Chapter Ten

Understanding

**This section will look at several words and their meanings. When we study certain words, we gain knowledge of what they mean. When we learn what they mean, we have a better understanding. To know what something means. To know why something is. And to have an absolute positive feeling of knowledge and how to apply it properly.**

Nehemiah 8:8 (NKJV) So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

Nehemiah 8:13 (NKJV) Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law.

**Do we really understand what we are talking about? Some might question us in this matter. What we need to do now, is look at several uses of the word "understand".**

**As we read these passages, look at the word "understand" and see how it is used. Pay attention to the context of the passage. Look at the results of having understanding. Look at the benefits of using or having understanding. You will notice that the word is active and not passive. In other words, it is being put to use.** **The passive tense would be like sitting in a car. The active tense is like driving a car. One idea conveys the actual doing of something. The passive tense carries the idea of mere existence.**

Psalms 14:2 (NKJV) The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

Psalms 107:43 (NKJV) Whoever is wise will observe these things, And they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

Psalms 119:27 (NKJV) Make me understand the way of Your precepts; So shall I meditate on Your wondrous works.

Proverbs 1:2-7 (NKJV) To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, {3} To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity; {4} To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion; {5} A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, {6} To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles. {7} The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Jeremiah 23:20 (NKJV) The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.

Daniel 9:13 (NKJV) "As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.

Daniel 10:12 (NKJV) Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

Hosea 14:9 (NKJV) Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the LORD are right; The righteous walk in them, But transgressors stumble in them.

**Every one of the above passages describes the word "understand" in the active tense. The following passages deal with the word from a different viewpoint. This use of the word is passive, but will later become active. You may sit in a car and later you may drive the car. Look at these passages and see if this is so. Look at the context. Look at the way the word is used.**

Mark 4:13 (NKJV) And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?

Mark 7:14 (NKJV) When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand:

Mark 9:32 (NKJV) But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Luke 9:45 (NKJV) But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

John 8:27 (NKJV) They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

John 8:43 (NKJV) "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

John 10:6 (NKJV) Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things that He spoke to them.

**All of these meet the requirements of our study. Now we will see what happens when the word becomes active.**

John 12:16 (NKJV) His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

John 13:7 (NKJV) Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

**The disciples did not know what Jesus was talking about when He was here. But later when the Holy Spirit came with power, they were made to understand. This changed their lives dramatically. I try to picture that moment in history when this understanding was first known. These people had been in ignorance their whole lives, and all of a sudden, they had knowledge and understanding of what it was all about. Can you imagine taking in and comprehending the message of God in a matter of moments? Many Christians take years to really grasp the meaning of life and their duty to God. These disciples got it in a moment. No wonder they went about preaching the Christ. No wonder they gave their lives for His cause.**

Acts 8:30 (NKJV) So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

**I am always impressed with the answer given by the eunuch. Many today would deny someone's assistance. This eunuch must have been a very wise man.**

Ephesians 3:1-12 (NKJV) For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles; {2} if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, {3} how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, {4} by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), {5} which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: {6} that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, {7} of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. {8} To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, {9} and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; {10} to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, {11} according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, {12} in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

**Paul received a special revelation. The other Apostles had been eyewitnesses of the Christ. They lived with Him. They ate with Him. They followed Him. They saw Him perform miracles. They heard His teachings. They saw Him die on the cross. They saw Him ascend into Heaven. They did not understand it all, until after He died and the church was established. Paul was different. He was not there with the Christ. But in order for him to be a minister to Christ, Christ had to reveal Himself to Paul. The Holy Spirit did this for Paul. Paul could preach to the Gentiles and still have the same gospel that Peter preached to the Jews. Paul knew about the gospel just as well if not better than Peter. Paul wanted to tell everyone about Christ, His church, and heaven. This is one reason that Paul wrote so many letters. Paul found out that his letters could reach more ears than his personal preaching. We are thankful that the Holy Spirit guided Paul.**

Ephesians 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Hebrews 11:3 (NKJV) By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

**Let's look again at the disciples. The scriptures teach that they were kept in the dark concerning the gospel. This was in accordance with God's plan. Remember in Ephesians 3 we read that the wisdom of God is made known through the church. The church was not established until Pentecost after the Lord's death.**

Luke 9:45 (NKJV) But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

Luke 24:16 (NKJV) But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

Luke 18:34 (NKJV) But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.

**Let's look now at some scriptures with the word "mystery". What is a mystery? That which is unknown now but is eventually made known. I hear of people reading a mystery novel or watching a mystery movie. I always thought that it was unfair that Perry Mason had more information than we did. Mr. Mason always brought up facts that the writers failed to advise us on. The writers had us thinking from the beginning. We always knew that the defendant was innocent, despite the evidence; but we could not give a reason with the information we were given.**

**The Old Testament was much the same way. The writers and those who lived in those times knew there was more to the immediate story. They thought it unfair that they did not have all the information. That is why God's plan of salvation is described as a mystery.**

1 Corinthians 2:7 (NKJV) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

Colossians 1:26 (NKJV) the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

Mark 4:11 (NKJV) And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,

Romans 16:25 (NKJV) Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

Romans 16:26 (NKJV) but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith;

Ephesians 1:9 (NKJV) having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

Colossians 1:26 (NKJV) the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 2:2 (NKJV) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,

**Mysteries are solved because facts have been made known. We are given clues and patterns to observe. We see the characters and how they inter-relate to each other. Look at the word "reveal" and "revealed". This is the making know of facts or truths. See how this word is used.**

Matthew 16:17 (NKJV) Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

John 9:3 (NKJV) Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Galatians 3:23 (NKJV) But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

1 Peter 1:12 (NKJV) To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; things which angels desire to look into.

Romans 16:25 (NKJV) Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

Romans 16:26 (NKJV) but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith;

**"Manifest" is another word that is very similar to reveal. Look at the uses of this word in the previous verse above and following.**

1 Peter 1:20 (NKJV) He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

1 John 1:1 (NKJV) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life;

1 John 1:2 (NKJV) the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us;

1 John 1:3 (NKJV) that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:10 (NKJV) In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

**We will now notice that knowledge is a part of God's plan. This is the confidence we have that the facts are correct.**

1 John 2:3 (NKJV) Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1 John 2:4 (NKJV) He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 5:20 (NKJV) And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

**Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit has given us this understanding. We must be like Paul and try to explain as much of the Gospel as we can to anyone who will listen. We now know there is a heaven and there is a hell. These places are real. We also know that God has a plan to keep us out of hell. We understand that in order to go to heaven, we must be like God. We must be holy;, as He is holy. We must be perfect;, as He is perfect. When we learn what these things mean, it becomes our duty to teach others what they mean. To share our understanding with others would be imitating Paul as he imitated the Christ.**

**Our next two sections will notice the application of the knowledge that we have acquired. We will see this in living Christian lives and by giving of ourselves in promoting the Gospel.**

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