

THEN WE SHALL KNOW EVEN AS WE ARE KNOWN

by Bob Allgood

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (I Cor 13:9-12).

All Scripture is important and none should be regarded as unimportant. To read through the Books of the Chronicles or the Old Testament history may not appeal to us as does the words of Jesus, nevertheless they are there for our learning. Jesus used the Old Testament Scriptures to teach during his earthly ministry. On the road to Emmaus he said to two of his sheep "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). Neither Jesus, Peter or Paul carried around with them a Red Letter Edition of the King James Bible!

Paul wrote, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's

wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 1:9-13).

ALL SCRIPTURE, both Old and New, was written by Holy men of God as they were moved by the Spirit of God. "ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect (Greek word artios = fresh, not stale, implies complete), and throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim 3:16-17). We must study to show ourselves approved unto God (not man) a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (II Tim 2:15). We are to search the Scriptures in order to prove all things taught by man and then hold fast to that which is good (and true), but reject the rest. We should not accept everything we hear without proving it from the Word of God, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive --" (Eph. 4:14). "Let God be true, but every man a liar"!

ALL SCRIPTURE is for the benefit of God's children and can be understood by those to whom God has given the ability to discern spiritual matters. All of us, if I may include myself, do not have the same ability to discern all spiritual truth to the same degree. We each have different gifts, as Paul teaches, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ - He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Til we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:7-13).

While ALL SCRIPTURE is for the benefit of God's children, ALL SCRIPTURE is not directed to, nor does it ALL apply to every child of God. Some of the Scriptures apply only to the Jewish world or economy under the Law, while others apply to the kingdom of God in time. The law and the prophets were until John (the Baptist): since that time the kingdom of God is preached, (Luke 16:16). While some Scriptures have a direct application only to the gospel church in time; others apply to the

church, the bride, the body of Christ, in glory. Many have dual application. While some Scriptures speak of "Eternal Salvation (eternal life)"; most Scriptures speak of Gospel or TIME SALVATION for God's people in this lifetime. Some Scriptures apply only to ministers, but most Scriptures apply to all of God's redeemed. We are given the responsibility to rightly divide the word of truth.

Likewise, SCRIPTURE does not apply to all mankind or the whole human race. The natural man who has not been born of God, who has not been quickened (made alive) by God's Spirit, has no Spiritual understanding at all. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spirit- ually discerned" and "Because the carnal (natural) mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (see I Cor. 1:14 & Rom 8:7). Jesus said in John 8:47, "He that is of God (born of God) heareth God's words: ye hear them not, because ye are not of_God_(not born of God)". Again, Jesus said "Ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep -- My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me".

This is not to say that the natural man can not know and quote Scripture. The Devil himself quoted Scripture to Jesus Christ (Matt 4:1-11). Devils believe in God and tremble (James 2:19). Demons called Jesus the Son of the most high God (Mark 5:7). Satan has ministers who are transformed as "ministers of righteousness" (II Cor 11:13-15). False prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, quote much Scripture with just enough lies to turn truth into damnable heresies (II Peter 2:1-3). It only takes a little arsenic in a glass of pure water to kill you. Knowing and quoting Scriptures is not evidence of Spiritual understanding or discernment. It is only evidence of human intelligence; the ability to read and memorize words !

Since the natural man not born of God can not hear or receive God's word, and since demons and devils know, believe and quote Scripture, why do some say that the hearing and believing of the gospel causes men to be born of God? The gospel (the Scriptures) is not God's means of giving life! Jesus said "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me,

that ye might have life" (John 5:39-40). Eternal life is in Jesus Christ himself ! The gospel "is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:11-12). That is so plain you would have to go to a Seminary and get some liberal professor to help you misunderstand it. The gospel brings knowledge of ETERNAL LIFE to the child of God in this time world.

The Gospel is "Good News" for the repentant sinner who mourns and grieves over his sinful condition. The Gospel is good news of our "Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light (hath made it known) through the gospel" (II Tim 1:10). The gospel or the Scriptures are for the edification and building up of the child of God and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through the Word of God that the child of God learns how to behave himself in this life and in the house of God, which is the church of the living God (I Tim 3:14-16).

When the elect of God are born of God, they are enabled (made able) to be led of God's Spirit and to hear God's word. Jesus said to the disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears for they hear" (read Matthew 13:10-17). Paul said "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom 8:14). No one has complete Spiritual understanding the very instant of being born of God, no more than infants have complete knowledge of all the things they will learn as they live and grow up in life. They are given the Spirit of God, (Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his [Rom 8:9]) who is the Spirit of Truth, and guide into all truth (John 16:13). They become vessels subject to the laws of God and Spiritual understanding according to the will and purpose of God. A learning process begins, "as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:1-3). The degree to which one has Spiritual understanding will depend upon their study of the Scriptures AND God granting them understanding.

Spiritual understanding comes from God! Many disciples spent better than three years under the personal ministry of the Lord himself, and they did not fully understand all things. We read in Luke 24:44, "And he said unto them, These are the

words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures". Paul was three years in the desert of Arabia being taught directly by Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:15-18) and he said "now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known". Paul prayed for the Ephesians that God "may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling -" (Eph.1:17-23). Many renown men of God, too many to name, who have been known for their "deep understanding" of the word of God, studied the word of God for years and never laid claim to "knowing it all".

There is no such thing as an Instant Bible Scholar. I recently saw an advertisement on television by Jerry Falwell offering a one year Bible study via video tapes that was almost guaranteed to make you a Bible Scholar in one year. We were told much the same thing in Bible college about the C.I. Scofield Reference Bible and his new revelations; how that it would make us Bible Scholars. I have spent years unlearning the false doctrines that are taught therein. Doctrines which our Lord, nor his Apostles, nor any of our Primitive church Fathers ever taught. It was only after I put away my Scofield Bible and stopped depending on "human commentaries" that God began to open my eyes to the truth. I soon learned that what I thought I had known, I didn't know as I ought to know. I knew only in part.

Paul wrote concerning idol worship, "If any man think that he knoweth anything he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (I Cor.8:1-2). I believe this principal applies to many aspects of our Spiritual understanding - or the lack of it. God says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). In 3 Romans 11:33 we read, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?". God's judgements (the Greek word "krima" = decisions) are unsearchable, and his ways are past finding out! God's ways and thoughts are not as

our ways and thoughts, and we sometimes think we know when in fact we don't know as we ought to know. Why then do men try to make decisions for God or try to establish ways in which God must act ??

I believe the reason for this is that we often think with earthly thoughts and in earthly ways and not with Spiritual or Godly thoughts and ways. We have a natural tendency, with this earthen vessel of flesh as our tabernacle, to look for natural answers instead of Spiritual ones. It is not uncommon to hear ministers pronounce someone as being born again because of some act they have done or some condition that has been met in their mind or according to their standard. I can not find anywhere in the word of God where Scripture pinpoints the exact moment or time when someone has been born again (i.e. born of God, quickened, made alive by God's Spirit). The fact is, Jesus says "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

Now unless I have totally missed it, this seems to teach me that man can only know the results of one being born of the Spirit, but can not tell when or where one is born of the Spirit. God's Spirit gives to his elect Spiritual birth at the time determined by God himself. Man makes no determination in this matter. There is no Scriptural grounds for man making any such pronouncements. We have never been given the privilege or responsibility to determine when one of God's elect is born of God. We have been given the responsibility to examine the results thereof for making determination of fellowship and association. Since the quickening of the dead is the work of God, I am satisfied it is done timely, and that this matter should be left in his hands.

When Paul says "For we know in part and we prophesy in part" I believe he is speaking of the Apostles and the Prophets who prophesied or spoke under divine inspiration in writing the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament. It is also a statement that partly applies to us today. The Old Testament was already written and in tact. The New was then being written under the same director as the Old, the Spirit of Truth. The word prophesy means to speak under divine inspiration in the

exercise of the office of a prophet (see Eph 4:11). The offices of Apostles and Prophets ended with the completion of the New Testament. There has not been and will not be any more divine revelations or men speaking under divine inspiration. If there is then the Scriptures must continually be rewritten and updated, and what is written would become unreliable with the expectation of "something new".

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. What we have in the Scriptures is all the DIVINE REVELATION we are going to get from God !! If you hear someone say "God revealed to me something that is not written in his word -", RUN FOR YOUR LIFE or avoid them like a rattlesnake, BECAUSE THEY ARE A LIAR and probably a minister of Satan! You can hear these kind of "weirdos" on television everyday. Sadly there are millions who listen and eat it up. Paul said "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lust shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and they shall be turned unto fables". "For we know in part and we prophesy in part" applies to us today to this extent: we know only in part what the Scriptures teach, and as a result of that, we can speak only in part what the Scriptures teach. Some men's part is greater than others and some men's part much less than others. It does not mean that there are not some things we know in full with an absolute certainty. There are many things revealed to us in God's word which we are to express DOGMATICALLY in the true sense of HOLDING TO DOGMA without the haughty spirit of arrogance usually associated with the word dogmatic.

WE KNOW there is ONE true and living GOD: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and these three are one (not three in one, I John 5:7); who is the CREATOR (Gen 1:1, John 1:1-3, Heb. 1:1-2); who is JEHOVAH the I AM THAT I AM, (see Exodus 3:6, 3:14 and 6:3); who is ETERNAL (Isa. 57:15), OMNISCIENCE [all- knowing] (I Chron. 28:9, I John 3:20, Rev. 2:23), and OMNIPRESENCE [ever- present] (Psalms 139:7-12), and OMNIPOTENT [all powerful], SOVEREIGN, and controls all things, and does all things according to His own will and His own purpose, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, what doest thou? (Jere. 32:17, 26-27, Dan. 4:34-35, Eph. 1:11 and Romans 9:18-24).

I am not an Absolute Predestinarian, but My God is not subject to the will of man "allowing him" to do anything. God does according to His own will and purpose, and the things I do are done "the Lord willing". Scriptures teach that all things are done according to the purpose and determinate counsel of God (Acts 2: 22-24). God is not the cause of sin, man is. God is Holy and Righteous and without sin. God forgives the sin of His people and is the salvation of His elect. God judges and punishes the wicked. My God is the cause of light, darkness, judgement and peace (Isa.45:5-7). "The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil [evil = judgement]" (Prov. 16:4, Isa. 43:7 & Rom 9:18-24).

WE KNOW all of mankind are depraved sinners by nature, born under the con- demnation of Sin and Death, born spiritually dead and subject to physical death, and only by the grace of God are some chosen of God in Christ and given Eternal Life (John 17:1-3, I John 5:11-12). The quickening or being born of God is a distinct act of God which God performs in the life of his Elect, at some time between conception and death. It does not come through the will or choice of man, nor by the preaching of the Gospel. Read John 1:11-13, 3:3-8, 5:21-29, 17:1-3. Eph 1:3-14, 2:1-10, II Timothy 1:7-11.

WE KNOW that God, according to His eternal purpose in Christ, chose out a people in Christ before the foundation of the world, known as The Elect; (Eph.1:3-6, Titus 1:2); a people made up from every kindred, tribe, tongue and nation; too numerous for man to number, even as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven, (Eph.3:1-12, Rev.5:9-10). "Before the foundation of the world" means before the world and Adam were created. GOD'S CHOICE was made in Eternity Past, and nothing could ever or can ever change or alter that CHOICE, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son -- Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Romans 8:28-30).

Those whom God did not choose are called the wicked in the Bible, and they deny God, hate God, hate God's laws and God's only Son Jesus Christ (see John 15:23-24, I John 2:22-23a).

THEY DO NOT WANT TO KNOW GOD, love God, or obey God, and have never had or ever will have a desire to do so. (see (Prov. 10:24 & 11:23, John 8:42). They have no fear of God and His judgement and no desire for God's righteousness (Romans 1:18-32, 3:10-18). The wicked 5 may be moral people, even religious people who give lip service to God, but their heart is far from him (Matt 15:7-9, 7:21-23). God's choice was not based on what He foreknew man would or would not do or want to do. If that were so, then God's choice would have been based on man's works. But Scripture says it is "not by works of righteousness we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us-" (Titus 3:5 & Eph. 2:8-10). The wicked do enjoy some blessings from God, "For he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust". But "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalms 7:11).

WE KNOW that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God; The Word of God and God the Word (John 1:1-3); God manifested in the flesh as the Son of Man (see Matt 16:13-16, I Tim 3:16); The Christ, The Messiah, the promised Saviour, came to this earth to die for His sheep, the Elect, and to save His people from their sin (Matt 1:21, John 12:27-33); and this he did, for God was in Christ reconciling the world (the Elect) unto himself (see Rom. 5:6-10 and II Cor. 5:17-19). Christ did not die for all of mankind. He gave his life a ransom for many (Matt 20:28, Mark 10:45). Christ died only for the Elect of God, His Sheep (John 10:11-18), and these and these only with none ever being lost, will spend eternal glory with God in our Lord Jesus Christ. (John 6:35-40, 10:27-30, Romans 8:35-39, 9:22-24).

WE KNOW that He died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day (and we deny the "Good Friday" heresy, Matt 12:40) according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen after He came forth from the grave (I Corinthians 15:1-8, 15:12-20, John 20:17, 21:19-29). That He ascended back to heaven and to the glory He had with His Father before the world was (John 17:1-3) and that He NOW reigns as King of King and Lord of Lords (I Tim 6:13-16, Heb 1:1-3, 8-13, Rev. 3:21, 5:9-14).

WE KNOW that He is coming again for His redeemed, for His elect. Our text says "For we know in part -- but when that

which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away". It seems to me, (notice how un-dogmatic I can be) "that which is perfect" is not referring to the gospel, which is perfect, but it had already come and was being preached in part. "That which is perfect" is not referring to the first appearing of Christ, who is perfect, for He had already come and He shall never be done away with. It seems to me, "that which is perfect" is referring to the ultimate conformation of the elect of God to the image of Christ Jesus which will take place when this corruptible has put on incorruption and this mortal has put on immortality - this flesh shall be done away with.

This will happen when Christ, who is perfect, and has by the one sacrifice of himself perfected forever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14), shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb 9:28). When that which is perfect is come - "For the Lord himself shall descend from heave with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and re- main shall be caught up together with them --". "Behold I show 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" and we shall all "meet the Lord in the air: and there shall we ever be with the Lord - wherefore comfort one another with these words".

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known". I believe the BUT THEN is referring to that CHANGE that takes place in the Resurrection and Translation spoken of in I Cor. 15:50-57 & I Thess 4.13-18

If I am right, and I believe I am, but I am trying not to sound so dogmatic, this teaches me that as long as we are in this "earthen vessel" we will be limited by the frailties of our human flesh and mind in our Spiritual understanding from knowing all things perfectly (i.e. completely). We have the the word of God - the Scriptures, for our edification, doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Sound Doctrine is taught in the word of God, and we should be "dogmatic" (without arrogance) about the sound doctrine we know. But we do not know all things. No human has ever mastered the word of God.

Therefore we live with hope in this earthen vessel, knowing that we know in part and prophesy in part; but then shall we know even as we are known. (BA)

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