

PTB2-23b: Understanding Bible part 2 of 3.

The Difference between Revelation and Illumination.

Granted with some would-be leaders like Beth Moore around the scene – some call them Bapticostal or something spelled like that, it is to be mislead on the difference between revelation, which is the giving by the Holy Spirit the Bible, complete now and ever since the first century with “the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3); and illumination which is the believer in the process of understand the Bible, the subject under discussion here that continues. Revelation is described in II Peter 2 as “No Scripture is of any private interpretation, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit...” Illumination is described in Ephesians 1: “¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

8-4: The Nature of Spiritual Wisdom, I Corinthians 1:18-2:16.

That the subject of I Corinthians centers around “wisdom” and “understanding” is clear from the number of places those two words are found.

1. For example the short quote from the OT, from Isaiah 29:14, in 1:19 contains both wisdom and understanding. This quote was deemed important enough by the Spirit to repeat it in I Corinthians, and perhaps it can be the beginning of our own understanding of the very nature of wisdom, including how understanding and wisdom are related.

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” (Isaiah 29:14 and I Cor 1:19)

(1). Let us no way misunderstand that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise; and since we know about the wise, or those respected by society as the wise, especially the university teachers, authors, and many of the PhDs and Th.Ds. who deny almost everything about the Bible, a case in point being the Jesus Seminar who deny that Jesus said most of what is in the Gospel of John. “Understanding of the prudent” is a little harder. Is this like in much of the OT, especially Proverbs, the saying of the same thing in two different ways, meaning that there is little or no difference between “understanding” and “wisdom”, or does it establish two categories: one for the wise and one for the prudent, corresponding to one for wisdom and one understanding. First, we will look at the context of Isaiah 29, and we immediately see that we are talking understanding and wisdom related to the Word of God: in 29:11 it is a matter of a vision coming in the words of a book, a common matter in all the Prophets, but the book is sealed and that reminds us of people who say I read the Bible but it is hard to understand {so already we see this choice of quote by Paul to talk about the understanding of spiritual matters}, a sealed book that the literate {educated and wise} say they can not understand because it is sealed and the illiterate {uneducated and prudent} simply say, “I am not educated” {sound familiar, but this is in Isaiah 29}; and then in 29:13, there is that same line of reasoning Jesus used in explaining what all things are taught in parables which is because (a) God’s people of Israel were participating in worship with their mouths and honoring God with their lips, but they kept their hearts far away from God {it should remind you of the present problem among church members of the perilous times of I Timothy 4:1-4 where church members “have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof”}, and (b) respect for God is taught by the commandments of men instead according to the authority of the Word of God {God doesn’t like that}, and (c) we might add from Jesus that the people see and do not see, hear and do not understand which Jesus in the Gospels applied to almost all of God’s people in Israel during His lifetime. Therefore I think that from the context, we can easily decide that the wise are the equivalent of the literate and the prudent are the illiterate. {Isaiah 29:14b is worded as the “prudent men”, and what I think we are getting at here is Mr. Average kingdom member with his common sense and practical capabilities, yet no understanding or wisdom on spiritual matters.}

(2). How are these prudent men; and since we are talking about understanding and wisdom as almost the same, then wise and prudent are almost the same, but each word explaining more of how they have no understanding because of the way they worship with their hearts elsewhere. It is like the psalmist wrote, “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom”. Since they have no respect or regard for God except what is being taught by the inadequate commandments {or teachings} of men, then there is no

real basis or foundation for understanding and wisdom. This context meaning is also clarified in Isaiah 29:9-10 where we see the theme of seeing without seeing and hearing without hearing repeated with reference to the words of how God has poured out a “deep sleep” on His people; He has closed the eyes of the people; and He identifies those eyes as the Prophets; and further God has covered the heads of the people of God, namely the seers. Ah, as we look at the wise as the literate and the prophets, we are looking at the prudent as the illiterate and seers. {It is also important in order for us to distinguish in I Corinthians between Prophets who give revelations and visions from God and the prophets and prophetess of the early Christian period who warned Paul, to think of the Prophets as the prophets and the prophetesses as the searers of things much nearer and mundane.}

But back to the prudent (29:15-16): they dig a deep hole to hide their counsel far from the LORD, these being the attitudes and instructions, customs and traditions with the teachings of men if you would, that guide the daily and yearly paths of their lives; the works follow along with the counsel {you might also consider it a common family, group, or community understanding for guidance} so that the works created by the group guidance are darkness; the people of God say “who sees us” and “who knows us”, that is no one is looking or directing us so that we can follow our own path; but God says that they have things backwards, can the clay say to the potter you did not make me and you do not understand me, obviously the creatures saying to the Creator that you do not understand us and we have no obligation to you. Therefore we would have to conclude that they are prudent with respect for God and His power, prudent with their obligations to Him, and prudent with the knowledge of the Sermon on the Mount, how God has the very hairs of the head numbered, knows the seating’s and risings like He knows when a sparrow falls.

(3). Now, we can check this understanding of Isaiah 29:14 and context with the explanation of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 1:19 of the quote; for remember that is the very purpose of the OT quotes most of the time, to state them and then to give the Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation. What follows after 1:19 by way of explanation? Well, first (a) Paul elaborates on what Isaiah meant about the wise and prudent as where is the wise, scribe, disputer of this age, and how God has made foolish all the wisdom of this world; (b) it was through the wisdom {spiritual} of God that this world through wisdom {natural wisdom of this world} did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe {and this is the marvelous work that God would again work among His people of Isaiah 29, starting with the preaching of the Gospel by Jesus Himself and continuing through the Apostles and other disciples}, and further the foolishness of the message from the worldly standpoint is that a wise way of life would come through the death of the Son of God on a cross, the death and sacrifice more like a criminal than like a hero in battle. {You see

the difference between the way the world thinks about wisdom and the cross as compared to the way believers think about wisdom and the cross.}

The word wisdom is found often beyond the quote of Isaiah 29:14: in I Cor 1:20 God makes foolish the wisdom of this world; in 1:21 it is "the wisdom of God", the world using the approach of their own wisdom but not finding God that way {you can see more of this in Romans 1}; in 1:22 while the Greeks seek after wisdom, the Jews seek after a sign or miracle {and recall Paul's experience at Mar's Hill in Athens before Corinth where philosophers listened all day to something different and new, and were so religious that they even had a tomb to the unknown God--by the way you might also consider such seekers after wisdom and philosophers as the prudent and wise}; in 1:24 the cross is the wisdom of God as well as the power of God although a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks; in 1:30 it is the Lord Jesus Christ who became for us wisdom from God {marvel on that for a while, but we will come back to it}, this wisdom from God identified here as the whole salvation process of "righteousness", "sanctification", and "redemption"; in 2:5 the faith of church members should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God {in modern thought patterns I would say not in the American Democratic Faith as much as in the power of God}; in 2:6 Paul and company speak wisdom for the mature which is not the same as the wisdom of this age, and it is also not the wisdom of the rulers of this age, the rulers of which are well on the way to becoming "nothing"; in 2:7 it is the wisdom of God in the hidden form of a "mystery", a mystery that God ordained before the ages of history and for our glory {you hear some more of Ephesians here, and in reality in I Corinthians and in the other first 10 of Paul's epistles what we have developed in the truth of Scriptures that will be summarized in Ephesians}, the specific reference being developed here is of how "God chose us in Christ from before the foundation of the world and determined us to be Sons". Enough, if you look in YOUNG'S CONCORDANCE you will find that "wisdom" is found 15 times in I Corinthians, contrasted to once in II Corinthians, 3 times in Ephesians, 6 times in Colossians, only once in Romans and none in Hebrews; and from the other NT writers, 3 times in Matthew, once in Mark, 6 times in Luke, once in Peter, four in James, and 4 in Revelation; therefore we can base on the text of I Corinthians itself decide that both God, Christ, the Spirit and Paul wanted us to have understanding on wisdom and understanding in the book of I Corinthians; and whatever we find as a gist for I Cor to distinguish it as one of the 14 letters from Paul, that gist must include either wisdom, understanding, or some combination of the two.

Remember, we are after in I Cor 2 the very nature of spiritual wisdom. We should do a quick exegesis of the thought flow from 2:1-16: (1) when Paul was with this church at Corinth to declare the "testimony of God", it was not by the means of excellent speech or of wisdom, you seeing in the very beginning of wisdom definition, a reference back to the first words of the epistle related to utterance and knowledge; (2) Paul carefully

planned and chose his message to the church to be only on Jesus Christ and His crucifixion; (3) while human wisdom {of course we are again on one aspect of the wisdom of this world} includes “persuasive words”, Paul’s message and preaching included weakness, fear, trembling {here I think we are seeing some of the aspects of the illness of Paul which showed itself in his appearance}, included a demonstration of the Spirit and of power; (4) that the faith generated by hearing the message {remember that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God} should stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; (5) okay the wisdom from the Apostles and companion disciples is (a) a wisdom among the mature, (b) not the wisdom of this age or of the nothing rulers of this age, (c) wisdom spoken in a mystery which God made known recently, and (d) a wisdom which the rulers of this age did not know since they crucified the Lord of glory {so that the wise rulers of the age of Paul are clearly identified as the religious leaders of the time of Christ, you know the scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees, and rulers who always opposed Jesus and had Him put to death}, but according to the will of God; (5) Paul quotes again from Isaiah, this time in 64:4 to the extent that what God has prepared in eternity for those who live, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, or even the heart of man has not enough imagination to conceive of; (6) however God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.

And we must pause here to lock onto this second usage of the word “revelation”. The first was in 1:7 and was an eager expectation for the revelation of Jesus Christ at the Second Coming. That is where we know Jesus most fully for we shall physically see Him with our own eyes. This second usage of the word relates to the Revelation of the Word of God, where we can not see but by faith. {The wisdom of the world, especially today in physics, technology, and to the extent that the social sciences like to practice the scientific method place an emphasis on what can be seen or physically determined by measurements. Remember however according to the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We reasonable expect, that is the hope of the Bible, that God has spoken to us through the words of the Scriptures, and we have a lot of real evidence that the Bible of 66 books is the Word of God although we do not see the Holy Spirit, nor did we see the writing of the Scriptures, but we can see, read, and hear the results of those Revelations.}

“But God has revealed them {the “them” we know to be the mysteries of God plan for us from before Creation} to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” (I Corinthians 2:10)

(1). God has REVEALED this formerly hidden wisdom based on His decisions from before Creation, the wisdom of the what and how of our salvation. Those revelations are in His Son, in the teachings of His Son, and in the written words of the Old and New Testaments.

(2). The means of communication from God to man was the Holy Spirit. Jesus said when He is come, and He did on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension, then He would teach disciples all things and bring all things to their remembrance. Paul tells us that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...." Peter said that Paul wrote Scriptures and that in the OT Scriptures "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit", further Peter said that sometimes the Prophets themselves did not understand what they were recording, but wrote it as lead by the Spirit of Christ {there is hardly any difference between the Spirit of Christ in the OT and the Holy Spirit in the NT and beyond}.

(3). The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God, of God's character, of God's will, and of all those marvelous things that God has prepared for the loving. A Wrap-Up of I Corinthians 2 on the Nature of Wisdom

Can we therefore say that there will be no wisdom from God except what God the Holy Spirit has chosen to REVEAL in the Scriptures. Yes, there would be one exception if we had been alive to hear one of the Apostles or disciples give their testimony to what they saw and heard from Jesus Himself; but we have those testimonies anyway in what Matthew recorded, Mark, Luke, and John, and Peter and Paul, the testimonies that Simon Greenleaf, the expert on legal evidence, is a prima facie case that would stand up as reliable testimony in any court of law.

We must add here that there is no room here for extra-curricula revelations whether it comes from a so-called Prophet of the Mormon Church, from the Pope, or from the Pentecostals who says often "God gave me a word" or "God told me". This is not and can not be a Revelation. It can be an illumination of the Revelation, but not Revelation itself. We could also make the dogmatic statement based on what we have seen in I Corinthians that: ANY REVELATION NOT COMING DIRECTLY FROM THE SCRIPTURES IS NOT PART OF THE SPIRITUAL WISDOM AND MYSTERY OF GOD, THEREFORE IT HAS TO BE THE WISDOM OF

THIS WORLD. {Often, it is also the wisdom of the prince of this world, and you know who that is.}

{I Cor 2 continued and concluded from above}: (7) We as part of humanity with a human spirit know about man from that spirit, and likewise only the Spirit can fully comprehend the things of God; (8) the spirit of this world is that human spirit, but that is not what we received when we believed, rather we received the Spirit who is from God, and in order that we might KNOW the things that have been given of the Spirit from God.

Again we must pause on I Cor 2:12 to distinguish between: knowing the things from God and those things which have been given from God by the Spirit, between in other

words the Revelation, which is the original giving to us of the things of God, and the Illumination, which is the knowing of the things previously given to us. The Revelations are there and in the 66 books of the Bible since they were put there by the Spirit of God of all the deep things that God wants us to know, but that does you not one iota of good until you “know” those things through illumination. Not only must be briefly look at this in 2:12 but also in the summary of Ephesians 1. {You see this goes to the very nature of the wisdom of this world, the wisdom that comes from God through Revelation, and the understanding of those revelations through the illumination of the same Spirit who wrote them in the first place.} (1). I Corinthians 2:12.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” To the Bible as the Word of God meaning it is divine in origin, absolute in authority, and high fidelity in communication, we might add “freely given of God” instead of the standard sufficient in message and “all the deep things of God that the Spirit can dig up”!

(2). Revelation and Illumination Summarized in Ephesians 1:17-19.

“...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you {Never forget that God the Father is the ultimate source of the Spirit, this spirit of wisdom and revelation}...the spirit of wisdom and revelation {well, isn't that what we have been talking about in I Cor 2 of how the wisdom from God, not to be confused with the wisdom of this world, is made known by through revelation--don't you like the Holy Spirit here being called the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, and by the way although the Spirit does work on our Spirit, here it should have been capitalized as NJKV}...in the knowledge of Him, the ears of your understanding being enlightened {there it is, immediately after the Revelation is the Illumination with the words of “your understanding being enlightened”}...that you may know {and there after illumination or enlightenment is the KNOWING}.”

And now we will not get into the specifics of the knowing of these deep things of God which Paul summarizes as the hope of Christ's calling {the one hope}, the riches of the inheritance in the saints {the one body}, and the greatness of His power on our behalf {the one Spirit and perhaps even in the one baptism}. We will save that for the chapter on Ephesians where all the great truths of the first ten epistles from Paul are summarized, and primarily without OT quote.

(3). While we are on the Spirit God has given to us, we should relate that to how to LEARN CHRIST and initial salvation, most generally called the new birth, sanctification, and glorification, but which has a problem today in leading to more “tares” in the churches and the kingdom as it is an instantaneous new birth being presented, preached, and practiced rather than the more like 9 month physical birth to

which Jesus made the contribution {for more on this subject of new birth and the falling away see the two commentaries based on Mark of CUP OF WATER and WHAT THE CHURCHES DON'T WANT YOU TO HEAR}.

“But you have not so learned Christ {this makes it obvious immediately that church members can learn Christ improperly and inadequately to the extent that they yield to the peer pressure of other Gentiles}...if indeed you have heard Him {wow, that takes a lot of nerve for a preacher to question the salvation of a church member with the big “IF”} and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus...” (Ephesians 4:20,21)

What is really required for salvation, for the Learning of Christ if you would is: (1) to hear Jesus in your heart as He says I and My Father knock at the door of your heart, and if you open up we will come in and sup with you, and you with us; and (2) and been taught by Him, the way of the teaching of Jesus now is through the Holy Spirit as John makes clear from the teachings of Jesus in John 14.

How to Understand the Bible from I Cor 2:13-16

While many good books have been written on hermeneutics, the science of biblical interpretation the best of which are from Bernard Ramm, the Bible itself in many places lays down the requirements for understanding of Itself. Some of these principles are given in the concluding four verses of I Corinthians 2, based on the background of the total chapter 2 context.

(1). You must have respect for the Apostles like Paul and the Prophets as the only mediums through which Revelation from God has been given to man; and when in 2:13 Paul says the “we” he primarily speaks in reference to himself and the other Apostles, perhaps even the Prophets of the OT. The words given to Paul, the words preached by Paul, and the words written by Paul are words that come from the Holy Spirit, not from the words generated in the wisdom of men. Like B.H. Carroll stresses in his commentaries, the actual words in the Scriptures were inspired as written in the original Hebrew and Greek languages.

(2). The teachings of the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Bible compare spiritual things with spiritual, Paul in I Corinthians with Isaiah, Isaiah with Romans, and Romans with I Corinthians and Mark and Matthew and therefore with Jesus. When the Spirit Revealed Scriptures the comparison was made between spiritual in the OT with spiritual in the NT, and you can see that in the mode and pattern of OT quotes in the NT, especially from Jesus Himself; and further when the Spirit internal to you Illuminates or Enlightens you on the teachings, it is by comparing the spiritual things your spirit already knows and from one place in the Bible with the spiritual things you are coming to know from another place in the Bible. I think we could summarize this

principles of hermeneutics as “Read your Bible: it will throw a lot of light on the commentaries.”

(3). Of course, most of the world does not understand the Bible; of course there are many interpretations based on the wisdom of the world, and that do not utilize the ASPI method of interpretation {“no scripture is of any private interpretation”, so that we must have not a public but a semi-public and authorized by the Spirit interpretation}; of course there are many denominations and differences of opinions since most of the world can not understand the Bible as they use the wisdom of PhDs, Th.Ds., and the scribes of the world; and of course there are degrees of maturity in the understanding of the Bible. Why? Because “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor 2:14)

(4). The degree to which you have come to think like Christ and feel like Christ, and do the will of God like Christ, is the extent to which you will have maturity in the understanding by illumination of the Scriptures; and Paul again quotes from Isaiah, this time Isaiah 40:13, to let Isaiah ask the question of “who knows the mind of God” and then to answer by way of interpretation and according to the Spirit, “we have the mind of Christ.”