

RECOGNIZING GOD'S WORD

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Is it not interesting that in Genesis chapter 18, we observe Abraham recognizing one of the three angels as God. Even when the three were at some distance, and before they spoke, Abraham recognized one as Adonai. How was Abraham able to accomplish this? Or, in Luke two, how could Simeon and Anna recognize the baby they saw, as the Lord? How could John the Baptist, recognize Jesus as the "Lamb of God" at a distance in John 1:29? In each of these examples, we have folks, somehow recognizing God (or the Lord) without prior introductions. God makes clear how this was accomplished, it is this "how" which this brief essay shall examine as this "how" is also the very same mechanism via which a person can recognize the very Words of or, from God.

In the early portions of the four Gospel accounts, the disciples did not really know who Jesus the Christ was. However, in the upper room, in John 14-17, they begin to recognize Him, each of them. Something had altered their perception. Indeed, their eyes were being opened, as were their ears. Note John 16:29, 30:

His disciples said, "Lo, now You are speaking plainly, and are not using a figure of speech. 30 "Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God."

Though rudimentary, the disciples are beginning to believe, (as in John 6:69). Yet, in verse 31, Jesus asked them if they then believed, for they apparently had not fully been enabled. Later in John 20:22, Jesus gives them a dose of the Holy Spirit. From then on these 10 (and later Thomas) know who Jesus the Christ is, they recognize Him. In each of these cases, one could declare that the presence of the Holy Spirit enabled each person to actually recognize who Jesus or God was. These enablements were due to a ministry of the Holy

Spirit. Yet in some of the examples (in particular those from the O.T.) no mention is made of the Holy Spirit at work. Something—within the being of some of these peoples—enabled them to recognize God.

Today, each child of God, is permanently indwelt, each elected person is a walking temple, each has the Holy Spirit within them. In OT times, this was not the case, the ministry of the Holy Spirit was different, He would come and go upon certain individuals. Perhaps this was how Abraham recognized God, or was another means existing? I believe there is another means, for example, note this passage:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:18-20

Since creation all humans *know* that there is a God! The creation itself makes it clear (even obvious) that a Creator exists. Additionally, Jesus declares in John: "Every one who is of the truth hears My voice." John 18:37b. "Of the truth" in the original Greek is:

εκ της αληθειας

This prepositional phrase indicates that the "every one" is a part of truth, reflecting a partitive use of this preposition. All of these folks are, or have within them a composition which has truth as one of its components. Not all individuals are of the truth, which is why most

folks will never really "hear" the Voice of Jesus. A distinction. All folks know there is a God, but not all hear or understand the Voice of Jesus Christ. The differentiating factor is that some folks have truth built into them, truth is a part of their beings. Having this built-in truth is not necessary for one to know that there is a God, but it is necessary in order for one to hear or understand the Voice of Jesus.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. 2 "But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. 4 "When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because **they know his voice**. 5 "And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. 7 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. John 10:1-7

Like sheep, only the elect/called hear the Voice of the Master. Likewise, only the elect can perceive the very Words (Scripture) of, or, from God. God has so designed His children. Thus they and they alone have the ability to recognize the Lord or His Words. To them alone are these words sent:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, **to those who are called** according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and **whom He called**, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. Romans 8:28-30

"Whom He called" (same Greek word as for "elect"), thus we are referring to a selected group as distinct from the rest of the mass of humanity. So, not all humans can hear the Voice of Jesus, nor are they all of the truth. Obviously we have a segregation, divine distinctions, in accordance to the will of God.

Via the indwelling Holy Spirit we can perceive the things for us from God. Things like wisdom, truth and His Word.

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 For **to us God revealed them through the Spirit**; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. I Corinthians 2:6-10

The "us" in the above quote is of course, believers, the saints in Corinth as well as Paul and company. In light of these declarations from the Bible, we can infer that man (certain men) can perceive the things of, or, from God via two methods:

- (1) via the indwelling Holy Spirit
- (2) via an innate knowledge

The evidence from creation itself should cause all men to know that there is a Creator, however, it does not cause men to learn of God's will nor of His plans. These further aspects are made available

to the elect, and to the elect only. The non-elect may read of His will and plans, yet such knowledge does not edify nor sanctify them.

Recall Deuteronomy 30:11-14:

For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. 12 "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 13 "Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 14 "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and **in your heart**, that you may observe it. Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Can we infer that God put the Word within their hearts? Is it there because we are speaking of their prior hearing of the Law? Is it there because they have memorized and retained it?

For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.

I Corinthians 4:20 illuminates the fact that words alone are empty. The realm or kingdom of God, His sphere, is one of power. It is this power which gives life to His words. Which makes them unique, even God-breathed. They are not like the words of humans, though they may look identical, they differ greatly.

For the word of God **is living and active** and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

God's Word is alive, *living*. "Living" in the Greek is: ζῶν and for "active" we read ενεργης. The same word for living is used of Jesus, as in "in Him was life", and Philippians 4:3, "names are in the book of life", and James 4:14, "for what is your life", and in many other passages. Its meaning is clear. "Active" is the root for our word "energy", similar to power. God's Word is powerful and full of energy. These words are not dead, nor are they lifeless and lacking energy. *Living Words*, imagine that! Well, certainly, if you are a child of God, then you are familiar with their life, as the words touch you with their power, they inspire, cleanse, convict and guide you. Most importantly they are food for the believer's soul.

God's Words are also life to us in the fullest sense:

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. John 6:63

"Life" in the fullest sense of the word, including eternal life. Like manna, the appropriation or ingestion of Jesus brings life. No Jesus means no real life. No words of or from Jesus means no real life (except for some of those who cannot yet grasp words, or who are severely disabled).

Consequently, we may declare that those mentioned in the quote above (Deuteronomy 30) have the word of God near (in their hearts) because God had prior chosen them! Now we know that all those hearing Moses' words that day were not believers—but to the chosen, the words were indeed near, even in their hearts—and indeed only Joshua and Caleb were elect! They alone were able of their generation to actually ingest the very Words. Like the Holy Spirit, the words could be used for guidance for instruction, for insight, and were reassuring; "are spirit and are life".

In Jeremiah 31:31-34, we note that during the future 1,000 year kingdom, God puts within their very hearts the Law, He writes it within them (the future Israelites and proselytes). It is embedded within them. Perhaps this is a special implanting, different from James 1:21 in which we read:

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility **receive the word implanted**, which is able to save your souls. [The KJV reads for "implanted" - "ingrafted"].

"Receive the word implanted" is: δεξασθε τον ερφυτον λογον. Herein we have an aorist tense, middle voice verb "receive", and an accusative object "the implanted word". The verb is an imperative, similar to a command, thus it is more than just a simple suggestion. But more importantly, the verb is in the middle voice, in which case the subject participates in the action. Now had this been a passive voice, we would have these folks accepting or receiving something without their permission or cooperation. But here in James 1:21 they are told to—"accept" or "receive" or "believe"—something which they already have! God put within each elect person the word, innate. Any person who has not this innate word within them are like those souls in II Thessalonians 2:10:

and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not **receive** the love of the truth so as to be saved.

Again a middle voice "receive". They could not "receive" or "believe" as they were not elect as the chapter indicates. In fact the word for

"implant" or "ingraft" is the same word for "innate" in many Greek writers.¹ The receiving of this implanted word, is the same as believing it (s.v. John 5:43, 44 and 12:48).

We need not use difficult passages to prove my point: God's word is within the bosoms of every believer. It is that Voice which they respond to. It gives structure to the "mind of Christ" which each believer has within them - I Corinthians 2:16:

For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But **we have the mind of Christ**. I Corinthians 2:16

"We" is of course Paul and the believers in Corinth. As with the middle voice, it is **optional** for us to "accept" or "receive" the implanted word, or to even depend upon the mind of Christ. But what is **not optional** is the reality, that within each saint lies the Word, and or, the ability to recognize it. Probably the best way to understand the mechanics of this "having the mind of Christ" within us believers, is to recognize this mind as synonymous with the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also permanently compounded with the Word from God, God's Word.

The Word from God (the Bible) often displays characteristics of person-hood and or personality. Note, the Word:

"gives Light" - Psalms 119:130

"gives understanding" - Psalms 119:130

"gives life" - Psalms 119:50

"is living and active" - Hebrews 4:12

is food - Matthew 4:4

is inspired - II Timothy 3:16

can foresee the future - Galatians 3:8

"speaks" - James 4:5

"washes" (cleanses) - Ephesians 5:26, I Timothy 4:5

"shuts men up" - Galatians 3:22

"was God" - John 1:1

"became flesh" - John 1:14

must be fulfilled - Acts 1:6

cannot be broken - John 10:35

is forever settled - Psalms 119:89

makes one wise - Psalms 119:100

counsels - Psalms 119:24

can expose false prophets - Deuteronomy 18:19-22

Many more aspects concerning the Holy Word from God can be found using a concordance. The above are enough to make my point clear: God's Word is powerful and is a necessary component for salvation and understanding, it is Holy. It is not like the words of men.

Deep in hills of Kentucky, was found in 1939, a cave. The cave had a small entrance, but underground it extended for several miles. Early on it was observed that a mushroom grew there which was edible, and that this mushroom provided an exceptional amount of essential minerals! So the harvesting of specimens began, several tons so far have been harvested, and each year several more tons are reaped. For years collectors have pounded away and removed obstructing rock layers and other impediments. Then on a particularly bright and sunny day Dr. Lamar Eddinger (a mineralogist) entered the cave out of curiosity. What he discovered forever changed the future of this unique cave. The rocks which had been pounded at and dynamited out of the way (so as to access more mushrooms), were found by Eddinger to be rich in the rare alloy platinumiridium! As it turned out, the cave was and is the only source in North America (including Canada) for this rare mineral alloy. To date the value of the extracted ore is nearly a billion dollars (mining only began in 1988). There is a lesson here. Let us imagine the ore as representing God's Word, and the mushrooms as commentaries, dictionaries, religious theories, ancient texts in various languages, and a variety of religious doctrines. As scholars and textual critics hunted for and grew and harvested the mushrooms, they tossed aside the apparently useless rocks. Let us also suppose that the Dr. Eddinger represents a believer, an elected saint. To an elected person the cave contained a single object of great worth, far surpassing the value of the mushrooms. The non-elect (or pagan) scholars, saw no value in the rocks, for the sake of research the rock, in their minds, was a barrier.

Such is God's Word today. Those folks who have the indwelling Holy Spirit, are the *only* ones who can recognize its true nature and worth. The educated pagans cut it up, dissect it, add and subtract from it and impose upon it an endless variety of humiliating

speculations and theories. Like trees, the timber is logged, cut and sawed, graded and counted. But the forest itself remains invisible, the big picture lost in the quest for a perverted sort of knowledge and human based wisdom. Lost are the very meanings and lessons generated by the Scriptures upon the heart of an elected reader. (At least lost to the pagan researchers, but treasured and preserved by the elected saints).

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For **all that is in the world**, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
I John 2:15, 16

These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. 27 And as for you, the **anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.**
I John 2:26, 27

As with all believing saints, we each have an anointing, the Holy Spirit within us guides us into the Word. *This guidance even extends to resolving accidental or intentional variations in the text (or various manuscripts), or translation irregularities.*

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.
John 16:13-15

Perhaps a few examples will clarify this assistance provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit. I have been reading the Bible steadily since December 1971. After I had spent several years reading and meditating upon its glorious truths, I began to notice the assistance! I vividly recall reading Acts 11:17 for the first time in the NASB, it read thusly:

If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way? Acts 11:17

I immediately sensed something wrong. It was and is that simple, the NASB was in error here. I opened my Greek New Testament, and indeed, the verbs and participles were all of the aorist tense, ("was I" is imperfect). Thus except for the lone imperfect, the actions were all simultaneous. Consequently, "after" was incorrect, it should have read "...when we believed", not "after believing".

Another example occurred when I read in the NASB, I Timothy 1:19, wherein we read:

keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

These "some" made shipwreck of **their** faith? Again I suspected the translation. "Shipwreck" should be seen as an active voice verb. As such these "some" did not make shipwreck of *their* (reflecting a passive voice), rather they made "shipwreck as concerns *the* faith". They caused harm to the faith in general, their behaviors impacted others. Again I simply sensed an error. It is true the KJV is correct in both

instances, but the KJV was not an active translation in my mind at the time (I first began memory work with the 1901 ASV, then the first edition of the NASB). This assistance works for me regardless of the English version I am using. I believe this is true for each child of God: this "innate" function, this "natural" insight into the "mind of Christ" will guide us as we read and study. I am certain that the level of guidance varies with each individual.

As stated, regardless of which translation you may be using, this indwelling recognition can assist you, it can guide you. Amazing, yes! This also applies to deciding which variant reading is proper when analyzing various Greek manuscripts, it greatly solves many conundrums experienced by textual-critics who labor under the canons of textual criticism, and not depending upon the indwelling Holy Spirit, if they indeed are believers. These folks are operating under a handicap, especially the pagan ones, as they cannot even really recognize the actual text of the manuscripts they vigorously examine. (For example, the long ending of Mark appears absolutely genuine to me, so no questions arise in my mind, regardless of what some ancient religious or capitalistic scribes in Egypt thought or wrote).

Certainly textual research and forms of textual criticism are important. It is important to preserve ancient Biblical manuscripts, it is important to understand what the early scribes and political and religious leaders believed. Yet, we also know that human nature can become addicted to the attainment of knowledge, of always investigating, or creating rational or wild theories, of tampering with God's Word. Such "tampering" is supported by the world and worldly societies, part and parcel of the world system. I admit, it is exciting, even intoxicating to actually view and work with ancient Biblical manuscripts, (or, great copies thereof) such study has a way of taking hold of a person.

Genuine textual critics, who are also elected saints, are rare. Even as such (being an elected child of God) the temptation to

radically alter, attack or attempt to put God's Word into a test tube afflicts even elected saints. This addiction is also financially rewarded by the societies of the world, enhanced with journal publications, peer support, educational facilities and institutional support. For the addicts caught unawares in this web, all seems well, many mushrooms remain, if only someone would assist with removing these blasted rocks!

The recognition of God's Word is included within the election process. Those whom God chose to be rescued, to be saved, have this innate ability to recognize the Words from the Father. Just as children usually recognize the Voice of their own father. This does not mean that all elected saints will always rely upon this ability, it does not mean that they will always recognize the Words. There are several *necessary* requirements, which should first be met:

- (1) the saint should be mature
- (2) the saint should be trying to be obedient
- (3) the saint should know how to repent
- (4) communication should be established BOTH ways:
 - (a) read and listen as He speaks **to us**
 - (b) speak **to Him** in prayer

We also know that God has, in times past, made information available to babes, those who were not mature. But these are the exceptions.

As time passes, and as an elected soul works at communicating with God and studying His Word, such persons too will increasingly recognize—even from afar—God's Word.

Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But **avoid** worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, II Timothy 2:14-16, with an improved translation.

"Worldly and empty" is a key phrase, for some discussions about words are essential and necessary, whereas some are "worldly" and non-essential. This is where maturity also plays a role in recognizing the very Words from God. So, if you are a mature child of God, (elected, indwelt), then you can, without fail, begin to supernaturally (innately) recognize His Words, regardless of which translation or version of the Scriptures you are using (one would certainly avoid famous perverted versions such as those manufactured by the Jehovah's Witnesses, *et al*).

In closing, we may now declare that there are three ways via which a person may know that there is a God, a Creator:

- (1) via the evidence of creation
- (2) via the indwelling Holy Spirit
- (3) via an innate knowledge, which is limited to the elect or the chosen.

The last two methods alone only occur within the elect, they and they alone are able to actually feed upon the words from God, to grow, to recognize God's word, to learn of God's will, and to experience God's special joy and peace.

END-NOTE

¹ Examples from several Greek writers would be:

Philo - "...they put a great constraint on their **natural** faithlessness..." ("natural" = ερφυτον) from: *On the Unchangeableness of God*. Per both Yonge and Wendland, 101:3.

Josephus - "...Alexander felt hostility and an **innate** hatred for his father..." ("innate" = ερφυτον) from *Jewish Antiquities*. XVI . 233.

Twice in the Epistle from Barnabas is the word ερφυτον rendered as "innate", 1.2.3 and 9.9.1. Each describes an inborn or natural talent or ability.

Our word ερφυτον is only found here at James 1:21 in the NT. It is not seen in the Greek LXX, except in the Wisdom of Solomon, at which occurrence it is "innate". Several expositors declare that James means for his readers to receive that word or teaching which was implanted into them by their teachers. Such a view removes all vestiges of innateness. In my mind, "innate" seems to be a far better rendition, as it is the meaning often implied by local Greek writers as well, Josephus, Barnabas, Philo, and Justin Martyr (*Second Apology* ii.8). The word in modern Greek means "innate". Despite the common interpretations, I much prefer James as actually meaning that the readers are told to "accept the word innate". It is not just any word, as in James 1:21 it is able to save their souls. Thus it is not the Law, nor the Torah. Though my interpretation is not the traditional one, it certainly accords with John 8:47:

"He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

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