

Nous Part 5

– *mind, thought, understanding, spiritual perception* –

Concept

The Greek concept of **νοῦς** (nous) has to do with our perceptive abilities – a way of understanding or interpreting something, a mental impression. Humanly speaking it is being aware of something by way of the senses - seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. While spiritually speaking it refers to the believer's Spiritual perception, which is necessary for discerning the will of God. The Bible teaches that man, in his natural human state, does not have the ability to perceive and understand the things of God. Furthermore, it is only the Lord by His Spirit who is able to open man's mind in this way; thereby allowing him to see, and to hear, and to know.

Review ~ Meaning Parts 1 through 3

In our first three articles, we studied Paul's teachings on this important word (**νοῦς**, nous, Strong's 3563) and concept. In Romans, he says believers are in the process of being transformed through the renewing of their mind. Then Ephesians teaches believers are renewed in the spirit of their minds. And finally I Corinthians describes the communal growth process of being knit together in the same mind and the same judgment.

Review ~ Meaning Part 4

Last week we began the second phase of our study of **νοῦς** (nous). This study centers on how the believer develops spiritual perception. Paul taught in I Corinthians 2:14-16, that a natural-thinking man does not understand the things of the Lord. This is because the things of the Lord are spiritually discerned. The human being with his natural abilities does not have the capacity to comprehend spiritual things. Only the spiritual man can understand spiritual things. Paul concludes chapter two with this statement: **But we ourselves have the mind of Christ.** The person saved by the Spirit of God has the Spirit of the living God residing within. It is through this indwelling that God's Spirit reveals the spiritual things of God to God's people.

νοῦς (nous) Part 5

A great example of this is found in Luke 24:13-45 and it serves as the focus of this week's study.

Their Eyes Were Held

In his gospel, Luke records that two disciples were traveling to the village of Emmaus on the third day after Jesus had been crucified (Luke 24:13). As they were discussing recent events, Jesus Himself drew near and began traveling with them. Verse 16 says, **And their eyes were held in order that they might not recognize Him.** The Greek word translated *held* is **κρατέω** (krateō, Strong's 2902) and means *to grip*. The Lord purposely held their eyes from recognizing Him. As we follow this through, we will understand why the Lord would prevent someone from recognizing Him.

Technique

Our examination of the text begins with verse 18. The disciple named Cleopas asked the Lord if He was the only person traveling in Jerusalem who was unaware of the things that had taken place. Jesus asks, "What things?" This provides insight into how the Lord works to develop His followers' perceptive processes. Obviously, Jesus knew what had happened in Jerusalem. He was not asking the disciples for information. But rather, He was drawing out of them verbal confession of the condition of their heart. He revealed their heart condition so that He might begin to transform them.

The Condition of the Heart

The disciples' communication with Jesus revealed four things about the condition of their heart.

First, they were referring to the things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth. They described Him as a prophet who was mighty in work and word.

Second, they said the chief priests and rulers delivered Him over unto judgment of death and crucified Him.

Third, they said they were continually putting their hope on this One who had been crucified to be the Redeemer of Israel; but, in discouragement, they said this was now the third day since all of these things had taken place.

Fourth, they related that certain women had gone to the tomb. The women returned and astonished the disciples with news that they did not find His body, but had seen angels declaring, "He is living."

Without Perception

The two disciples explained that others went to the tomb finding it just as the women had said, **but Him they did not see** (Luke 24:24). Verses 25 to 27 provides Jesus' response:

- 25) "O Senseless and slow in heart to believe upon everything which the prophets spoke;
 26) was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and that He should enter into His glory?"
 27) And having begun from Moses and from all of the prophets, He was interpreting to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

The word translated *senseless* is the Greek word **ἀνόητος** (anoētos, Strong's 453). It literally means, *to be without perception*. The meaning derives from the alpha privative **α-** (a prefix used to express negation or absence); and **νοέω** (noeō, Strong's 3539), the verb form of **νοῦς** (nous), meaning *perception*. Jesus was not scolding the disciples for lacking the ability to understand what the Scriptures were saying. He would not expect them to be able to perceive spiritual truth without the Holy Spirit revealing it to them.

Revealing Spiritual Things

The Lord pointed out to these disciples that they did not have the ability to perceive the things of the Lord and that their hearts were slow in grasping everything the prophets spoke. He then proceeded to **interpret for them from all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself**. Later, these two disciples looked back on this time and said, **Was not our heart burning in us as He was speaking to us in the road and as He was opening to us the Scriptures?"** (Luke 24:32). Here we see two principles that the Lord continually taught. The first is that every person does not have the spiritual ability to understand the spiritual things of God. And second, only the Lord, through His Spirit, can reveal spiritual things.

Dependence

In fact, this is the key to understanding the Lord's teachings in the Gospels. The Lord never taught His disciples to produce their own faith or spiritual perception and understanding. Instead, He continually put the disciples in circumstances that revealed their inability to function spiritually. The Lord taught His disciples to depend on Him during the three years He physically walked with them. John 15:5 expresses this clearly, where Jesus said, Without Me, you are not able to do one thing. All the time the Lord spent with His disciples, both in Jerusalem and on the road to Emmaus, He was working on them. Mercifully preparing their hearts to receive the truth of the Word of God when the time came.

He Remains

As the Lord and the two disciples drew near to Emmaus, Jesus looked as if He were going to continue traveling. The disciples asked Him to remain with them. Jesus would have gone on had they not constrained Him to stay with them. Their desire for Jesus to spend more time with them was evidence that the Lord's ministry to them during their travel together was now changing their hearts. Jesus stayed with them for the evening meal. He took bread, blessed it, and was continually giving pieces of the bread to them.

Breaking Bread

Luke 24:31 tells us what happened as Jesus was breaking the bread and giving it to them. **And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him and He Himself became invisible from them.** The translation *were opened* represents the passive voice of the verb **διανοίγω** (dianoigō, Strong's 1272) that means to *open completely*. The passive voice means that they were the recipients of the action of having their eyes opened. Although He had held their eyes earlier in the day from knowing Him, the Lord chose, at this time, to cause them to recognize Him. Their hearts had been prepared to realize the final outcome of the Lord's crucifixion: He is living!

Proof

The disciples went back to Jerusalem that very hour and told the apostles what had happened. While they were speaking, Jesus Himself appeared in the room. He showed them the nail prints in His hands and His feet. He also ate a meal in front of them to prove that they were not seeing a ghost, but the resurrected Christ.

Ready to Perceive

Then He said to them, as recorded in Luke 24:44-45:

44) "These are the words which I spoke to you while still being with you, that it is necessary that all things should be fulfilled which have been written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me."

45) Then He opened their mind (νοῦς) in order that they might understand the Scriptures.

The disciples were now ready to *perceive* the things of the Lord concerning His crucifixion and resurrection. This happened only after the Lord had prepared their hearts and had opened their perceptive abilities to understand the Scriptures. The natural human being is not capable of arriving at the correct understanding of the things of the Lord using his own human abilities. The Spirit of the Lord must develop the condition of the heart and then reveal the understanding of Christ.

Final Preparation

Jesus continued to explain from the Scriptures that it was necessary for Him to suffer, and to die, and to rise the third day. The disciples were now ready for the coming of the Holy Spirit who would fill their hearts and use them for His glory.

Summary

Paul taught it is necessary for a believer to be transformed through the renewing of his perceptive processes. That they should all be in the process of being knit together with the same spiritual perception and judgment. A person can only perceive the spiritual things of the Lord when the Spirit of God reveals them. Additionally, Luke 24 shows the Lord Himself can prevent a person from recognizing Him both in the physical and spiritual realms. He can prevent His people from knowing Him until He has changed their hearts and minds, which are naturally without perception.

Conclusion

It is the Lord, by His Spirit, who opens the perceptive processes of the believer so that he can see the Lord and understand the teaching of Scripture concerning Him.

Notes

- Nous is the English font spelling of the Greek word **νοῦς**.
- All Biblical quotes contained herein are a Literal English Translation of the Bible produced by BTE Ministries - The Bible Translation and Exegesis Institute of America.

Technical Notes

Luke 24:16 (Literal English Translation)

And their eyes were held in order that they might not recognize¹ Him.

Luke 24:25-27 (Literal English Translation)

25) "O Senseless and slow in heart to believe upon everything which the prophets spoke;

26) was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer² these things and that He should enter³ into His glory?"

27) And having begun from Moses and from all of the prophets, He was interpreting to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

John 15:5 (Literal English Translation)

...without Me, you are not able⁴ to do one thing.

Luke 24:44-45 (Literal English Translation)

44) "These are the words which I spoke to you while still being with you, that it is necessary that all things should be fulfilled⁵ which have been written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me."

45) Then He opened their mind (**νοῦς**, nous), in order that they might understand⁶ the Scriptures."

¹ The Greek articular infinitive of purpose **τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶναι**: *the not to recognize* is translated by **διὰ νὰ μὴ γνωρίσωσιν**: *in order that they might not recognize*.

² The infinitive of purpose **παθεῖν** with the accusative subject **τὸν χριστὸν** is translated, **νὰ πάθῃ ὁ Χριστός**: *that the Christ should suffer*.

³ The infinitive of purpose **εἰσελθεῖν** is translated, **νὰ εἰσέλθῃ**: *that He should enter*.

⁴ The Greek word **δύναμαι** (Strong's 1410) that is usually translated *can* in most English translations, literally means *ability* or *capacity*. Jesus is telling His disciples that without Him, they have no ability or capacity to function in the spiritual things of Christ.

⁵ The infinitive **πληρωθῆναι**: *to be fulfilled* is translated **να πληρωθῶσι**: *that they might be fulfilled*.

⁶ The articular infinitive **τοῦ συνιέναι** expressing purpose: *the to understand*, is translated, **διὰ να καταλάβωσι**: *in order that they might understand*.