

THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS

Refuting the Age of Accountability Heresy

by Bob Allgood

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his"

Here is an eternal truth that no man can change, not by will, word or works ! Men may deny it, try to pervert it, cast doubt upon it, add to it or take away from it, but this truth stands, The Lord knoweth them that are his. Everything that man knows about God, that which is revealed in nature and that which is revealed in Scripture, is sealed by this truth, The Lord knoweth them that are his. Every attribute of God, all that God is, all that God has done and all that God will do, is sealed with this truth, The Lord knoweth them that are his. Just as sure as God created the heavens and the earth, The Lord knoweth them that are his. Just as sure as the sun shines upon the earth, The Lord knoweth them that are his. Just as sure as Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again from the grave the third day according to the Scriptures, The Lord knoweth them that are his. This is an absolute, immutable, truth about God, who can not lie, The Lord knoweth them that are his.

God knows all things ! Therefore nothing man does or thinks can surprise God. God does not *wonder* about things as we do. We know that God has thoughts because He says, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts". With this in mind, I have often *wondered* what God thinks of those who devise ways, by physical means or interpretation of Scripture, to bring new found children to His door as if to say "look God I have found some more for you to claim for your own".

Arminians teach that God is looking for souls to save if only they can get the lost to believe the gospel and accept Jesus. Calvinists teach that God depends on man to get the gospel message to the elect so they can hear, believe and be eternally saved. While these groups use different approaches, they both use the same gospel means for souls to be born again, and must of necessity make special exceptions for all infants and little children, etc., on the grounds of an imaginary age of accountability. David asked, "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? - He that sitteth in the heaven shall laugh: The Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalms 2:1-4). *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

The Context Surrounding Our Text

While this declaration, of comfort and assurance to the elect child of God, will stand alone as a landmark truth, the context

(II Tim 2:19 (KJV)), magnifies the importance of the words, The Lord knoweth them that are his. Paul made this declaration in response to some "Who concerning the truth have erred (i.e. who were teaching false doctrine) and overthrow the faith of some" of God's little children. That situation is certainly amplified in these 'last days *when* perilous times shall come' (II Tim 3:1).

Anyone who truly desires to learn the qualifications, duties and responsibilities of a God called minister should study the two letters Paul wrote to Timothy. In both letters much is said about the need to preach sound doctrine, the need to avoid fables, profane and vain babblings, and to guard against those departing from the faith in the last days (Cf I Tim. 4:1-16, II Tim 4:1-5).

Using II Timothy 2:15-19 to establish the context we find that Paul instructs Timothy "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (V. 15). Notice three (3) things taught in this verse. (1): It is a shame for a minister not to study the word of Truth (i.e. the Scriptures - II Tim 3:16-17). As ministers, if we fail to study, we will surly be ashamed before God in time when we stand before God's people to preach the word. I speak from experience, it is indeed a shame to stand before God's hungry sheep and lambs and have only cold left-overs to feed them. There is only one gospel for ministers to preach, but even the children of Israel were given fresh manna every day. (2): This charge qualifies how much we should glean from the word of man. Ministers are far better off reading "Thus saith the Lord" in the word of truth than reading "Thus said the commentator" who, being only a common tatter, is subject to error and lies.. (3): Last, but not least, this makes it clear the purpose of Bible study is not for a minister to impress man with how much he knows, but to show himself approved unto God. You can usually tell when ministers are trying to impress man. Their messages will usually have a dynamic sounding title, be very technical or complex and present some new or novel interpretation of Scriptures, such as "The Resurrection is past already" OR "All Infants and Little Children Are Eternally Safe Because They Have Not Done Any Works of Wickedness or Reached The Age of Accountability Whereby They Become Responsible For Their Sins".

Sometimes these new and novel interpretations of Scripture are only temporary misunderstandings or errors that can be corrected with a little more study and 'rightly dividing the word'. Sometimes help from others who have the proper understanding is needed to correct the error. Scripture teaches when a brother goes astray or is overtaken with a fault "ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1-5). I imagine most ministers have at one time or another

experienced correction from another brother. This is why "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (II Tim 2:24-26). While we should never be hasty to condemn and convict simple misunderstanding of Scripture, we should be ready to quickly offer correction in the spirit of meekness.

However, if these false interpretations of Scripture turn into 'profane and vain babblings *which* increase unto more ungodliness' they are to be shunned (V. 16), because their word (i.e. the profane and vain babblings) 'will eat as doth a canker' (V. 17). The word translated canker comes from the Greek word meaning *ulcer* or *gangrene*, which like cancer, if left unattended will kill you ! 'Profane and vain babblings' are heresies that divide God's people and overthrow the faith of some. They are to be shunned and not fellowshiped, not even in the name of kindness, longsuffering or brotherly love

In my opinion the devil wins a real victory in a church when he can get God's people to accept and live with 'profane and old wives fables' instead of demanding the truth be preached. This can happen when God's people are ignorant of God's word and/or apathetic toward knowing the Truth; not fearing the timely judgment of God and cry peace, peace when there is no peace. This will happen when God's people (1) have left their first love, (2) have accepted the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, (3) have a name that they liveth, but are dead, and (4) think themselves rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. This will not happen when God's people are (1) Poor in spirit, humble and abased before the Lord, (2) Mourning and sorrowful over sin and the effects of sin, (3) Meek in the hands of God, (4) Hungering and thirsting after righteousness, (5) Merciful and compassionate to others, (6) Pure in heart, and not full of worldliness, (7) Living in the kingdom of God; living in the peace and righteousness and joy of the Holy Ghost, (Rom 14:16-19) and (8) Being persecuted for righteousness sake (read Matt. 5:1-12).

Paul did not consider it improper, harsh or mean spirited to name the names of Hymenaeus and Philetus (Alexander - see I Tim.1:20) as two brothers guilty of blasphemy and teaching heresy (V. 17). God's word does not hesitate to name names and identify the sin committed, so that we can learn thereby and fear God. Some today have adopted a form of protocol for preachers in the stand that is so politically correct they will never offend any one, not even the Devil himself. If I could afford it, I know several preachers I would send a copy of the new Politically Correct Bible. I understand the publisher has removed all personal pronouns and changed the wording so no one will be offended, no male or female or those in between. While the Scriptures teach us to be kind and considerate, they

also teach us that Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity (Heb. 1:8-9). He made a direct attack against sin (Matthew 23:13-33). Jesus did not tip-toe through the tulips with honey and syrup dripping down both sides of his mouth trying to manipulate his words in order to be politically correct. Neither do I find where any of the Apostles who wrote the New Testament attempted to be politically correct.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter time some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim 4:1). As much as this was applicable in Timothy's lifetime, it has multiplied a thousand times in our present evil days. Paul was not talking about "false prophets or wolves" which appear in sheep's clothing departing from the faith. Such have never been partakers of the faith (Matt 7:15-20). You can not depart from something you have never been part of. In my opinion the term false prophet is often misused and misapplied to brothers "Who concerning the truth have erred" (V. 18).

The word err, error and erred can mean to deceive; to seduce; to wander; to go astray or to have strayed from the faith (Cf I Tim. 6:10, 21). Such going astray could be from ignorance or a deliberate act. It seems to me the acceptance or rejection of correction by the one gone astray would determine his real credentials. The words depart from the faith carry with them the meaning of a deliberate revolt against the faith. In my opinion, for one to err concerning the truth, and to remain in that error, refusing correction, is the same as to revolt from and against the faith. Such a person then proves himself to be a heretic, having refused the first and second admonition (Titus 3:10-11)

This appears to be the case with Hymenaeus and Philetus. They clearly departed from the faith and began to teach heresy, overthrowing the faith of some, and when they rejected all efforts of correction, Paul delivered them over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme (see I Tim. 1:20). This should remind us that, "If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27)

In my opinion Hymenaeus and Philetus were not *wolves in sheep's clothing* (i.e. false prophets) but they were heretics. Our English word false is an adjective that describes. It comes from the Greek word pseudo and means *fake, impostor, phony, and pretender*. The word false appears 28 times in the New Testament - always preceding such words as *accusers, apostles, brethren, Christ's, prophets, teachers and witnesses*. We can not know the eternal destiny of such people - and

should not attempt to judge that - for certainly some of God's elect have at one time or another, in a time of ignorance or weakness, been false accusers, false teachers and false witnesses. But "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth". Thanks be unto God, The Lord knoweth them that are his.

However, having said that, Jesus makes it very clear in Matthew 7:15-20 that a false prophet (in the strict sense of the word) is not a child of God. He called them "*wolves in sheep's clothing*" and "*corrupt trees*" that bring forth corrupt fruit, which are hewn down, and cast into the fire. Peter teaches this same destiny for false prophets (whom he also calls *false teachers*), when he says, "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness ---" (II Peter 2:1-13). John clearly identifies false prophets as spirits that are not of God — (I John 4:1-3). Paul identifies false apostles as being deceitful workers and ministers of Satan transformed as the ministers of righteousness. Certainly no one should classify any of these as ministers of God who have departed from the faith or who have erred concerning the truth. It seems obvious to me that Paul would not turn a minister of Satan over to Satan in order that he may learn not to blaspheme !! But when a child of God is disciplined and put out of the church, into the world, he is delivered unto Satan for the destruction (judgment) of the flesh that he may learn not to sin (see I Cor. 5:1-5). The purpose of church discipline, is to bring about repentance and restoration.

THOSE WHO TEACH FALSE DOCTRINES OVERTHROW THE FAITH OF SOME -- BUT NOT THE FAITH OF GOD

Paul said the false teachings by Hymenaeus and Philetus, 'overthrow the faith of some'. (V. 18) I am so thankful it does not say that such false teachings can 'overthrow the faith of God'. If I understand the Scriptures correctly (and I believe I do on this point) God the Father had faith in his Son Jesus Christ to finish the work of eternal redemption which he came to do, and the Son had faith in the Father that he would raise him up from the dead and glorify him with the glory he had before the world began (John 17:1-5, Romans 3:3, 20-27). Every elect child of God, was foreknown of God and chosen by God in Christ Jesus before the world began (Eph. 1:3-6), and is eternally safe as the result of that choice. Every elect child of God was predestinated to *ultimately* be conformed to the image of his Son *in glory* (Romans 8:28-30). Every elect child of God, without exception, (regardless of age, stature, ability or condition) is saved by grace through the faith of God, which God imparts to each one at the instant he/she is quickened, {i.e. made alive from being dead in trespasses and sins} by

God himself, sometime between conception and death. (John 5:21-27, 6:37-39, 17:1-3, Eph. 2:1-9).

Illustrations of this truth are plentiful: Jeremiah before conception (Jere. 1:4-5), John the Baptist while still in the womb (Luke 1:15), David while still sucking on his mothers breasts (Psalms 22:9), The thief who died on a cross next to Jesus (Luke 23:39-43). No one knows the exact time the elect are born of God's Spirit (John 3:8) but we have the assurance that ALL will be quickened. Therefore knowing that ALL elect are eternally safe and eternally saved by God's grace and God's faith there is no scriptural basis for some new method of security such as A Magic Age of Accountability.

This discussion is not over whether infants and little children are eternally safe or whether all infants who die in infancy go to heaven or not. All of God's elect are eternally safe, and ultimately saved. All of God's elect go to heaven. No one with any scriptural understanding goes around playing God and pronouncing the eternal destiny of anyone, much less infants and little children. But the teaching that all infants and little child were elected by God as a category because they have not done works of wickedness or reached the age where they are responsible for being sinners, flies in the face of the doctrine of total depravity and the landmark passages on election according to God's purpose.

DEPRAVITY AND ELECTION

One of the fundamental doctrines which magnifies the truth of God's Sovereign Grace is the total depravity of mankind. By depravity, it is meant the sin nature of mankind received from Adam, the condemnation before God because of that sin nature, and man's complete inability to recover himself by any natural means from this condition. Depravity is not determined by the degraded lifestyle one lives, but rather the degraded lifestyle (or works of wickedness) is the evidence of depravity, just as works of righteousness is the evidence that one is righteous (Gal. 5:16-24, I John 3:7). The lemon tree does not become a lemon tree when it produces lemons, it was already a lemon tree. A good tree brings forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit (Matt. 7:17-19).

While the word depravity is not found in the Scriptures, the principle is clearly taught. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). The words "for that all have sinned" mean that in Adam all have sinned. "In Adam all die". All of mankind (i.e. Adam's posterity) is conceived in sin (Psalms 51:5) and are by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). Because of Adam's sin, God declared "all are under sin" and "there is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:9-10). Depravity does not determine the eternal destiny of

any one. If it did all mankind would go to hell, for there is none righteous. But God, in love, mercy and sovereign grace according to his own will and purpose chose a certain number of mankind unto eternal glory (Rom. 9:22-24). Hath not the potter power over the clay ?? These beautiful doctrines sound hard to many of God's people at first because they have never been taught the truth.

The sinful nature of mankind is evident at an early age of childhood. Children do not have to be taught to lie, they do it by nature, as David wrote, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psalms 58:3). Some say, that the wicked in this verse speaks of the non-elect referred to in Scripture as the wicked. It is true that the non-elect are called the wicked and the elect are called the righteous many places in Scripture. But it is also true that all men (mankind) are liars and without exception telling a lie is wickedness, and that the righteous do wickedly when-ever they sin, and that God hath declared in Adam "All have sinned and come short" "for there is none righteous no not one". Man can not escape the reality of his sinful depravity with a play on words.

DEPRAVITY INCLUDES ALL

The none righteous no not one must of necessity include all infants conceived in the womb, little babies, little children and all other persons, even if man may think some could stand before God having done no works of wickedness. It makes no difference what man may think or what false doctrine he may dream up about that unborn fetus or that innocent looking new born baby, or little child, or the best person in town. In the sight of God there are none righteous no not one, without the righteousness of Christ. If any one had any self righteousness to claim in the sight of God, it would appear as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Man in his best state is altogether vanity and less than nothing.

Some might say of that fetus, or that infant, or that child, or that good person, he/she has never violated God's ten commandments. God says, "By the deeds of the law (doing or not doing) there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). The law (ten commandments) was never given to establish man's righteousness before God (Gal.3:21). By the law comes the knowledge of sin and our inability to be righteous. The law was added because of man's sin, man's transgression, of the law of sin and death by Adam (Gen. 2:17, 3:6, Gal. 3:19-27). Therefore no man, no infant, no child, no one, is saved by works of righteousness (Titus 3:5-7). nor the absence of works of wickedness.

The only righteousness that satisfies God is his own righteousness, which he imputes to every elect child of God at the time they are quickened or made alive in Christ. (Romans 3:20-27). This is performed by an operation of God, a circumcision made without hands, (Col. 2:9-15) wherein God cuts away the condemnation of death received from our natural father Adam (Rom. 8:1-2) and imputes and declares his own righteousness for the remission of sin (Rom. 4:6-8).

The doctrine of election does not teach (as some charge) that God chose a certain number of Adam's posterity to go to hell and a certain number to go to heaven. But rather God chose a multitude that no man can number (Rev. 7:9-10) to be redeemed by Christ from their sins (Matt 1:21) to be presented unto himself as a glorious church (Eph. 5:27), and a purchased possession unto the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:3-14). God's choice was made before the foundation of the world based on whom he foreknew (Rom 8:28-30). God knows and foreknows all things, but His electing foreknowledge is of whom not what works of righteousness or wickedness any one would do or not do. (I Peter. 2:1)

DOCTRINAL EMERGENCY – DIAL 911

With all of his self attained knowledge and wisdom, man can write voluminous books of Systematic Theology and volumes upon volumes of Commentaries. Man can attempt to impress others with his high-minded high sounding technical terms and vain philosophies. Man can state his ideas and rest his case with his new and novel interpretation of the scriptures. But God establishes the truth and destroys all false teaching about election with twin boys. I have said it before, and I'll say it again, when you have trouble understanding the doctrine of salvation by grace, or if you want to prove or disprove what someone is saying about the doctrine of election DIAL 911. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth (Romans 9:11) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated".