

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD

by Bob Allgood

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ". Philippians 3:8

I do not claim to be knowledgeable in the Greek language. But by doing a Word Study I have learned the words KNOW, KNOWN, KNEW and KNOWLEDGE all come from several different Greek words and are used many different ways in the Scriptures. An example of this is I Corinthians 8:1-3: "we know (Eido = conscious of a fact) that we all have knowledge (Gnosis = learning). Knowledge (intellect) puffeth up, but charity (Agape = God's love) edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth (Eido = understands spiritually) anything, he knoweth (Ginosko = from experience) nothing yet as he ought to know (Ginosko = absolutely from experience). But if any man love God, the same is known (Ginosko = absolutely known - Cf II Tim. 2:19) of him". There is a difference between KNOWING intellectually, and KNOWING BY EXPERIENCE. There is HEAD KNOWLEDGE which comes from "Learning About" and there is A SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE which is made KNOWN only by the Holy Spirit of God.

There is a difference between THE EXCELLENCY OF

THE KNOWLEDGE that Paul is talking about, and the **INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE** or **LEARNING** that puffeth up. Paul is not only speaking of **THE SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE** that the child of God has in time, but he is also speaking of the **EXCELLENCY** (the highest form, supreme or superior knowledge) that child of God will know from experience when he departs this earthen vessel and goes home to be with God (Read II Cor.5:1-8). Paul **KNEW** (from a personal experience) whom he had believed while he lived here on earth. He also looked forward to the time when he would **KNOW** more perfectly, as he says, "That I may **KNOW HIM** and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made con- formable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil 3:10-11). While we have this hope in time "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: - the things which are eternal (II Cor. 4: 17-18). "For now we see through a glass, darkly (not fully understanding); but then face to face (after the resurrection - see I COR. 15:50-54): now I **KNOW** (Ginosko = by experience) in part; but then shall I **KNOW** (from an absolute experience) even as also I **AM KNOWN** (absolutely by God).

Most people **KNOW ABOUT** God - most people **KNOW ABOUT** Jesus Christ. In this country it is difficult for one to grow up beyond a few years before one hears about God or about Christ. The way most people profane the name of God and Christ as curse words, a child hardly gets out of diapers before they know how to use God's name in vain. If they are fortunate enough to escape the profane language of ungodly parents, they soon pick it up at school or elsewhere in this ungodly world. Anyone can learn about God and Christ from television or from our "money" which has (presently) printed on it "In God We Trust". There are very few in this world who don't know about God and Christ. The "excellent knowledge" under consideration is not knowing **ABOUT**, but from experience.

Paul the Apostle knew about God and Christ before HE KNEW CHRIST. In the name of God, he persecuted the Church of the living God, and put to death those who believed in Christ. Paul held the clothes of those who stoned Steven to death while Steven preached Jesus Christ. (see Acts 7:58). Paul knew about Christ, but he did not KNOW Christ until Jesus introduced himself on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-6). Then Paul began to have a personal, intimate, spiritual knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord that would grow and grow until Paul could say "I know whom I have believed".

There is a big difference between KNOWING ABOUT SOMEONE and KNOWING SOME- ONE. I KNOW ABOUT Abraham, Moses, David, Peter and Paul. I have READ and STUDIED ABOUT each of them to some degree. I suppose I could write a book ABOUT what I KNOW ABOUT these men. But the truth is I DON'T KNOW any of them. Furthermore, it is not critical that I KNOW any of them. What is critical is: First that I AM KNOWN OF GOD and CHRIST. In this I have no part. If I am not known of God; if I am not one of God's chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world -- I can not make myself such by doing anything. Not by knowledge (learning) or by doing deeds of righteousness. Now I have a "hope of eternal life, which God, who can not lie, promised before the world began". This hope I have by the witness of God's Spirit, for "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). The second critical witness is that I KNOW MY LORD, MY GOD, MY SAVIOUR, even if in time it is only in part, that in eternity I will KNOW EVEN ALSO AS I AM KNOWN. Hallelujah !! and Amen !!

The gift of Eternal Life does NOT come by knowing about God and Christ from the reading of the Scriptures. This is not to diminish the importance of reading Scriptures. We do far too little reading and study of the Scriptures. But 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 NOT in a human knowledge of the scriptures. Again Jesus said "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:1-3). John wrote "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON (Note: In His Son, not in the record - ba). He that hath THE SON hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:11-12).

Unregenerate Jews had heard about Christ - they knew about God and Christ. In John 8 we read about Jews claiming God as their Father. Jesus said to them "If God were your Father, ye would love me -- Ye are of your father the devil -- He that is of God heareth God's words; ye hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:39-47). These Jews knew about God but DID NOT KNOW GOD - because they were not of God. Again, some unbelieving Jews said to Jesus "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly". Jesus said to them "I told you, and ye believed not --- because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you" (John 10:24-26). Does anybody in their right mind think any other gospel preacher can get the message across better than Jesus. These Jews had heard about Christ directly from Christ himself. Who can do better than that? Jesus obviously did not give Eternal Life to these Jews who had read and heard about Him, because they were not of His Sheep and could not believe because they were not of His Sheep. Eternal Life is not HEAD KNOWLEDGE or LEARNING gained from reading Scriptures about Christ or hearing the Gospel about Christ – Eternal Life is IN Christ Himself.

The Gospel informs God's people of the great and gracious salvation provided for them in Christ. The Gospel brings to light "life and immortality" promised to God

elect before the foundation of the world (See II Timothy 1:7-12). The Scriptures are given to provide understanding to those whom God has given life by his Spirit. The natural unregenerate person, who has not the Spirit of God, can not understand the Scriptures (which are Spiritual) for these things are foolishness unto them. The Scriptures must be SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED (Read I Corinthians 1:9-16). Some of the worlds most renown infidels have had great head knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, but have no spiritual knowledge of Christ whom they deny. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (I John 2:23). Only by the Holy Spirit can one KNOW CHRIST.

Paul wrote, "Because the carnal mind (the mind of the natural unregenerate person who has not been quickened by the Holy Spirit of God) is enmity against God". "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" - "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:5-17). In John 14, Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but YE KNOW HIM; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, I will not leave you comfortless, I WILL COME TO YOU". John said "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in them. And hereby WE KNOW that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us". And again John wrote "Hereby KNOW WE that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 3:24 & 4:13). Only in the Holy Spirit can we have communion with God and a taste of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ our Lord in this time world, KNOWING by that same Spirit God shall also quicken our mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11).

How often do we doubt what we know? Thanks be unto our heavenly Father that the foundation of God standeth

**sure having this seal, “God knoweth them that are His”.
Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep,
and am known of mine” (John 10:14),**

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