterion I want to pick either its size or its color or its shape something about it that may suggest one slightly more than the other but it would be wrong to say that the thing that I put in the box is a small green square or a large blue triangle and then another object comes along slightly different from the first object and

I put it in the same box but I couldn't say that it's exactly the same as the first one even if it's nearly the same it'll never be exactly the same size and shape and everything and that's Derrida's problem with language because it gives us a finite number of boxes to put things in whichever word we choose it's never going to be exactly right because language is repeatable and it can never do justice to the singular you see we compile words and words on top of each other but we'll never have done enough to express the singular adequately within language if you want to put it in Christian terms for Derrida all language is an idol it pretends to make present something that cannot be present in experience it's a false image and so the conclusion that you've got to come to if you're Derrida is that you mustn't take language too seriously if I really believe that the words that I use give me perfect access to reality for Derrida well that makes me a logocentric idolater I need to recognize that language always totalizes always gives me access to nothing beyond its own web of interrelated meanings and so I become suspicious of neat logic and categories that language tries to box things up into now again this is at least in part done with the best of intentions and to put things in linguistic boxes and leave them there for Derrida it's not just untrue it's actually wrong it's evil it's like saying all Yorkshiremen wear flat caps or more seriously all

Muslims are suicide bombers it's insulting we don't like that sort of totalizing language but if that's what all language does all the time you see you've got a major problem if you're Derrida and to resist that sort of totalizing then becomes your ethical duty so you can see how if you buy into this framework like Derrida where what I claim to know is still dependent on my language well it makes very little sense to tell somebody else that they're wrong because there's nothing outside us both and above us both to arbitrate between our two positions it makes no sense to argue over truth because there's no one thing that we're both arguing about it's not that our two positions are equally true it's just that asking the question of truth doesn't even make sense there's no logos to decide between us it's like asking which is truer a sink or a set square how do you propose to begin to answer it depends what you want to use it for depends what the context is you see well that's enough

[36 : 58] Derrida for now we can come back to him during the discussion time if you want let me just try and draw this together with four summary points first of all modernism thinks that if you get the foundation right and you build on it correctly you'll arrive at universal truths truths that are the same for everyone at all points of history wherever on the earth you are universal truths second point post modernism thinks it's not as simple as that that our logocentric language doesn't give us any truth that lies beyond it just gives us its own truth thirdly that there's no real clear line between

modernism and post modernism post modernism really just walks modernism through to its own conclusions like Nietzsche's madman in the marketplace and fourth the god who dies in all this is the god of the philosophers the god that we've seen becoming more and more redundant ever since

Descartes the god who dies in this is not the god of the bible now it's worth saying at this point that this sort of thinking is by no means universal in our society or in any society today Richard Dawkins for one example would be and is scathing of this sort of thinking Dawkins is working much more in a modernist paradigm and people we meet on the street will probably get some of their understanding of the world from modernism and some of it from post modernism as well as other sources as well now a post modern critique of Dawkins would be to say that he's like the people in the marketplace that the madman visits yelling and laughing but not realising the consequences of what they themselves have done okay I'm going to stop there for a moment and open the floor if anyone has any questions or comments just on that and then we'll deal with anything arising out of that material and then I'll go on afterwards to the second half so does anyone have anything that they want to say about that if there's anything that was unclear please say and I'll try my best to clarify what you know of the experience of these philosophers as they came to further conclusions the sort of conclusions you're expressing were they getting

I'm not talking now about their thinking so much about how they reacted to what they were finding well Nietzsche went mad Derrida didn't I think I think that the caricature of these philosophers sometimes is that they take great glee in the lack of meaning and dance about on God's grave there are some philosophers who have done that not these that is a caricature of the postmodern attitude the experience of a lot of these people is a very poignant experience because their understanding of the world doesn't allow them some things that they know they need so ethics is the point where this really comes into sharp focus so none of these people that I'm talking about well certainly not Derrida would go around saying oh there is no good and evil that's great let's all just do what we want and you know if you want to kill someone that's fine you go no no no but he's got to try and find a way of being able to say it is important that I protect the life of someone else from within his philosophy so what you see in a lot of these thinkers and what you see in the late Derrida particularly is they're sort of tying themselves in knots trying to provide a way within their thinking to be able to do ethically what arrive ethically at where they want to arrive so my experience of a lot of their writing is of a poignant very human search for meaning within a universe that nowhere thinking doesn't allow them that meaning yeah yeah thank you totalizing is the language that assumes that it has said what there is to be said about something when it's spoken so if

I say X is Y then as far as language is concerned it's a dumb deal there you go X is Y closed case but what people like Derrida are saying is that's always inadequate you you've never captured it completely experience is just more complicated than that there's always a remainder beyond what you've tried to put in the box in language so you've tried to totalize it you've tried to say everything there is about you haven't succeeded experience doesn't accommodate itself to language in that way doesn't Derrida's theory defeat itself because he's explained this all through language yeah thank you it's a common critique of Derrida I think the way that I want to answer it is saying what do you do if you're

[43 : 25] Derrida okay so you believe that language is inadequate to express truth not that it is utterly impotent but that it is inadequate well you express that using language in a way that shows both the inadequacy and the potency of language if you like so if you read a passage of Derrida he is circling around ideas he's using plays on words he's sort of drifting from one thing to another and I think what he's trying to do is say in his language the way that he uses language sort of reflecting that what he's wanting to say which is that language is this fuzzy sort of instrument so it's a helpful comment but I don't think it undermines what he's trying to do because he's not saying that we can ever say anything at all in language you know full stop signed

Derrida that's not what he's doing he's just pointing to languages inadequacy and he reflects that in the way that he writes yeah i'm going to say in the second half that there's a lot that that Christians would have i think an innate sympathy for in what he's saying which would probably be a good moment to press on to the second half i don't want things to slip too much okay what i want to do in the second half now is think more constructively first of all what lessons may there be in postmodern thinking for Christians and secondly i want to think as well about how Christians might be uniquely well placed to answer and minister to a postmodern culture and i'm not intending this

next session to be philosophically rigorous in any way it's a reflection that comes out of a number of conversations that I've had with people largely in Christianity explored courses over the past few years the first useful thing that postmodernism does is that it follows through on the consequences of the death of God if there really is no God if death really is the end then we lose not only God but we lose human beings and language and ethics as well and you know I think the Bible agrees with postmodernism here in the book of Ecclesiastes the author tries to make sense of the world as he calls it under the sun the world with reference only to the world not the next world and not to God let's try and make sense of life just here and now as it is without any reference to God and one theologian said that in Ecclesiastes death is the black wall into which all human endeavours crash and the key word to sum up life under the sun in the book of Ecclesiastes is vanity or in the NIV it's translated meaningless without reference to God you can't hold on to any meaning in the world again it's exactly the same as

Nietzsche's madman is saying Nietzsche's madman says are we not plunging continually backward sideward forward in all directions is there still any up or down are we not straying as through an infinite nothing and so I think Christians could do worse than affirm this postmodern insight saying that it is intellectually dishonest to want to get rid of God and at the same time to try to keep realities that only make sense if there is a God it's Dostoevsky's observation in the Brothers Karamazov if God is dead well everything is permitted and it's William Golding's conclusion that if God is dead if man is the highest good and evil are decided by majority vote philosophically you could say what we're talking about here is you can't get an imperative out of an indicative you can't go from an is to an ought that's why you can't get ethics in a godless universe because in a godless universe all there is is what there is if something is made for a purpose you see it has a right and a wrong use but if it just is if it has no purpose well then there's no right or wrong way to use it so is postmodernism a threat to Christians at this point does it undermine our belief by no means actually precisely the opposite is the case because to live under the sun is not to live in the real world there is a God and for

Christians death is not the black wall into which all human endeavours crash because the very death that renders the wisdom vain in the book of Ecclesiastes is the same death that Christ has won the victory over on the cross so in 1 Corinthians 15 that I printed on the handout Paul can write behold I tell you a mystery we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed for this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality when the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality then shall come to pass the saying that is written death is swallowed up in victory oh death where is your victory oh death where is your sting the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law but thanks be to

God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ therefore my beloved brothers be steadfast immovable always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain that is a uniquely Christian perspective in the Lord your labour is not in vain death is not the buffers for the Christian death is swallowed up in victory it is not meaningless see our labour as Christians won't be obliterated by death but it will be changed transfigured purified glorified and therefore the Christian alone can throw herself into this world with all seriousness into the arts and sciences into relationships into projects knowing that death will not make a meaningless joke of them so I want to suggest we don't say to the postmodern at this point oh you've got it wrong everything's not meaningless rather we say yes you're right you're painfully agonisingly right but just consider the possibility that there's more to life than what is under the sun that under the sun isn't everything that there is but then wouldn't the postmodern come back and say something like well even if there is something beyond the sun

[51 : 57] I could never know it because all my experience is linguistically mediated and I can have no experience of the absolute and that would be a good opportunity to talk about the distinctively Christian understanding of logos you see for both modernism and postmodernism alike logos is reason rationality calculation logic but for the Christian logos is not a concept it's not an idea he's a person this is the point that John's making at the beginning of his gospel that I printed on the handout when John uses the word word here in the Greek that he was writing in it's logos so he's talking about logos in the beginning was the word the logos and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was nothing made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men the light shines in

the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it there was a man sent from God whose name was John he came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all may believe through him he was not the light but came to bear witness about the light the true light which enlightens everyone was coming into the world he was in the world and the world was made through him yet the world did not know him he came to his own and his own people did not receive him but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of

God who were not born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth so the christian says yes there is a logos to life a meaning a purpose a truth but it's not a truth brought by a person it is a person and to find the reason of life the meaning of life is to know him to know Jesus so christianity is not a philosophy it's not a way of life as the christianity explored course puts it christianity is christ and to know a person of course is not the same thing as to know a fact even to know a fact about a person so postmoderns are suspicious of propositional language the sort of language that says this is that this is a large blue square but for the christian truth is not ultimately propositional hear me well

I'm not saying that truth isn't propositional I'm saying that truth is not ultimately propositional there is something more fundamental than propositions a logos that underwrites the truth of propositions and his name is Jesus so again for the christian the truth about the universe is not a fact like it is for the naturalist inside the box and it's not a mystical experience like it is for the mystic who tries to escape from the box for the christian the truth about the universe the most fundamental thing about the universe the meaning of the universe is a person god father son and spirit you can't reduce a person to a list of facts that's the whole point that the post-modernist is trying to make and you can't dissolve a person in a mystical experience so you see christ as a logos doesn't really fit this schema of the box he's neither mere fact within the box no meaningless mystical experience outside the box and that's the second point that I want to make from John 1 it's that our experience of the logos for John isn't the result of us finding a clever way to get out of the box no no we remain inside and it's the logos who comes to join us this truth is all over that extract that I read out the light shines in the darkness John says he was in the world he came the world the word became flesh and dwelt among us!

so the postmoderns I think are right any attempt to arrive at logos through our everyday experience of the world or through the use of human reason is always inadequate the box is shut in that sense but for the Bible the onus is not on us to poke our heads outside the box to find out what's out there in reality what what the ultimate meaning of the universe is now God took the initiative and himself entered the box in a way that we could understand and what better way is there of communicating with us than becoming one of us so it's God who speaks not we who speak about God the postmodern fear if you remember is that anything that I say will be totalizing and it's true anything that I can dream up to say about God is bound to misrepresent him in some way or another at some point but what if the shoe's on the other foot what if it's God who does the talking what if the responsibility for using language is his not mine well that's the Christian claim the responsibility isn't ours to break out of the box to break out of human language to find God

God himself took the initiative to break in to our experience to use our language himself so we don't think our way up to God no he stoops down to us the movement's not bottom up if you like but top down so yeah the Bible would agree God is invisible but Colossians 1.15 says that Christ is the image of the invisible God so this great division between language and truth is not an absolute division for Christians because the word the Logos has become flesh let me try and sum up I think I'm going to leave the last section at the top because it would be a shame not to have time to discuss these ideas together so just let me try and conclude in a couple of sentences now post-modernism is neither the Christian's friend nor the Christian's enemy exclusively that's what I was getting at with the title one guy published a book suggesting that post-modernism was the next reformation unless the church embraces this idea

[60 : 03] Christianity will die other people on the opposite extreme have said Christianity is pretty much the contemporary antichrist if we go anywhere near it it will end up destroying us I think neither of those is the case like all philosophies post-modernism is a mixed bag it provides opportunities and it provides barriers to the course of the gospel but we've got good news for the person with a post-modern outlook good news of a word become flesh to live among us and to die for us on the cross rescuing us from our rebellion against God and from the anger of a God who as

if we'd have if we'd have time to look at it in Acts 17 calls on people everywhere to repent modern and post-modern alike now I'm going to stop there for the moment it will be good to hear any comments or reactions or questions that you have to anything that I've been saying or anything else about post-modernism that I haven't had a chance to touch on and hopefully we can get a dialogue going about some of these ideas so do feel free to throw out anything that you have actually the title

I didn't quite fully understand it I can understand what you're saying that some people are saying that post-modernism is the new reformation so if we don't go along with it Christianity does I wonder if that perhaps is expressed in terms nowadays of what we might call ecumenism or something like that I don't know but I don't understand the Antichrist but what he was going on some some Christians did everyone hear the question?

good ok some Christians wed their Christianity so strongly to modernism that they end up defending modernism as if it were the gospel so they defend this idea that you like with Descartes you've got to start with a firm foundation and then you build out from there inexorably and you get to some sort of universal truth ok and because of the the history of Christianity that that idea has got so entwined with the way that they understand Christianity itself to be that they see that because post-modernism questions modernism they think that it's questioning biblical Christianity Christianity and so they fight tooth and nail against post-modernism saying that you know this is the the absolute line that we need to defend whereas what I think that's happening a lot of the time is that they're actually defending modernist philosophy which they've confused a great deal with biblical Christianity how does the label antichrist attach itself to that well if if modernism is so caught up with Christianity then the thing which undermines modernism would be the antichrist

I wasn't I wasn't packing a whole load of theology into the use of that word it was more of a provocative title than something that had a great deal of thinking behind it John uses it he says you've heard that antichrist shall come and now many antichrists have come that's exactly the way John uses the phrase there isn't really an antichrist there is a spirit of antichrist and this is one but I think yeah something which is against the problem is the problem we have actually is that many of our basis of faith and our evangelical statements are couched in the language of modernism and I think it's very difficult to to change this without sowing out something that's without sowing out the baby with basalt you know what the logos does to me in John's view of the logos is precisely this point to say that it guarantees the use of meaning which I think is what you're saying but we have to we have to have meaning in the sense that that John means it and not in the sense that that Degas means it as you say

I agree with you there it is absolutely not the conclusion of what I've been saying that we should throw out all our doctrinal statements because they are propositions about God I think what what we need to realize is that if if truth is personal which I think is is is what the Bible is saying truth is a person Jesus I am the truth I am the way the truth and the lie nevertheless it is possible to communicate things about a person using propositions just because you can't communicate exhaustively everything about who they are in their singularity it doesn't mean that propositions are useless so to say of Jesus that he is the son of God that he died for our sins is is incredibly important but it's at the point that we we start to think that that is at bottom what truth is you see that there's there's no there's no person involved that I think it becomes dangerous so I absolutely keep propositions just remember what they are

[65 : 33] I'm just sort of thinking Australia is probably from probably more society than England without actually realising it makes us think that way more and the charismatic church which is all based on experience rather than reason has had exceptional growth in Australia and I it just sort of occurred to me that's probably because people are potentially close to without even realising they are but are trying to understand God and trying to experience God again the reason and the rationalism something that holds no value or like it's not worth investigating our life which as an evangelical it's more about reason and rational and mental understanding it's quite interesting to see more than the evangelical church as it stands and at least in

Australia it's not corrupt you to the same yeah I think you put your finger on something really important there brother I think that the moment surely this must be the case the moment that we divide the truth of Christ from what it means to know Christ experientially we've made a division that the Bible doesn't make to know a person is to know them with the whole of who I am so my mind is engaged my feelings are engaged even my physicality is engaged as well and so one of the things that I would have gone on to say is that it's important for us in engaging with a postmodern mindset

that's as you very rightly say critical of statements and cynical about statements as well you know we say God is love God is faithful you can trust God I say yeah right yeah that would be lovely and I'm sure that's a thought that comforts you but I've never met anyone that I can trust like that and if we still keep saying that but we also live together in community in a way that demonstrates that that shows the truths that we're speaking with our lips then you know then by

God's grace people may begin to give some credit to what we're saying because it's not just words anymore and again I think this is a profoundly biblical idea so in Titus 2 10 Paul's talking to slaves and he's saying look make sure that you act well as slaves and in that way you will make the teaching about God our saviour attractive so he's saying that the way that you are the way that your life is is an apologetic for the gospel so it's not that it replaces it there's still the teaching about God our saviour but it's that your life is showing people that oh this is really attractive they're living differently they have got a love that I don't see there is a trust among these people there's a genuineness an authenticity that I don't see perhaps I'll check out what it is that they believe and so and I think one thing that perhaps to generalise but nevertheless I think there's a grain of truth in this perhaps one thing that more charismatically inclined churches often do is precisely don't sever that link between belief and behaviour now you could say that sometimes they go soft on the belief etc.

but you know it's case by case isn't it but I think there's something definitely for us to learn from the bible and from perhaps the charismatic movement in that respect we are as persons we are in the image of God so there is something for him to relate to in that sense yeah it's not trying to bridge an infinite gulf when God tries to speak to us of course as you very helpfully say we are made in his image I mean to me on the charismatic issue the problem to me of much charismatic theology and it does vary as you said is that it actually denies the possibility of categorization because it says it absolutizes experience which is a postmodern view that immediate experience is all we have and therefore it does become impossible to say that anything is wrong if it has the right feeling and what you consider to be the right feeling of course it can be anything you like but usually that right feeling is highly constructed in fact around a social way of doing things and to me this has always been my fear of charismatic theology is that if you take it at its face value the experience is the defining concept and when you get something like say the Toronto blessing you have no categories for discussing it so if you abandon meaning in a postmodern sense entirely then of course you have no meaning left really you have only experience that's very helpful

I think again it comes down to the idea that for Christians truth is a person I am the truth how do you get to know a person well they reveal themselves through their words anyone who I've ever got to know I've got to know through speaking and listening to them so the idea that we could know Jesus outside language in some way seems to me a nonsensical claim so I think it comes back for both the conservative evangelical and the charismatic to what does it mean to know a person words categories alone if they remain sort of dry categories are not sufficient I can know a lot about someone without knowing them a lot of theologians know a great deal about God but they don't know him but similarly on the other hand to suggest that I can know God adequately apart from the way that God reveals himself in language

[72 : 49] I suspect is often quite an arrogant position not listening to what God himself has told us but trying to know him some other way I wonder if there's a link between sort of postmodern these ideas and kind of pluralist view of religion so if you divide talking about drawing a link between postmodern thought and pluralist kind of view of religion so if you divide everything into sort of propositions and experience then different religious beliefs are just different ways of trying to express the inexpressible in language so you know they might seem to be different it's like you're putting God into a blue square box or a green triangle box they're completely inadequate but then what really matters is the experience so if you find that your concept of

God sort of works gives you the right experience of God then it's authentic in some way can you comment on that sort of thing thank you let me see if I see if I've understood the question you're saying that the way that people often approach belief today is what lights your fire what does it for you you know for me it's Jesus for you it's crystals and for the guy down the road it's you know whatever surely the fact that that does something for you is what it's all about is that what you're saying yeah well it in a sense it depends where you start from if you start from the fact that there is no truth that we can know anyway then all you're really left with is you know what does it for you so that would be quite a reasonable thing to say if you've already come to the conclusion that there's

no knowable meaningful trans-historical trans-personal truth but it's an odd position to start with given that the Christian claim is that precisely the word has been made flesh and therefore there is something beyond what makes me feel good and what makes you feel good wonderfully and it would appear to me that it would be better to start with that claim and to decide whether that is indeed the case before you assume that there's nothing out there to know anyway so let's just find what makes me feel good yeah

I think that's right I was just sort of I mean that's the way most generally people think nowadays I think about you know you have your view of God and I have mine and you know yours makes you feel happy and makes you enjoy life and makes you a nice person so that's great but for me a completely different set of propositions works for me so maybe if I just put it in a related question which is how do these ideas get from the academy down to the bloke on the street let me answer your first sorry yeah perhaps I think what this is sort of shining a light on is the fact that most people today it's not that they don't believe in the Christian God it's that they don't have the categories in place that fit the Christian

God at all it's that when Billy Graham went round doing his crusades in the 1950s wonderfully by God's grace most people who didn't believe in God didn't believe in the Christian God that is the God that they rejected was the God of the Bible which meant that they had all the right categories in place they just didn't think they were true whereas today you can't assume that anymore you can't assume that people believe that we live in a universe that was created by God therefore owned by God therefore we're accountable to him therefore our actions have meaning that we've turned away from him that we sit under his judgment because of that and that therefore it would be an appropriate thing or a possible thing to do for him to come and rescue us so today you know you say something like

Christ died for our sins and people say oh how touching what a touching gesture that would be unless you've got these categories in place of creation and accountability and turning away from God you can't make sense of the Christian message so perhaps what the person who's saying you know that X does it for you Y does it for me what we would need to do is do the sort of thing that Paul does in Acts 17 when he's speaking to people who don't have the Jewish Old Testament categories rattling around in their head we take it right back to the beginning say okay let me explain to you what sort of a world it is that we live in we didn't come here by chance there was one God and he made everything that there is he made you in fact and therefore your life is not your own you're his creature and he put you here and in fact you know that because even some of your people say we are his offspring and if you want their equivalence of that in our society but hold on you say we're his offspring yet you also make images that's not right is it because if you're dependent on

[79 : 20] God then what are you doing making little gods that are dependent on you that doesn't work and in the past God was indulgent with you but now God calls upon all people everywhere to repent and you better pay attention to that because he's set a day when he's going to come back and he's going to judge the world by the man that he's appointed and we know that that's true that I'm not just saying this because he's actually raised that man from the dead in history on a particular day there was this man who was raised from the dead so you see what he's got to the gospel he's got to the resurrection but he started right back at the beginning and he's built up a whole Christian world view into which the gospel makes sense so if we are living in a world created by God and he's in control and we're dependent on him and we know that but we've turned our back on him then God coming to die and rise again you can see why he would do that why he would need to do that so perhaps if someone is saying

Jesus does it for you and my thing does it for me what we'd need to do is go back and lay those foundations of the Christian world view within which the gospel makes sense the biggest problem doesn't seem to be most obvious in the future which expresses a desire to understand the world the biggest problem just seems to be a general apathy where people don't really care and don't want to understand the world and it's just about experience there's no good there's no bad it's just what you do and you know it seems to be a much bigger barrier people are thinking about their existence in the first place it makes it much easier doesn't it yes there are certain things that one can say to try and get under the skin of people who take that sort of an attitude depending of course on the context and on the relationship with the person you can show how tolerance is the most intolerance attitude that there is sort of along the lines of you believe that it's wrong to criticise other people's

views yes yes yes

I believe that it's wrong to criticise other people's views you're tolerant of every position but what about the Christian over there who believes that some people's views are better than others should we tolerate that well no if she's intolerant towards other people's views then we can't tolerate her okay well should we tolerate anyone then who is for whatever reason intolerant towards other people's views well no if they're intolerant they shouldn't be tolerated that's the whole point so then you say well tell me do you tolerate anyone who doesn't agree with you do you tolerate anyone who disagrees with the view that it is wrong to criticise other people's views and if you don't well then your tolerance is the most intolerant view of all because it doesn't seek to engage it doesn't seek to persuade like my Christianity does it just forecloses disagreement plus it appears that you can't keep your intolerance rule so you know you can try and help people to see some of the potential inconsistencies in the way that they think another thing that you could do is if someone is coming from a naturalistic view of the world and of course these things can be done in a very high handed cocky inappropriate way or they can be done in a gentle way that walks alongside the person and doesn't try to condemn them or get one over on them but to help them you could say do you believe that torturing babies is wrong

I guess most people if you push them long enough would come to an affirmative answer and then say well tell me why that's wrong and people may struggle of course it's wrong people will say that's a ridiculous thing but just tell me why just humour me for a moment explain to me why that's wrong and it may be that a person comes to the position where they realise I can't argue for that I can't Within my understanding of the world I can't say that torturing babies is wrong and that would be a significant moment of realisation for them so I guess there are some things that you can do when people are apathetic!

bearing in mind the need to engage with people and speak with them I find that when I get those replies where people will say that's fine for you I get my kicks or whatever I need out of doing this sort of thing very often a mishmash of different faiths of course cherry picking but the issue for me is when people say that is surely to do with the consequences of those things I mean if we only ever talk about what what's going on underneath the sun as you say in ecclesiastes then fine everyone can do whatever they want to do but surely the point is the eternal consequences of these surely that's where Christianity for instance would say well actually there's more to it than that otherwise you're welcome to get your kicks out of whatever god you make and that's the point otherwise you could debate cleverly this way by saying actually you're in fact very intolerant yourself but then what the point is actually there's an eternal consequence we believe to whatever god you've made absolutely and

[86 : 12] I think Paul again is helpful there so when he can get straight into Jesus Christ Jesus is the Christ Jesus is the Messiah when he's talking in Acts 13 to a group of Jews who know the Old Testament he doesn't start all that way back he says look let me prove to you from the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ or in Acts 2 where Peter is talking let me prove to you that Jesus I take it that in Acts 17 the reason that Paul doesn't do that is that he knows that if he goes straight to Jesus is the Christ he was raised from the dead you need to believe in him with a group of pagan philosophers what comes out of his mouth is not going to be what hits their ears because it's like saying Jesus died for your sins an understanding of the ideas that make sense of

Jesus dying for our sins then we're communicating the words but we're not communicating the idea the truth of the gospel so I completely agree with you if someone does understand a Christian view of the world then by all means present Christ crucified and plead with the person to repent and believe but if that understanding isn't there then of course God can always by grace work in the life of anyone and it may be that through presenting the death and resurrection of Christ he wonderfully regenerates the person but I think the biblical pattern is different I think the biblical pattern is that we take account of where people are starting from and build up a view of the world that makes sense of the gospel taking them from where they are to the cross starting however far back we need to start to make it make sense for them I think a big encouragement is the fact that men and women have conscience and conscience remains a great ally in this process as much as it may be damaged it remains a great ally true but I find that the modern person is definitely there's some conscience that is active in some ways but there's definitely with that sense of needing to be forgiven they wouldn't put that into words nowadays and I find that hence the tolerant society

I find that people are very willing to forgive themselves for things perhaps a way of coping with the workings inside of them of their conscience the conscience is about myself whereas when the Bible talks about guilt it's talking about the state of relationship between me and God it's something outside me so one of the things that we need to do I think is to help people see that we're not just saying when we're saying Jesus can forgive you and you'll have no guilt we're not saying Jesus can make you feel better about yourself although of course you will but it's not about yourself it's because you've realised who hears and you're living for him and glorifying him but it's actually something outside you that's changing it's your relationship with

God and I guess that's just one example of a word that when we use it and when most people use it we mean different things so if we talk about guilt you're guilty we're saying one thing but people are hearing something else so we need to be careful to explain what a Christian understanding of guilt is just build up this Christian worldview so that people can understand what we're saying when we talk about Jesus I'd be interesting to know where you think that philosophy is going now I don't know what it feels like in Cambridge but my feeling down here on the south coast is that people are beginning to say okay if language is what constructs meaning let's construct our own meaning so you get kind of Richard Dorkin clones who basically saying you know well okay modernism worked for a few hundred years why don't we say that modernism just declare this empiricist view to be the right one which is more or less what Richard

Dorkin is saying you know don't seem to realise it doesn't really make sense but you know on the other hand I marked an essay last year which was a preparation essay for a PhD which was on the syntax of the tarot and the basic it was a very good essay actually the best essay I've read for a long time but the basic principle of this was that science was a western invention which it seemed to me the objection to this argument though was yes but so is a PhD and so is a university in what possible category can a PhD make sense if you take such a view and it certainly is a problem it seems to me if you took this radical position you wouldn't do a PhD because a PhD is a construction of language again be careful

[92 : 31] David is not saying language is utterly useless or nothing ever means anything he's just saying that language is never exact it never delivers reality to us as it is there's always a remainder there's always something more so so of course if he were to be saying that language is utterly meaningless then that would be an absurd thing to try and communicate using words as you rightly said but I think he's saying something a little more subtle than that which is that language never gives us direct access to reality it it always adds its two pennant if you like we always get languages construction rather than some pure experience of what is out there and I think you can write meaningfully about that as I was saying earlier without completely undermining your position

I think the point I make is people are now saying if language is what we have then language constructs its own meaning rather than there is no meaning the meaning can be the meaning constructed by language sure sure you asked what is sort of happening in philosophy today philosophy like everything has its fashions and every generation tries to define itself in contradistinction to its forefathers that's the way people make reputations for themselves that's the way that things progress you know you read the best thing to be written today you try and improve on it you try and change it what's happening today as I very imperfectly understand it is that people are bored of this idea that language this view of language which caches itself out in Derrida and other thinkers as a very very circumspect ethics it's very difficult to be strident and to say anything with great confidence and the philosophers we're writing today are trying to regain that stridency and they're using different ways of doing that so for example rather than saying that reality such as it is is at bottom linguistic which is something that Derrida would say one philosopher writing at the moment is saying reality is at bottom mathematical and he uses the mathematical idea of set theory to try and understand being and for him the way that he argues that allows him a more sort of robust position he defines himself in contradistinction to Derrida as people do so these things are always moving and it's not that the people writing today completely reject everything that people like Derrida are saying because philosophy is quite incestuous you always sort of feed off the previous generation and change it a little bit so a lot of the trajectory that's been covered to get to people like Derrida is still there but it is always changing and well yeah he does quote Russell at points you know things come and go things come around again don't they it's like Ecclesiastes there's nothing new under the sun things just get recycled and tweaked so now need a subject people are now talking about post-to-post modernism don't know how many posts you've

got why do we have philosophers what's the point what's the point of philosophizing to answer questions like that but you haven't have you come to any conclusions philosophers don't come to conclusions things can we stop that there there there are other questions that they could be answered sort of in a little group or whatever so can we just

I must say on behalf of everybody thank you very much for a very stimulating and comprehensive presentation which we've really enjoyed and particularly those insights from the Bible I've found very very helpful and thank you for your answers so can we just say a thank you so if you'd like to be kept up to date on the next Be Thinking talk please see Anthony make sure he's got your email address and we'll keep you informed but just for now thank you very much thank you