

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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14 December 2008
VOLUME 8; ISSUE 50

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Many will never know the Truth

Words of Admonition for YOU and I

How's that for a title? You may be thinking, "What a negative and false statement!" But is it? Yes, Jesus said, "*You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*" (Jn. 8:32). The Lord also inspired Paul to write, "*Now the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged*" (I Cor. 2:14). The world reads these two verses and exclaims, "An unsolvable paradox."

Paul's "natural man" is one whose interest and desire lay within the world itself. Truth is not something that is monetarily profitable, entertaining, brings popularity, or able to secure a higher position at work for the natural man. The natural man cannot know truth and will not be subject to God's laws because they do not interest him (Rom. 8:7). The natural man takes a casual approach to studying God's word if even that. The natural man opens the Bible, reads a passage out of its context, is confused, and closes it concluding that it cannot be understood. Some natural men dig a little deeper yet when their interpretation is in conflict with a dear friend they exclaim, "no one can understand the Bible alike." The natural man's conclusion is, "If I cannot understand then no one else can."

There is no doubt that there are "hard to understand" passages in the Bible (see II Pet. 3:15-16). No where; however, do we find God telling us that the principles revealed in His divine revelation to man are impossible to understand. The "hard to understand" passages are intended to make man dig for the meanings to enrich his life now and forevermore. Those who give this effort will not be disappointed (Matt. 13:10ff).

A given is that man can and must know all truth (Jn. 8:32). That being said one must take an intelligent approach to such understanding. If I were to approach a study of Romans chapter 4 with little prior knowledge of Genesis and the life of Abraham I may find it difficult to impossible to understand Paul's conclusions. Though my guiding principle was the Lord's statement, "*you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*" I nonetheless find myself not knowing all truth. In a state of confusion I may turn to a commentary and read another man's interpretation. Shall I accept his conclusions? Shall I close the book on the study? Where shall I go next? Often times such an approach to God's word leaves the disciple even more confused and ignorant of truth.

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Rachel Bender had a health baby girl on December 8, 2008. The baby's name is Aurora Diane Bender. Aurora weighed 7 lbs. 13 ounces at birth and is 20 inches in length. Rachel and her baby are doing great.

Travis Pyle had laparoscopic surgery to remove his gall bladder this past Thursday. Travis was permitted to go home Friday morning and is now recovering.

Quincy Adams will be going back to Dallas on Dec. 18th one final time to have his eye surgery. We pray that all goes well.

Tom Witherspoon has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Tom will be undergoing surgery within the next few months. Please keep him in your prayers too.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Let me say, as gently as I can, that those who spend little time examining context and grand themes in the Bible just simply **will not know the truth**. Yes, Jesus said, "*You shall know the truth,*" yet you my unlearned and uninterested friend, will never know truth and neither will you subject yourself to it (Rom. 8:5-7). Your mind has been polluted by preachers who teach that truth is overly simple or impossibly difficult. You have allowed elders to scoff at textual studies and waste brethren's lives with workbooks that demand nothing more than a fill in the blank. Quarter after quarter goes by on the calendar and no one is challenged to understand truth. Many brethren have not pushed their minds and neither have they spent volumes of time studying. The current distress the church is experiencing over MDR, false teachers, and tolerance is due to a level of ignorance among God's people that has become alarming.

Those who cannot learn truth are confused by much of the Bible. The Bible is a difficult read because interest, effort, and a vigorous work ethic have not been applied to interpretation. We have young people who can unravel the webs of stories such as "The Fictional Chronicles of Dragon History Volume I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, etc." (jcr) yet they have no bearings on the word of God. Young teenagers are lost even in simple books such as Acts of the Apostles. Parents encourage their children to read and are excited to see them finish volume XI of "The Fictional Chronicles of Dragon History" after a ten year study. These same parents often shrug their shoulders at their children's ignorance of God's word. Why? Because in most cases the parents themselves are grossly negligent and ignorant of God's Word. No, they will not admit it yet the evidence is overwhelming.

Let me suggest a remedy to Bible ignorance. First, know that you can know truth **only** if you apply yourself to know it. Second, be humble enough to admit that your knowledge is deficient. Thirdly, know that if you try to tackle a difficult text without a detailed study of the context it is found in you are certain to be confused. I suggest getting to know your Bible by examining book studies as a whole. Take the time to dissect books chapter by chapter and verse by verse. This will do two things. First, such a dissection of the text will give you familiarity with the Bible and secondly it will help you interpret a given passage in its context. I would also suggest keeping a notebook handy. When you run across topics such as baptism, obedience, justification, Holy Spirit baptism, and so forth write down the topic and the verse where its topic is found. Soon, you will have an enormous list of topics with an exhaustive list of Bible verses the topic is found. You will become like the child who is given a "connect the dots" picture in numerical format. With a little work, what once was a bunch of jumbled up numbers becomes a clear and beautiful picture. Even so, what was once a bunch of jumbled up hard to understand verses in the Bible now becomes a clear and meaningful book of encouragement and hope.

Is such a study a daunting task? Yes. Sixty six books is a great deal of material... yes it is. That will take years... yes it will. But I work... go to school... play in the band, football team, etc. How will I find the time? Those who know the truth are those who are interested in truth. Those interested in truth will find the time to tackle this daunting task. Now, will you or will you not KNOW truth?

John C. Robertson

Fear of God or Man

Back to the Old Paths Series

Jeremiah 6:16

Introduction:

God's people must remain grounded on the firm foundation of truth (II Tim. 2:19). Those that veer from God's standards must be encouraged to get back to the old paths of truth (Jer. 6:16). One way that God's people may remain (and or come back) firmly planted within God's foundation of truth is to have fear in its proper place. Those who fear man and give into the world's ways will be greatly disappointed on the Day of Judgment. Those whose fear remains with God as they remain grounded in truth shall never be disappointed.

I. Examples of men who illustrated a fear of God and courage in their lives:

A. Jesus:

1. His Preaching (Matt. 10:28)
2. His life (Matt. 16:14)
3. His concerns for man's eternal soul (Matt. 15:1-14)
4. His death (Phil. 2:8)

B. The Apostles:

1. Their preaching (Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-32).
2. Their lives (I Cor. 4:9-13)
3. Their concerns for man's eternal soul (Acts 21:37ff)
4. Their death (Acts 21:13)

C. Old Testament Examples:

1. David's speech to Saul and Goliath (I Sam. 17)
2. Elijah (I Kg. 18)
3. Jeremiah (Jer. 20:9)
4. Daniel (Dan. 6)

II. Making a proper distinction between deity and the arm of flesh:

A. Man is limited by age, strength, and knowledge.

B. God has no such limits placed upon Him:

1. God's power and divinity put on display in Egypt (Rom. 9:17).
2. God caused the Sun and Moon to stand still during Joshua's day (Josh. 10:12ff).
3. God has illustrated his power over: the seas, planets, plant life, animals, sickness, disease, demonic spirits, life, death, and sin.
4. God is truly the "El Shaddai" (i.e., the Almighty Strong One) (Gen. 17:1)

C. Those who fear man are destined for eternal damnation (Phil. 1:28).

III. God commands us to fear Him Alone:

A. OT days (Deut. 5:29; 6:1ff; Josh. 1:9; 10:8, 25).

B. NT days (I Pet. 2:17).

Conclusion:

The natural and proper place for man's fear ought to be found in God. No matter how fierce the wicked may appear (Matt. 10:24-31) the Christian should never fear the enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:17-18). Let us recall the encouraging words of Paul who said, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) The author of Hebrews also wrote, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6). Knowing these truths let us boldly preach truth, live truth, and place our hope in God!