

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST

"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)

Please Read Full Text: Philippians 3:4-14

Paul is comparing or weighing in a scale, as it were; all of his religious background and status; his ancestry and pedigree; his own self righteousness in the law, and his zeal for God (which was without knowledge - see Romans 10:1-4) - against the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He points out that he was circumcised the eighth day; he was of the stock of Israel (of the seed of Abraham); he was of the tribe of Benjamin; he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; he was a Pharisee (a separatist and the most strict of the sects of the Jews); and concerning the law he was blameless. He then concluded that all of his past; all of his upbringing; all of his religious background and self righteousness was as nothing, even as DUNG, compared to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Paul is speaking here of a personal, intimate, spiritual knowledge of MY LORD JESUS CHRIST that transcends a mere head knowledge gained from childhood training, higher education or family tradition.

Many of the Seminary Educated Ministers (of which stock I was) like to see their Titles placed before their names, and the Letters of their Degrees follow their names. It is not uncommon to see where Right Reverend Father Fool'em All, B.A., B.D., Th.M., Th.D., LL.D., Ph.D., D.D. is the Founder and Pastor of the Mixed Multitude Church. I don't know what all of these letters stand for, I never got that far. I did earn a B.S. degree from a secular University, but when I got to Bible College, I got a B.A. degree for a BAD ATTITUDE and I never got a D.D. degree, and I am glad I didn't. According to Isaiah 56:10 that D.D. could stand for a DUMB DOG that can not bark. I know it stands for Doctor of Divinity, and after hearing some of them preach, I think they should have stuck with their Candy making. I know that Paul says, you can count all these titles and degrees as "DUNG" compared to the EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST MY LORD.

Since becoming a Primitive Baptist, I have heard many Old Baptist say "I have been a Primitive Baptist all my life". I mean no disrespect to anyone who has been a member of the Primitive Baptist church since childhood, I wish I had been. But, Paul says you can weigh all of this background in a scale, and compared to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, it is all as DUNG. All of our pedigree; all of our education (human learning); all of our religious background, even church membership since childhood, WITHOUT a personal, intimate, Spiritual KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST is as DUNG. Paul said "I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED --" (II Tim 1:12).

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 depart 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 resurrec- tion 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 few in the world who do not KNOW ABOUT GOD and CHRIST. The EXCELLENT KNOWLEDGE is not knowing ABOUT --.

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 HIM- SELF TO PAUL ON THE DAMASCUS ROAD (Acts 9:1-6). Then Paul began to have a personal, intimate, spiritual knowledge of JESUS CHRIST MY 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 !! ETERNAL LIFE is not 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.

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 (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).

The unregenerate Jews had HEARD ABOUT GOD and CHRIST. We read where they claimed God as their Father, and Jesus said "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 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" Jesus said "I KNOW MY SHEEP - and I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE" (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. Who can do better than that ? Jesus obviously did not give Eternal Life to these Jews who had READ and HEARD ABOUT CHRIST, because they were not of His Sheep and therefore could not believe. Eternal Life is not HEAD KNOWLEDGE or LEARNING gained from reading Scriptures ABOUT CHRIST or from hearing the Gospel ABOUT CHRIST - ETERNAL LIFE IS IN CHRIST HIMSELF.

The Gospel informs God's people of the GREAT 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 SPIRITUALLY 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 has 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.

"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 MY LORD in time, KNOWING by that same Spirit God shall also quicken our mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11).

WAS JESUS CHRIST REALLY GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH

by Elder Bob Allgood

Was Jesus Christ who he claimed to be, or was he a liar? When one stops to think about it, this may be one of the most important questions ever asked mankind. If Jesus Christ was NOT who he claimed to be, then he was not only a liar, but he would have pulled the most colossal frauds over on mankind that has ever been pulled. Believe me there have been some colossal frauds pulled on mankind, including the hoax NASA pulled about man going to the moon. But

you would have to see the pictures of US flag waving in the breeze on the Moon, which has no wind or air to understand that one.

In the Old Testament, 800 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah foretold of his birth, and said, “Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:13-14). This same prophet said of this Son, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6-7). Now if Jesus was called these Names and He wasn’t “The Mighty God and The Everlasting Father”, that would have been blasphemy on the part of Isaiah. When Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and they called his name “JESUS” (i.e. JEHOVAH is SAVIOUR), Matthew said, “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt 1:18-25). If the Virgin Birth was a hoax and not the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, then Matthew was a liar, and we would have no reason to believe anything he wrote. So if these things are not true we can tear from our Bibles the books of Isaiah and Matthew.

The apostle John tells us “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John then tells us “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3, 14). John claimed that Jesus Christ was the Word of God, the Creator of all things, and was made flesh and dwelt among mankind. If this was not true, John was a liar, and we can tear from our Bibles all the writings of John, which includes the Gospel, his epistles and The Revelation.

Paul came along about six years after the Resurrection of Christ, and wrote, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16). Of course his reference to God being manifest in the flesh could refer to none other than Jesus Christ. He confirms this in Philippians 2:5-8, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and

became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Paul said that Christ was once in the form of God, and equal with God, but was made in the likeness of men. If this is not true Paul was a liar and we can tear from our Bibles all the eleven epistles that this apostle wrote.

I will not use the space to deal with excerpts from the writings of Mark, Luke, Peter, James and Jude who are the only writers of New Testament books and epistles not discussed. Obviously if what they have to say about Jesus Christ is not true then we have no Christian Bible left to refer to. But let’s consider what Jesus said about Himself. It is one thing to discount what others say about Christ, and another thing to call Jesus himself a liar. For if he is a liar, then we have NO Saviour and NO hope of eternal life.

Jesus was talking with some Jews and said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw, and was glad”. The Jews replied, “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Verily, verily (truly, truly) I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM”. An English teacher would probably say Jesus used bad grammar. But the truth of the matter is, I AM is the name of JEHOVAH, and this was another way in which Jesus was telling the Jews WHO he was. In Exodus 3:14 we read, “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you”. I AM is another name of JEHOVAH, God Almighty (Exodus 6:2-3).

Jesus Christ The Same

by Elder Bob Allgood

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” Heb. 13:8

There is an old saying among us humans “nothing remains the same”. Certainly that is true when it comes to daily activities, for “to every thing there is a season” (Eccles. 3:1-8). It is true when it comes to our cities, for everything is either being built up or torn down. It is true when it comes to our bodies, for they are continually wearing out, although the young people do not realize this until it is too late. But this is not true when it comes to Jesus Christ. God says in Malachi 3:6, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed”. Jesus the Christ in his glorified FORM remains the SAME yesterday, and to day, and for ever, “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

Recently I determined to undertake a personal detailed study of the “Life of Christ” and the first question that came to mind was, “Where do I begin to study one who is eternal” ? John directed the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the seven churches of Asia, “from him which is, and which was, and which is to come” (Rev. 1:4, 8). Jesus Christ declared him-self to be “the beginning and the ending, the first and the last - He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen” (Rev. 1:8, 11, 18). Perhaps this is what Paul had in mind when he wrote “Jesus Christ the same --- “.

One must be careful with his terminology when talking about Him (Jesus Christ) being Eternal. As I understand it, divisions have been caused by disagreement over the use of words more than the principal involved. Sometimes our minds are incapable of reasoning beyond the limits of our own personal vocabulary. Therefore I ask that you be charitable with my use of words. I believe my understanding of the principal is sound, but my vocabulary may be lacking. The Scriptures are clear that Jesus Christ AS the living Word is eternally THE SAME yesterday, and to day, and forever. The Living Word, Logos, who is the Truth, does not change and is forever settled in heaven. Certainly Paul could have had the Eternality of the Living Word in mind when he said “Jesus Christ the same --“.

We know that Jesus the Christ, as the Living Word has not always been in the SAME form. John tells us, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God – And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us --“ (John 1:1, 14). Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the FORM OF GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: --“ (Phil. 2:5-6). Since God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and the Holy Spirit is a Spirit, and Jesus Christ as the Living Word was in the FORM OF GOD IN THE BEGINNING, I think it is safe to assume that Jesus Christ, as the Living Word, was in the form of a Spirit. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are ONE”.

Jesus the Christ as “God was manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16) AND “took upon him the FORM of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men --“ (Phil. 2:7). Paul wrote, “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). Again, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:1-3). That is, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices thou hast had no pleasure” (Heb. 10:5-6).

Man can not explain the mechanics of the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus the Christ. Even though some try by offering their vain philosophies or human reasoning, we hear God say, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9). Paul tells us, “his ways are past finding out”. Some will say, with modern day genetics man knows how to create life in a Test Tube. Answer: Man has not done anything but Manipulate Life - Only God can create and give life. Mary could not understand the virgin birth, for she said “How can this be, seeing I know not a man”. Answer: “The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:34-35).

God FORMED the first Adam from the “dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (I Cor. 15:47). Paul said, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh –“. Jesus himself proclaimed, “I proceeded forth and came from God –“. At the end of his ministry Jesus prayed, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (Jn 17:5). As God manifest in the flesh the life of Jesus the Christ on this earth lasted about 33 ½ years from his BIRTH to his RESSURRECTION. We are not told much about our Lord’s childhood, but we are told that he was BORN TO DIE.

There are no less than 226 names attributed to Jesus the Christ in the Bible. He is also called “Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, Holy One, Lamb of God, Prince of Life, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Root of David, Word of Life, Author and Finisher of Our Faith, Advocate, The Way, The Truth and The Life, Dayspring, Chief Shepherd, Bishop of Our Souls, Chief Cornerstone, Righteous Judge, Bread of Life, Living Water, Light of the World, The Door, Head of the Church, Morning Star, Sun of Righteousness, The Resurrection and Life, Horn of Salvation, Governor, Alpha and Omega, The Son of God, Lord of All, and I AM “ just to mention a few other names.

But his BIRTH NAME, predetermined by God his Father and announced by the angel Gabriel who was sent to Joseph and Mary, was JESUS (Jehovah is Saviour). “And she shall bring forth a son,

and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins". The name Jesus is synonymous with Emmanuel, which being interpreted is "God with us" (Matt. 1:18-21). His name is Jesus but his Title is CHRIST meaning the Anointed One or Messiah. When he was born, the angel of the Lord proclaimed to the Shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord". The shepherds found the BABE wrapped in swaddling clothes (Ezek. 16:4) and lying in a manger (Luke 2:7, 12). When Jesus was eight (8) days old he was circumcised and NAMED Jesus (Luke 2:27). When the forty (40) days of Mary's purification were finished (Luke 2:28 with Lev. 12:2-4) they took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him unto the Lord. There he was blessed by Simeon, for "it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26-32). Following that, Joseph and Mary returned "into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth".

Baby Jesus did not remain a Baby. The wise men, who were Gentiles, came from the East to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2, Isa. 60:1-5). They wanted to know "where Christ should be born". They were too late to find Jesus "wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" in Bethlehem, the city of David.

Joseph and Mary were back in Nazareth. Jesus was about a year old when the wise men came "into the house" and "saw the young child with Mary his mother (Matt. 2:8-14). No less than six (6) times in this passage is Jesus referred to as a "young child". He was no longer a "BABE lying in a manger". He was the Christ child. We know almost nothing about his childhood, except that when he was a boy of twelve (12), he was found "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke 2:41-46). When asked WHY, he answered, "How is that ye sought me? Wist (know, understand) ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49).

Just as Mary did not remain a virgin (Mark 6:3), Jesus did not remain a boy. He grew up to become a man. The scriptures are silent about his boyhood, except to say, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). We learn no more about Jesus the Christ until he is about thirty (30) years old, at which time he walked sixty (60) miles "from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him" (Matt. 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-23). The age of thirty (30) was the time that the Priest could begin his service "in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things" (Num.

4:1-4). Scripture then turns our attention to the Christ, the Son of man, the Son of God.

The prophetic term for Christ, the Messiah, is “the Son of man”. Daniel “saw in the night vision, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14). This term “Son of man” is used throughout the prophecies of Ezekiel to speak of the Christ, the Messiah.

Andrew, the brother of Peter, heard John the Baptist preaching, and followed Jesus. He then went to Simon Peter and said, “We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, THE CHRIST” (John 1:41). Nathanael said to this SAME JESUS, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel” (John 1:49). Jesus once asked his disciples, “Whom do men say, that I the Son of man am?”. After getting various answers of what others thought, he asked, “But whom say ye that I am?”. Peter replied, “Thou art THE CHRIST, THE SON of THE LIVING GOD”. Jesus pointed out to Peter that THIS TRUTH did not come by “flesh and blood” but had been revealed unto him by his Father. After this, Jesus told his disciples, “that they should tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ” (Matt. 16:13-20). Again, he charged his disciples, “Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead” (Matt. 17:1-9).

Jesus the Christ came to die for the sins of his people, BUT he did not remain dead. Following his death on the 14th of Nisan, a Wednesday evening, before 6 PM, He was laid in a borrowed tomb, which they tried to seal for the Devil’s benefit. The next day was the High Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleaven Bread. After three days and nights, He was resurrected by the Spirit of God just before sundown on Saturday, the regular Sabbath day. Jesus had told them he would be in the grave for three days and three nights (72 hours - no more, no less). It was still dark, “Early in the morning” when the women came to the tomb on the “First Day of The Week” to anoint the body, They found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Jesus had come forth from the grave victorious over sin, death and hell, and had ascended into heaven, into the true Tabernacle of God, to present him-self the ONE sacrifice that perfects forever them (the elect) that are sanctified.

“When he had by himself purged our sins, (he) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” to begin his eternal reign over his kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14, Heb. 1:3, 8-13). Paul wrote, “and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, -- and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:8-11). “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). “Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever”.

The Mystery of Christ According To God's Eternal Purpose

by Elder Bob Allgood

" Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. " (The full text is Ephesians 3:1-12).

We sincerely hope that our readers will reference their Bibles (KJV) in conjunction with reading this article. I believe that we have quoted sufficient Scripture to show that the text for our subject is not taken out of context. A text taken out of context leaves a pretext. A pretext leads to false reasoning and unsound doctrine. There is enough of that going on without the need for any additional contributions. There would be much more sound doctrine taught if God's people would take the time to read, reason and rightly divide the word of truth, instead of being satisfied with the nice sounding rhetoric's of man's preaching. Words may sound good, but if they leave you without understanding, what good are they? I remember a dear sister once saying to me, "You sure preached a good sermon. I didn't understand what it was about, but it sure was good". Her kind words cut to my heart! I would rather teach the word of God with understanding than to preach a sermon that just sounds good. This is why Paul said, "I would rather speak five words with my understanding, .. that I might

teach others also .." (I Cor. 14:19). "Whereby, when you read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ ...".

Our text takes us back to the beginning. Paul teaches us that "the eternal purpose which he (God) purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" was a "mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God". I have learned that if I really want to understand a particular doctrine I must go to the beginning and follow it through to the end. When we go back to the beginning we find only GOD; we find the ALMIGHTY, we find the I AM THAT I AM, we find the CREATOR who created all things by the WORD of his mouth. When we go back to the beginning we find the WORD, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All thing were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

When we go back to the beginning we find GOD who said "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". The plural pronouns us and our tells me that when we go back to the beginning we find the GODHEAD; the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three ARE ONE. God is one God. The Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one. Jesus tells us that "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). Before the WORD was made flesh and dwelt among us as the man Christ Jesus, he was in the form of God, he was with God, he was equal with God, he was God. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit". Paul wrote, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:16). But, when we go back to the beginning we find that the WORD was not yet made flesh. John tells us "The WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us". Paul said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men --" (Phil. 2:5-7).

The Bible teaches us in many places that "God is holy" (Ps. 99:5, 9). Since God is a Spirit, we must conclude then that God is a Holy Spirit. The virgin Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18) and the angels said to her "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of the shall be called the Son of God " (Luke 1:35). Therefore, when the WORD, who was with God and was God, was made flesh, He was called "The Only Begotten Son of God" (Luke 1:35, John 1:18, 3:16, 3:18, Heb. 11:17, I John 4:9).

When we go back to the beginning we find that God "created all things by Jesus Christ". When we go back to the beginning we find that God chose a people in Christ before the foundation of the world. When we go back to the beginning we find "the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began". If we go back to the beginning we find God's eternal purpose which He, being a Holy Spirit, purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, who was in the form of God and was God. In as much as "these three are one", we must conclude that the mystery of Christ, according to God's eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, was the same as "the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Himself" (Eph. 1:9).

It seems evident to me that the scriptures teach that God (i.e. the Godhead) purposed in Himself to predestinate, call, justify and glorify a particular people In Christ before the foundation of the world (i.e. before God created man). It is also evident that God (the Godhead) swore by Himself (Heb. 6:17-18) that Christ would take upon himself the form of man and die for the sins of his elect people and that God the Father would raise him from the grave by the power of his Spirit. BUT, scripture does not teach that it was necessary for the Godhead to convene a conference to "make a decision or reach an agreement" about the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus.

With all due respect, I fear that some attempt to "pigeon hole" the work of the Godhead by having the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit agree to perform certain functions independently of the other. While the figment of man's imagination may give rise to such an agreement, in my opinion Scripture does not support it. There is an abundance of Scripture to prove that God purposed His eternal purpose in Himself and by Himself. God told Abraham "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee --- And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ---" (Gen. 22:16-18). Paul tells us, "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself -- " (Heb. 6:13-20). While it may appear to be so in the mind of man, there are not three separate minds in the Godhead! God's people who have the mind of Christ should understand this (I Cor. 2:9-16, Phil. 2:1-8).

The mystery of Christ according to God's eternal purpose is clearly taught to be that both elect Jews and elect Gentiles are reconciled unto God in the body of Christ, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the

cross, having slain the enmity thereby, And came and preached peace to you that were afar off (i.e. Gentiles), and to them that were nigh (i.e. Jews). For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father " (Eph. 2:14-18).

The Ephesians letter is addressed to "the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus --". While it was written specifically to the saints in the church at Ephesus, it is applicable to the faithful in Christ Jesus for all ages, past, present and future (Eph. 3:21). This would include both Jews and Gentiles without making distinction, for "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15). "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

Paul, who was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, was the chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). However, Peter preached the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10) before Paul did (Acts 13). Paul began his ministry by preaching first to the Jews (Acts 9:20-22), but when the unbelieving Jews rejected the gospel, he turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46), but he never excluded the Jews from his preaching (Acts 18:4, 19:10, 20:21, Rom. 1:14-16).

Much of the Ephesians letter was directed primarily to the elect Gentiles (2:11-13) who had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise - but now in Christ Jesus" they have been "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands" (Col. 2:11) and "made nigh by the blood of Christ". Chapter 3 begins, "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward". The 'dispensation of the grace of God' is not as the "Dispensationalist" claim, the N.T. period of time when God began to eternally save people by grace in contrast to eternally saving the Jews by their works under the Law. Eternal life, for all of God's elect, Jews and Gentiles, has always been and will always be by the grace and mercy of God in Christ Jesus according to his eternal purpose. None have ever been eternally saved apart from the mercy and grace of God according to His eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. God has never had but one way of bestowing eternal life (I John 5:11-12).

Paul explained that this dispensation is the time period "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory" (Col. 1:25-27). Paul said, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men (i.e. both Jews and Gentiles who are the called according to his purpose) see what is the fellowship of the mystery (of Christ).

Paul mentions the mystery of Christ no less than five times (Eph. 1:9, 3:3, 3:19, 5:32, and 6:11). The Lord willing I may expand the scope of this subject at another time and take in the other references Paul makes about the mystery of Christ (Rom. 11:25 and 16:25, Col. 1:26, 1:27, 2:2 and 4:3, I Tim. 3:16). Even though he may call the mystery by another name, in my opinion these are all the mystery of Christ, or related to the mystery of Christ and to the Church of Christ.

WHY, WHAT EVIL HATH HE DONE ?

"Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why what evil hath he done ?

By Elder Bob Allgood

This question is not only recorded in Matthew 27:22-23, but it is recorded with the exact same words in Mark 15:14 and Luke 23:22. John records it as "What accusation will ye bring against this man"? (Jn 18:29). A good principal to follow in understanding any event is to ask, WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY. Pilate covered the Who, What and Why in this one question. Pilate did not ask this question because he knew who Jesus was. Pilate had to ask Jesus "Art thou the King of the Jews"? Pilate did not ask this question because he was a Jew and knew the prophets, for he asked, "Am I a Jew ?Thine own nation and the chief priest have delivered thee unto me:

what hast thou done"? He did not ask this question because he knew the truth, for he asked Jesus, "What is truth"?

Pilate asked the question based on physical evidence. Pilate told the chief priest and rulers of the people: "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him--" (Lk 23:13-14). Pilate said at least three (3) times, "I find no fault in him". Nevertheless, they cried, "Let him be crucified". Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your King"? But the apostate Jews answered, "We have no king but Ceasar". How sad it is, but sometimes God's people would rather bow to the kings of this world than to obey God and His word. How sad it is, but sometimes God's people ignore the obvious evidence of justice.

Pilate followed a Jewish custom to indicate he was innocent of the crime and "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it". But for the apostate Jews it was an opportunity for them to pervert another of God's laws (Deut. 21:1-9). And so they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children". -- Crucify him, crucify him ! Let him be crucified !

Why, what evil hath HE done? He who was in the beginning with God and was [Greek word *ito*, meaning *existed with*] God. He who made all things and without him was not any thing made that was made. He who, in the fullness of time, was born of a virgin. He who began his earthly ministry by being baptized by John the Baptist. He who healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, cured lepers, fed the hungry, cast out demons, raised the dead, walked on the water, calmed the storms and spake as no man ever spake. He "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Pet. 1:22). So, Why crucify him, what evil hath he done ?

There was no need for Pilate to ask When or Where, because there was no What ! Jesus Christ was without sin. He did no sin because He could not sin. He was God manifest in the flesh (I Tim.3:16).He and his Father are one. In him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col.2:9). They that had seem Him had seen the Father. He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. They that had seem Him and touched Him could say with Thomas, "My Lord and My God" (Jn. 20:28).

Bible denying liberals have for a long time denied that Jesus was (IS) The Christ and have always taught that Jesus was just a good man

and at best just another prophet (see Matt. 16:13-18). The Promise Keepers, an ungodly inter-denominational oorganization, use a hand-book that claims Jesus had all the phallic passions of man (including homosexual) and could have sinned had he wanted. That is blasphemy ! I have even heard that some of the *liberals* among our ranks preach that Jesus could have sinned had he wanted to.

If Jesus had a nature that could have sinned, he could not have been our Saviour, for he would himself have been a child of wrath by nature. That was impossible ! Christ was both God and Man. God can not be tempted with sin (James 1:13). The man Christ had to be a perfect, righteous sacrifice without spot and without blemish. As man he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:14-15) - because he could not sin. So, What evil hath he done ?

Had this question been asked of any other person, any one born of man and woman in the natural way, the answer would be, As it is written, "*There is none righteous, no not one*" (*exclusive*). Speaking of the human race, God says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (*inclusive*). "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men (generically used to speak of the human race), for that (also rendered *in whom, speaking of Adam*) *all have sinned* ".

Contrary to what modern man teaches, the human race, all of mankind; man, woman, boy, girl, and infant, are all sinners by nature. The word of God testifies to this truth and *death* bears witness. Show me a natural person who will never die and I will show you some one who is not a sinner. Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Elijah were both translated, but their vile, corruptible bodies had to be changed before entering God's presence. "The wages of sin is death" and no natural human being can escape it. Even those who are alive at the coming of Christ must be changed from *corruption to incorruption and from mortal to immortality* (I Cor. 15:51-57).

While most parents do not like to think about it, those precious little babies are sinners by nature. God said of David "I have found David - - a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). We can believe David who said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps 51:5). David was not saying his mother was living in a state of adultery when she conceived him (as is the case with many births in this adulterous generation of our days), but rather that he was conceived in a nature of sin. Paul confirms this in Eph. 2:1-3 when he says, "And you hath

he quickened {made alive} who were dead in trespasses and sins - and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others".

The sin nature may not be evident while the child is in the womb or while he/she is a suckling. But the nature is there and it does not take long for sin to rear it's ugly head. David said, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies". I remember well our toddlers getting caught with their hands in the cookie jar, and then lying about having taken a cookie. Children do not have to be taught to lie, they do it naturally, because they are naturally sinners. Satan is the father of all lies (Jn 8:44) !

Samuel spoke of man, woman, infants and sucklings of the Amalekites as all being sinners (I Sam. 15:3 & 18). This may sound like a "hard saying" but please keep in mind, we are not talking about the eternal destiny of any one. We are talking about the depraved sinful nature of mankind compared to the sinless nature of Christ. Most people like to talk about the love of God, but few want to talk about the reasons WHY Christ had to be crucified. It was not just a turn of events that could have been avoided ! Christ died for the ungodly! "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:10) . If Christ died for you, then you are/were an ungodly sinner. If Christ died for infants and little children, then they are/were ungodly sinners. Christ died only for sinners ! He came to save his people from their sin !

Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners -" (I Tim. 1:15). Anyone who is saved by Christ, is or was a sinner. All infants and little children saved by Christ, are/were sinners. John said, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation {satisfying sacrifice} for our sins" (I Jn 4:10). If God loves you, he sent his Son to be the satisfying sacrifice for your sins. God sent his Son to be the satisfying sacrifice for the sins of each one he loves; each and every one whom he saves.

We can not have it both ways ! No one can claim that any man, woman, boy, girl, infant or suckling is loved of God and saved by Christ and in the same breath claim they are not sinners. Christ died for sinners (but not all sinners as we will see shortly).

The Word of God does not teach the popular man-made doctrine of an "Age Of Accountability". There is no period of time in which God gives everyone an opportunity to decide whether they are going to be sinners or not. There is no safety net of love in which God holds

everyone until they reach a certain age, and then drops them into impending danger of spending eternity in hell fire unless they do certain works of righteousness. No one goes to hell or heaven because of what he does or has. No one goes to hell or heaven because of what he does with what he has !

The law God gave Moses was never intended to give life, but rather to reveal sin. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20). "God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal 3:21). If only those who keep the law given to Moses (as recorded in Exodus 20) are going to make it to heaven, only Jesus Christ will be there. The law says "Thou shalt not kill". Moses and Paul are out. The law says "Thou shalt not commit adultery". David and millions of others are out. The law says "Thou shalt not make unto thee any grave image - Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them". Aaron, almost all of national Israel, everyone who has a statue, picture or image of Christ or Angels, etc. -- they are all out. Need I go any further to illustrate this truth ?

When considering infants and little children with regards to their being sinners by nature we might ask the same question that was asked by Pilate of Christ. What evil have they done ? The answer may well be none that we have seen or heard ! But we must remember that eternal life is not given to God's elect based on what good they have done or what evil they have not done. It is "Not by works of righteousness we have done {or evil works we have not done }, but according to his mercy he saved us --" (Titus 3:5).

Whenever I have trouble understanding this truth, I dial the emergency number, 911. That is Romans 9:11 where God disproves all works heresies in the birth of the twins, Jacob and Esau. Note carefully what is said: "For the children being not yet born {still in the womb} neither having done any good or evil {with the sin nature, but not having done any good or wicked works}, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth -- As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. God told Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion". "So then *it is {eternal destiny}* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy".

The election in this text is to eternal glory, not some timely event, such as seeing or entering the kingdom, the church of God. While it is true that all things are foreknown and certain events are predetermined

or foreordained by God, such as the Virgin Birth; the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ; His eternal reign as King over an everlasting kingdom without end, the doctrine of election applies to people not things. Predestination is a subject that generally applies to those whom God has chosen in Christ Jesus before the world began.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 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. What shall we say then to these things ? If God be for us, who can be against us. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God ----- " Romans 8:28-34

Some preachers are guilty of preaching some people into hell and others into heaven based on their nationality, or age, or what they have or have not done. All Jews are not heaven bound because they are natural born Jews. There is no age of accountability. Election is not based on having done good or evil. God did not elect categories of people! God elected individuals ! God has never given man the privilege or the authority to determine where any one spends eternity - not for himself or another. Man brought sin and death into the world, but righteousness and eternal life comes by God through Christ to as many as have been ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48).

Jesus said before going to the cross, "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" (John 17:1-3). All that have been given to Christ by the Father will be in heaven, no more and no less.

Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out -- And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but raise him up again at the last day - No man {no one} can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day" -- "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men {the Elect of God}* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (Jn. 6:37-39, 44, 10:32-33).

Why Crucify Him even though he had done no evil and was without sin ? Because it was foreordained before the foundation of the world that he would shed his precious blood for the redemption of his people (see I Peter 1:18-21). Because it was written in the law of Moses, foretold by the prophets and in the Psalms in the Old Testament Scriptures that he must suffer and rise from the dead (Luke 24: 25-27, 44-47 and I Cor 15:14). Because the Angel proclaimed "He shall save his people from their sin". Because Christ declared "For this cause came I unto this hour". Because it was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (see Acts 2:22-24). Because He came willingly to this world of sin and sorrow to lay down his life for his sheep. He said "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:14-18). WHY? Because herein is the eternal purpose and the love of God made manifest for an elect people whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world .

HE THAT DENIETH THE SON

by Elder Bob Allgood

"WHOSOEVER DENIETH THE SON, THE SAME HATH NOT THE FATHER" I John 2:23

The word DENY has several meanings which include: contradict, reject, disavow, renounce, refuse, disown and abstain. The context in which the word appears must be considered when arriving at the proper meaning or intended purpose of it's use. Certain rules must be kept in mind:

1. No one can DENY that which they have no knowledge or understanding.
2. One who DENIES today may change his/her position tomorrow or later; OR may be CHANGED in his/her position by God.
3. Therefore DENIAL does not determine the eternal destiny of anyone, but is indicative of their present spiritual condition.

DENIAL OF THE SON is a gospel or timely act. In the eternal sense none of the elect can deny the Son. God has chosen the elect in Christ before the foundation of the world and effectually calls them by his Spirit according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Jesus said "All that the Father giveth (to) me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out". (John 6:37) "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be ALL TAUGHT OF GOD. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (6:45). Our text says "WHOSOEVER DENIETH THE SON, THE SAME HATH NOT THE FATHER".

WHO CAN DENY THE SON ? At least three classes of people:

(1). The **UNREGENERATE** who have "heard" the gospel - the truth about the Son - with the natural ear but can not receive it - because they can not spiritually discern the truth because they have not Spirit of God. (Read I Cor. 2:14) Paul wrote, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Rom 8:9). John wrote, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).

(2) The **UNCONVERTED** whose "heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should be converted" and the Lord should heal them. Isaiah said of these " By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive" (Matt 13:10-17).

(3) The **CONVERTED** who deny him in disobedience to his commandments. We deny the Lord when we fail to "DENY OURSELVES and TAKE UP OUR CROSS" and follow him. We DENY THE LORD when through fear of man or lust of the flesh we fail to love him and keep his commandments. Peter denied the Lord three times in this manner. How many times have we done so ?

OUR TEXT (I John 2:23) speaks of the **UNREGENERATE** (in their present state of denial) **FOR THEY HAVE NOT THE FATHER**. If we back up to I John 2:18 we see that John is speaking of those he calls "ANTICHRIST". He says "Even now there are many antichrist; whereby we know that it is the last time". In verse 19 we learn that these antichrist "went out from us, but they were not of us - if they had been of us, they would have continued with us". Verses 20 - 22 teaches us that "THE LIE" of the antichrist is not a doctrinal error or misunderstanding of truth -- the LIE is not of the HOLY ONE, for no lie is of the truth - certainly not of the Spirit of Truth.

WHAT IS THE LIE ? The denial that JESUS IS THE CHRIST - DENIAL that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Holy One of Israel, King, Saviour. WHO IS A LIAR - he that DENIETH that Jesus is the Christ. He that denieth that Jesus is the Christ is antichrist - and He that is antichrist DENIETH the Father and the Son - WHOSOEVER (of this sort {my words}) DENIETH THE SON, THE SAME HATH NOT THE FATHER - They are UNREGENERATE in their present state.

LITTLE CHILDREN, LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU. Not every "religious person" who gives lip service to God is a child of God. Jesus was once talking to some "religious Pharisees" who claimed to be the children of Abraham. He said unto them "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: FOR HE IS A LIAR, AND THE FATHER OF IT" (John 8:44).

WE HAVE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS UNREGENERATE DENYING THE SON . THEY DENIED HIS DEITY. The religious Pharisees said "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? How is it then that he saith, I come down from heaven ? (John 6:42). Many times the RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITES "took up stones again to stone him". Jesus said to them "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me"? The Jews answered him "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:31-33). In reality what they were doing was DENYING the virgin birth of Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, Emanuel, "which being interpreted is GOD WITH US " (Matt 1:18-25). John says "every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist --" (I John 4:3).

Jesus once asked the question " Whom do men say that I the Son of Man (the Messiah, the Christ) am"? The response was that "men" considered him to be a "reincarnated" prophet. But Peter knew better, for he said "Thou art THE CHRIST, the Son of the living God". Peters knowledge and understanding had been revealed by the Father. "Blessed art thou - flesh and blood hath not revealed (this) unto thee, BUT MY FATHER which is in heaven". He that denieth the Son, hath not the Father.

There are many "religious leaders" living in our day that have heard the truth with only the natural ear, and using the name of God, Religion and Christianity, they deny that Jesus is the Christ. They Deny his Deity which leads to denial of his sinless life, his sacrificial death, his blood redemption, his bodily resurrection, his priesthood, his power to forgive sin and save his people and his coming again. As the Pharisees of old, they have made the house of God a "House of merchandise" and have polluted it with IDOLS (statues, formalities, inventions of men, worldly music, etc.). Many of their followers are blind, and have not heard the TRUE GOSPEL of Jesus the Christ. But this is not true of all. Some defiantly deny the Son, and have "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant - an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:26-31).

WHAT SHOULD BE THE POSITION OF GOD'S PEOPLE TOWARD THOSE WHO DENY CHRIST ? Should we invoke God's blessings upon them simply because they use the name of God ? Are we to consider them as good people and call EVIL good ? Let Scripture speak for itself: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one". "There is none good but one, and that is God." "A Good Tree can not bring forth evil fruit" "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. (Isaiah 5:20).

The Word of God says, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God's speed, for he that biddeth him God's speed is partaker of his evil deeds (II John 9-11). John the beloved, the Love Apostle wrote these words. My dear friend and child of God, these are not my words, but those of OUR GOD given by HIS SPIRIT concerning HIS SON - we should pay heed to them. For "WHOSOEVER DENIETH THE SON, THE SAME HATH NOT THE FATHER".

Peter preached, "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just -- and now brethren I wot (know) that through ignorance ye did it — Repent therefore and be converted --" (Acts 3:12-26).

Denial of the Holy One of Israel and the Just -- Denial that Jesus is the Christ by the UNCONVERTED is a timely act that is committed through ignorance of the truth. The word "ignorance" means: to IGNORE, to not know or understand the truth. It has nothing to do

with one's mental ability to understand. This is why some of the most intelligent people are ignorant of all spiritual truth. These Jews to whom Peter had preached had heard the truth, but had **IGNORED** or not understood it. Their present state of denial represents a spiritual condition subject to change according to the will of God. For Peter says "**REPENT** ye therefore and be **CONVERTED**". Their present denial was not a factor which determined their eternal destiny.

While both the **UNREGENERATE** and the **UNCONVERTED** will deny that Jesus is the Christ there is considerable difference in their spiritual condition. The **UNREGENERATE** deny that Jesus is the Christ because they have not the Spirit of Christ -- they have not the Father -- they are spiritually dead and need to be made alive before they can discern the things of God. The unregenerate can not **REPENT AND BE CONVERTED** before being **QUICKENED**. No preacher can tell a spiritually dead person to live. You can not tell an **UNREGENERATE** person to repent and be converted. (Proof text: Rom. 8:5-9, I John 2:23, John 8:47, 10:24-26, I Cor. 2:14, John 3:3).

But the God called preacher can labor with the **UNCONVERTED** in hope that God will give them repentance. Paul told Timothy "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, (for-bearing) in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil" (II Tim. 2:24-26). Repentance is the changing of one's mind or more correctly having one's mind changed by God's grace. It is God that gives the repentance (change of the mind) to the acknowledging of the truth.

Repentance always results in **CONVERSION** -- that is the turning from error to truth, from wrong to right. Notice in our text Peter said "Ye **DENIED** the Holy One and the Just (i.e. that is Jesus the Christ) --". "And now, **BRETHREN**, I wot (know) that through ignorance ye did it". Peter then told them to "Repent and be converted". **BEING CONVERTED** is the turning from one's present position of rebellion or denial of truth to the position of acknowledgment of truth. Repentance and conversion go hand in hand.

Some believe that **REGENERATION** is often quickly followed by **REPENTANCE** and **CONVERSION**. I will not quarrel with them as long as everything is left in this order. It is impossible to know the exact moment or date one is born of God. "The wind bloweth where it listeth (will), and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell

whence it cometh, and wither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). When is the first time you felt the wind of God's Spirit blow upon you ?

Some believe that Paul was QUICKENED, then REPENTED and was CONVERTED, all on the road to Damascus as recorded in Acts 9:1-9. I have my thoughts on that, but will not at this time distract from the subject matter at hand. This I know, Paul was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious (he was a murderer). Paul was denying that Jesus is the Christ, and persecuting all that believed IN THAT WAY. According to Paul's own testimony he did all these things in ignorance and unbelief, and therefore he said "I obtained mercy" (see I Tim 1:12-17). Ignorance and Unbelief expresses the state of mind of the unconverted more than the unregenerate.

But this we know, that soon after Paul's experience on the Damascus road and his baptism he preached Christ that HE IS THE SON OF GOD and he proved that "THIS JESUS IS VERY CHRIST" (Acts 9:20-22). Notice the IS. Paul did not preach that Jesus would have been Christ if the all the Jews would have accepted him. He did not preach that Jesus will be Christ if you will let him, or that he will be Christ after some conditional events way off in the future. No, Jesus IS THE CHRIST. IS the Saviour, IS the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16), IS the Messiah the King of Israel (John 1:41 & 49), IS the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (I Tim 1:17). IS NOW, HAS BEEN AND WILL ALWAYS BE. For "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

What was the result of Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost to the unconverted that JESUS IS THE CHRIST (read Acts 2:22-47)? "Then they that gladly heard his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41) What was the result of Peter preaching that JESUS IS THE CHRIST to the unconverted in Acts 4 ? "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand " (Acts 5:4). Many that had denied the Son repented and were converted and no longer denied the Son.

Philip preached Jesus IS the Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch and he was converted and baptized. Peter preached Jesus IS the Christ to Gentiles at Cornelius' home and they were converted and baptized. Apollos mightily convinced the Jews that JESUS IS THE CHRIST. Paul preached that Jesus IS the Christ to the Gentiles throughout the then known world and MANY were converted and baptized. MANY, not all, but MANY were converted. Some said we will hear thee again,

some mocked, but others believed. It is God who gives repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Dear child of God, have you been denying that JESUS IS VERY CHRIST - Lord and Saviour - Messiah and King. The one who came according to scripture and died according to scripture, and was buried and rose again according to scripture ? "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Have you been denying the Son, King Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God ? If God has given you grace to do so then - REPENT AND BE CONVERTED - read Acts 3:19-26. May God bless his word.
Published out of love for Christ and the Truth. (BA)

WHO SHOULD BE CALLED A CHRISTIAN ?

by Elder Bob Allgood

"If ye be reproached for the NAME OF CHRIST, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a CHRISTIAN, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" I Peter 4:14-16

The word Christian is a Biblical name that should not be tossed around in a loose manner without respect. It is the NAME OF CHRIST applied to one of his "followers". It describes a child of God as a "follower of Christ" who is "Christ-like" in his beliefs and actions. The word is used only three times in all of Scripture. It is never designated as, or intended to be, a name for every member of God's family. It is not a name given to every new born child of God. It is not a name given to everyone who claims to be a follower of Christ. You cannot find in the word of God where Jesus or any of the Apostles ever called a child of God a Christian. The name was given to the Disciples first at Antioch, probably by the Gentiles, in order to distinguish the "true followers of Christ" from the unbelieving Jews. To be called a "Christian" by an unbeliever is an honor indeed.

No where in the word of God can you find where a child of God ever calls himself a Christian. Any child of God who thinks he

deserves to be called a Christian should read the words of Paul who said "Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners; of whom I am chief". Paul thought of himself as a "wretched man" and said "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18-25). If Paul, a true "follower of Christ" never called himself a Christian, who among believers should call himself a Christian? The answer is none! Why then do we find this name being so misused and abused today ?

Paul told King Agrippa (Acts 26:27-29) that he knew that he BELIEVED the prophets. If Paul knew what he was talking about (and he did), then King Agrippa was a BELIEVER, and as such a child of God. Since the natural man cannot receive or believe the Word of God or the things of God (see John 8:47, 10:24-27, and I Cor. 2:14) King Agrippa must have had spiritual understanding of the prophets in order to believe them. But King Agrippa was not a Christian ! He said to Paul "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian (to be a follower of Christ). Here we have an example of a "believer" who was not a "Christian". Why then should we call all believers "Christian"?

In Acts 8:9-20 the Bible tells about Simon the sorcerer who "himself believed also" and "was baptized". He then tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit with money. Peter told him "Thy money perish with thee". Simon was a baptized believer, but he was not a "Christian". In Acts 5:1-11 we are told of Ananias and Sapphira, who were both believers and baptized members of the church. They lied to God. Peter did not say "Now you Christians are going to be punished because of your sin". Jesus spoke of those who would say "Lord, Lord", speaking and doing many wonderful things in the NAME OF THE LORD. But he said to them "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus did not call everyone who names the name of the Lord a "Christian". Why then do we find so many ministers using the name Christian so loosely ?

"The disciples (i.e. learners of Christ) were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). These disciples were Members of the CHURCH of the living God and LEARNERS of the word of God. In order to be a MEMBER of a TRUE Gospel church one must give testimony to having been born of God's Spirit; confess that they are a Believer in Christ and saved by the grace of God; they must FOLLOW CHRIST in the act of Scriptural water baptism. Scriptural water baptism can only be administered by the authority of a TRUE New Testament Gospel church. Therefore children of God who have not followed the Lord Jesus Christ in Scriptural water baptism ought not to be called Christians. Why then do we find so many ministers, and even some Primitive Baptist Elders, calling UNBAPTIZED professing believers, CHRISTIANS ?

In our text Peter indicates that suffering in the NAME OF CHRIST or in a "Christ-like" manner will merit the use of the adjective Christian. This fact alone eliminates ninety nine percent of those who are falsely called Christians. Peter also tells us that suffering as a thief or evildoer is not suffering as a Christian. A thief is one that takes that which is not his. Many who claim to be children of God try to take from God his glory by adding their own works of righteousness to his free grace. Most, who are erroneously called Christians, say they had to accept Jesus; or do this or do that in order to become a child of God. That is adding human works to God's free grace, so that man's receives some glory. If anyone tries to take glory away from God's grace he is a thief. How then can he be called a "Christian"? If any man glory "let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor 1:31).

It is EVIL to teach false doctrine! Christ did not teach lies and false doctrines? On what Biblical authority do men call teachers and believers of false doctrine "Christians"? Jesus condemned those who named the name of God and taught for commandments the doctrines of men as "Hypocrites"! Today they are called Christians! Is this not blasphemous to the precious name of Christ? Is it not profaning the name of Christ our Saviour? Yes it is, and it ought not to be so !

I can understand why those who do not believe in the true doctrine of Grace use the Name of Christ so loosely and call everyone "a Christian". I remember as an Arminian I used the name Christian so loosely that it lost all of it's meaning. We talked about "Backsliding Christians" and even "Carnal Christians". That is like talking about holy devils or sanctified demons. We went to Christian Book Stores that sold all kinds of IDOLS and religious books that taught heresy. We went to the so called "Christian Movies" that were made in the Hollywood, the Devils playground. Everybody and anybody who gave lip service to God or Christ was called a Christian.

The name of Christ is continually blasphemed and profaned through the MISUSE and ABUSE of the name CHRISTIAN. You can hear it on religious television and read it in religious writings. The "Free Will" preachers who deny the Sovereign grace of God in favor of "Man's free will" are usually the ones who are guilty. But lately, I am sorry to say, I have noticed some Primitive Baptist Elders using the name Christian very loosely.

It is very sad to see this kind of thing creep into the Old Line Primitive Baptist Churches. I am told by the older Elders that just a few years ago it was not so. Brethren, it should not be so today. Perhaps some of our dear Elders are reading too many Arminian books. Some may be leaving the Old Paths without realizing where they are going or what they are doing. My prayer is that they will "Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the

good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls". Remember when you call someone a Christian you apply the NAME OF CHRIST to them saying they are a "follower of Christ" or "Christ-like" in their belief and actions.

This has been written in love and concern for the precious name of Jesus Christ.

THEN WE SHALL KNOW EVEN AS WE ARE KNOWN

by Elder 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).

Certain words in this text have been made bold to emphasize some thoughts I hope to present for your consideration. 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 renowned 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 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

hear- est 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 deter- mination 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 deter- mination 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 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 remain 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 think 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 in our Spiritual understanding from knowing all things perfectly (i.e. completely). We have the Scriptures for our edification, doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Doctrine is taught in the word of God, and we should be "dogmatic" (without arrogance) about the sound doctrine we know, knowing that we know in part and prophesy in part; but then shall we know even as we are known.

(BA)