

Ephesians 3:1-2, Part 2

0202

But that is to say that it is absolutely not true, that the real true meaning of Scripture is beyond our knowing, that everybody has their own understanding and who knows what the right understanding is. That is a lie.

The Spirit of Truth does not teach you the meaning of the passage. Nor does the Spirit of Truth, remove or negate the need for teachers and preachers. So if the Spirit of Truth does that does not do that, what does the Holy Spirit do? How does the Spirit of Truth lead us as God's people into the right and correct understanding of God's Word?

Now to see that let's take a look at a well-known passage that's found in First Corinthians chapter two. We're familiar with this passage, I refer to it regularly. Because this, the whole chapter is about this, the whole chapter is about how it is that the Spirit-indwelt believer knows and understands what is the truth of God, and what is not the truth of God.

Now, we're not gonna take the time to go through the whole chapter, we could, it would be helpful, but we won't take the time to go through the whole chapter, I just want to skip to one part of a chapter. And from this, what I want us to see is this: The Scriptures are teaching us very clearly and very plainly, what the Spirit does and how He does it, so that we, as believers can know what to look for know what to expect, know what to ask of God to do in our hearts, so that we won't expect the Spirit to do what the Spirit doesn't do. But we will expect the spirit to do what the Spirit does. Do that make sense?

Okay, so now, let's take a look at verse 12. From verse 12. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, who is from God's speaking of the Holy Spirit, we are the recipients of the Spirit of God, all believers, we know are indwelt by the Spirit of God, so we've received this Spirit. Why did we receive it? That we might understand the things freely given us by God?

So that's the question, Paul. That's the purpose. The purpose is that we might understand that things given us from God, but the question is still, how? How does the Spirit do that? He's gonna explain: verse 13: "And we impart this in words, not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual." So there he says, "We teach these things. We're teaching spiritual truth, spiritual concepts. And we do this not by human words, but the Spirit Himself is doing this."

And you see that word interpreting. You know, what interpret means, interpret means to assign a value or an understanding, to relate an understanding of a thing, okay.

So we impart this truth, not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truth to those who are spiritual numbers 14 The natural person. So let's stop right there, the natural person. And let's understand who the natural person is.

The natural person is Paul's way of referring to one who does not have the Holy Spirit. There's one other instance in which this same phrase is used, and I'm sorry for the awkward page break, but it's on the back page. Jude, verse 19. This same phrase shows up the only other time in Scripture and here's how it shows up. "It is these who cause divisions." And then Jude says, "worldly people, devoid of the Spirit," so that worldly people, that's the same phrase, worldly people or natural man, natural woman, Natural Humanity, devoid of the Spirit, the additional description there is that these are people who have not the Spirit of God.

So Paul says, the person who has not the Spirit of God, the natural person does not what? Accept Accept the things of the Spirit of God, why? For they are folly to him or foolishness to him. So there's two words that really help us in this passage to understand what Paul means, how the Spirit works, how the Spirit works in the believer. And the first word is folly or foolishness.

So he says, The one who does not have the Spirit doesn't accept the things of God. And why don't they accept them? Because to them, they are foolishness. Chapter one verse 18, of the same book, Paul, use that same word to say that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are being lost those who are perishing, okay?

So the natural person hears the truths of the Spirit hears the truths of God, does not accept them, and the reason they don't accept them is because they are are foolish.

Paul did not say that they're nonsensical. He did not say that they're undiscernible, undecipherable. He didn't say that they're gibberish. Paul didn't say that the natural person doesn't accept the things of God because they don't understand them, or because they're gibberish to them. He says that they evaluate them, and assess a value of foolishness to them.

In other words, they have to understand in order to call them foolish, to call something foolish. You understood it. And so the natural person hears the truth of God and says, That's foolishness.

Now, let's continue on, we'll see the other words that's really helpful for us to keep that in mind. We'll come back to it, verse 15, the spiritual person, on the other hand, judges all things but he himself is judged by no one.

So it's really unfortunate that there is no translation that translates this passage consistently. And what I mean by that is, you see this word 'discern,' end of verse 14, and then you see judge or judges and then judged, verse 15, they're all same word. They're, they're the identical word. It's unfortunate that they're not translated the same way every time because I think that would help us to make an important connection. If we saw in the English Paul uses the same word three times, first of all, the natural person judges, but the spiritual person also judges all things was not judged by anyone. Okay?

So the connection that we're to make here is this: the natural person makes a judgment. Now the word judge there, we can think of judge in a couple of different ways, right? You can think of judgmental, somebody that's very judgmental, very critical kind of spirit, right? Or you can think of God's final judgment, right? We can use judge in that sense. That's not the sense here. That's not the word here. The word here is more like the word appraise.

You know, how 'judge' can mean appraise. You, you judge something to be valuable. You judge something to be a waste of time you judge something to be unworthy of your effort, whatever, right? We use the word judge in that way. That's what Paul's meaning is here.

So the natural person appraises the things of God as not undiscernible, but discernible, yet foolish, and that's the key.

That's the whole key to the work of the Spirit. And understanding how it is the Spirit leads us in a different way into truth than He led the apostles into truth.

Because the natural man, the one who is without the Spirit, is not capable of appraising the truth of God rightly. They instead appraise it as foolishness. Now what is foolishness mean? Foolishness foolishness means something unwise, unproductive, unuseful, just something that should be discarded.

The Scriptures are not gibberish to anyone. No one who is capable of reading, reads the Christian scriptures and says, that's just gibberish.

You ever read the sacred writings of any other religion? Has anybody ever read sacred writings of Islam or Buddhism or Confucianism or it, they're all the same. They are gibberish.

If you've never read them, trust me, you don't want to but they are nonsensical. They're just gibberish. The Christian Scriptures are not. And the Christian scriptures never imply that they are gibberish, to the unsaved person.

Rather, the scriptures understand that they can be understood by all people. But what can't happen without the Spirit is the right judging or the right appraisal of the Scripture.

So there's two things that the Spirit of Truth, by making us alive to God, there's two things that the Spirit of Truth enables you to appraise or judge rightly. And that is, first of all, you are able to rightly appraise the truth value of the Scriptures. You're able to rightly appraise or rightly judge the truth value of the scriptures.

So without the Spirit of truth, we would read the scriptures as natural man would read the scriptures, understanding their meaning, and dismiss them as foolish untruths. "That's not, that's not true. This person dying 2000 years ago and taking away the penalty of sin, or a God who holds people accountable for their actions," or any of the truths of the Bible. Without the Spirit of truth, the natural man reads those understands them, and dismisses them as foolish untruths.

The Spirit of Truth, on the other hand, enables us, or teaches us to rightly appraise the truth of the scriptures. So the spiritual person reads the scriptures, and the Spirit of Truth says to us, "that's true."

Now by connection, that's how we recognize the right teaching and the right preaching of God's word. Because the Spirit of truth, who wrote the Scriptures—the Holy Spirit is the author of the scriptures, he wrote them—and the author lives in you.

And when the author of this, here's what he wrote, being rightly explained, he tells you, that's right. That's truth. You can believe that.

And that's how the Spirit of Truth guides us into truth. He doesn't whisper the meaning into our ear, rather, when we study it. And we think, "Okay, I think that this is what's God, God's saying to me here," the Spirit of Truth says, "Yes, that's what he's saying." That's what he means." Or the Spirit of Truth says, "No, we're not there." Or when you hear the word preached, the Spirit of Truth says, Yes, that's it. He's on it. That's, that's the right track, or no, this is not really, that's not really ringing home, right?

Because the Spirit of Truth residing in the believer, isn't having to interpret truth. He's listening for his truth that he wrote to you. And so there's this resonance that occurs there. Philippians chapter one, verse nine and 10, I, I didn't think, I didn't make this connection until after your notes were printed. But Philippians chapter one, verse nine and 10, Paul says, "I made my prayer in this way, that's your love would abound more and more in knowledge that you would accept what is excellent."

That's what Paul's saying that as you grow in your vibrant relation with the Spirit, that spirit's voice gets stronger, and stronger, and clearer and clearer to tell you when you've heard truth, so that you can recognize it.

I know that you've heard me use this, this is my favorite illustration for the work of the Spirit. Because I think this is the clearest way to understand this. And it's the illustration of resonance. Resonance is a phenomenon of physics. Nobody really can explain why this happens. But this is a fact of physics, that if there are two strings, that are tightened to the same pitch in the same room, and one of those strings vibrates, without touching the other one, the other one will also vibrate. So we have one guitar up here. If we had two, I could go to one of these guitars, and I could pluck the low E string. And without touching the other one, the low E string would also vibrate, assuming they're both tuned.

That's called resonance. That is the Holy Spirit. That is how the Holy Spirit works. The Holy Spirit leads you into right understanding of his word. Because when you hear it rightly proclaimed, the Spirit testifies to you, you've heard it. He has taught it rightly.

Likewise, when you hear it taught wrongly, if you are indwelt by the Spirit, then there should be the same indication in reverse.

Now, the thing is, we're all sinful people. We're all fallen people. And so that voice of the Holy Spirit, so to speak, is not always as clear as it should be. And we don't always understand it perfectly. So this isn't to say that because Holy Spirit lives in us that we always preach His word rightly. And we always

hear His word rightly, we don't ever make mistakes. That's not the case at all, because of the effects of sin upon us.

But that is to say that it is absolutely not true, that the real true meaning of Scripture is beyond our knowing, that everybody has their own understanding and who knows what the right understanding is, that is a lie.

If the Holy Spirit exists, then we know the right meaning of what he wrote, because that's what he testifies to it.

So that's the first thing that the Spirit does. The second thing that the Spirit does, is he teaches you to appraise not only rightly appraise, the truth value, but also rightly appraised the moral value.

So the Scriptures say to us a lot of things that the natural man would hear and understand and say, That's foolish, because that's a worthless sort of exchange. Just some examples, there's so many examples, but just one example: the scriptures would say to us, it is of infinitely more value, that you lay up treasures in heaven, instead of treasures on earth.

Okay, so that's a moral value, we're assigning, the scriptures are assigning a greater value to the next life than this one. The one devoid of the Spirit would hear that and say, That's foolishness.

Because this life, this life is the here and now. So you see that? I mean, that's, that should be plain to us, that the Holy Spirit communicates to us a different way of assessing moral value.

Jesus says, The first will be last, the last will be first, The natural man hears that says, "that's foolishness. I understand what Jesus was saying. But if what he's saying is foolish."

Or the scriptures would say to us, that infinitely more precious is the righteousness of Christ given to us by faith, rather than the righteousness that I can achieve on my own, the scripture say infinitely more valuable, infinitely more precious is the righteousness of Christ. The one devoid of the Spirit hears that and appraises the wrong value, appraises a higher value on my own righteousness.

Or the praise of men. The scriptures say to us, far more valuable is the praise of God, than the praise of men. The one devoid of the Spirit hears that understands it and says, Well, I really like the praise of man more.

So the Spirit of Truth teaches you to appraise or judge the right moral value on what the Scriptures present to you, so that the one who is indwelt by the Spirit—the Spirit is communicating to them when we hear that right preaching of the word that says, value, the praise of God over the praise of men, the Spirit of Truth says to us, "yes," and enables us makes us alive to God so that we are enabled to do just that.

Now, having said all that, can you see how frustrating and discouraging it would be if we understood that the Spirit's work is to teach us what the Scriptures mean? And then we open our scriptures, we

pray, God, show me what this means. And we read it. And we don't get it at first, close, close the Bible. Well, I guess, I guess this whole bible thing doesn't work for me, or I guess the spirit really isn't talking to me.

But that's not what the Spirit does. The Spirit wants you to exert yourself, and to use the capacity that God has given to men and women to understand his word which is clearly written to us. That's called the doctrine of the Perpesquity of Scripture. So just a really fancy word that means God is not ambiguous in the Scriptures. He wrote them plainly. That's not to say that they're not parts of it that are harder to understand than others. But the scriptures aren't ambiguous. They're not hidden. They're not secret they're plain.

And so the Holy Spirit wants us to apply the God-given abilities to comprehend. And then the Spirit's works comes along to say, now you're getting it. Now you're understanding it. He's preaching it true. He's preaching it correct. And that's how the Spirit of Truth works.