

Nous Part 3

– *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.

Introduction

This is the third part of our study on the Greek word **νοῦς** (nous, Strong's 3563) which has to do with the perceptive ability of the mind.

Review ~ Meaning Parts One and Two

We first studied Paul's teaching on this theme in Romans 12:2 where he said, **Do not be continually fashioned with this age, but be continually transformed through the renewing of your mind (νοῦς, nous), so that you might prove what is the will of God which is good, and well pleasing, and complete.**

We also studied where Paul taught this same concept in Ephesians 4 verses 17 and 23, **Therefore this I say, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk according as also the rest of the Gentiles are walking in the emptiness of their mind (νοῦς, nous), but, You should be renewed in the spirit of your mind (νοῦς, nous).**

Context ~ I Corinthians 3:1-4

Before we begin our study of our part three text, it is important to establish the circumstances. Bearing in mind that I Corinthians is a letter of correction written by Paul to a carnal (fleshly) church, we read in I Corinthians 3:1-4 (Literal English Translation):

- 1) **And I myself, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ.**
- 2) **I gave you milk to drink, and not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it, but neither yet now are you able;**
- 3) **for you are still fleshly. For where there is jealousy and strife and divisions among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking according to man?**
- 4) **for whenever anyone should say, "Indeed I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not fleshly?**

Verse 1

Paul is making reference to the first time he was with them. At that time they were carnal Christians, a normal phase in their walk with the Lord.

Verse 2

He reminds them of how he ministered to them because of their fleshly condition writing that he ministered the milk of the Word to them because that is all they could handle at the time. Then he says that now, about five years later, they still cannot handle solid food.

Verse 3

Here Paul uses the term *fleshly*, σαρκικός (sarkikos, Strong's 4559) to indicate that they were now abnormally fleshly in their approach to the spiritual things of Christ. He points out that there is jealousy, strife, and divisions among them, evidence they are fleshly and functioning the way people without the Spirit of God would function.

Verse 4

Their carnality also shows in their willingness to separate themselves from the rest of the Body of Christ through their identification with a teacher and his system of theology rather than with the Body of Christ as a whole. Later in chapter 3 Paul presents the fact that all the servants of the Lord are presenting parts of the complete message of the Gospel.

Complete in Christ

Even though Paul wrote I Corinthians as a corrective letter to a carnal church, he begins the letter by describing their completeness in Christ. In I Corinthians 1:2 he describes the Corinthians as **having been sanctified in Christ Jesus** and says they are **saints by calling**. In verses 4-7, Paul says he gives thanks to God for them based upon the grace that has been given to them because they are enriched in Him in all speech and knowledge. Paul goes on to say that the testimony of Christ was established in them so that they are not behind in any one gift while they are waiting for the revelation of Jesus Christ. In verse 8, Paul states that the Lord will establish them blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 9 Paul assures them that all of this will take place because **God is faithful**.

Faithfulness vs Function

Paul presents the believers as spiritually complete in Christ based upon God's faithfulness through His Son Jesus Christ. However, the spiritual *function* of the believers in Corinth is another matter. Paul writes that the "fruit" of their conduct and attitude about themselves and the things of the Lord is evidence that they are fleshly and lack spiritual maturity.

Meaning Part Three ~ I Corinthians 1:10-13

Our text this week is I Corinthians 1:10-13 where Paul ministers again on this important theme.

10) Now I encourage you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that you should all speak the same thing, and that there should not be divisions among you; but that you should be being knit together in the same mind (νοῦς, nous) and in the same judgment.

11) For it was made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by the ones from out of the family of Chloe, that there are quarrels among you;

12) now I say this, that each of you is saying, "I indeed am of Paul," and, "I am of Apollos," and, "I am of Cephas," and, "I am of Christ."

13) Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified on behalf of you, was he? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?

Spiritual Unity

After presenting their completeness in Christ, Paul encourages the Corinthians to speak the same thing and to be in unity with one another. He says this because some were tearing the church apart with claims of special revelation and with a carnal approach to the Gifts of the Spirit. Paul is stating that believers should be speaking the same gospel and not be splitting the church from within. They are very much like the Body of Christ down through the ages even to the present day; while desiring to be used of the Lord, they are unable to tell the difference between an emotional energy generated by a gathering of people (in this case people who are Christians) and the actual power of the Spirit of God.

The Same Mind Explained

Paul then teaches that we should all be in the process of being *mended* or *knit* together in the same mind and judgment. The word for *mind* is the word **νοῦς** (nous). Paul is stating that all believers should be involved in the process of being made one in the area of spiritual perception and judgment.

Fleshly Division

He says that he has learned from Chloe's family about the quarrels that are causing division within the church. He knows that the Christians at Corinth are calling themselves after the teacher with whom they agree and are quarreling with others in the church who are in agreement with any teacher other than the one they agree with. Notice that Paul also included as fleshly those who are saying, "I am of Christ." Evidently, some Christians in Corinth perceive that others are splitting off following teachings not originally given to them. These, in turn, are splitting from the ones they perceive to be carnal Christians and want only to be called after Christ. On the surface this would seem to be right. However, even though the Lord is the head of the Church, the Body of Christ, the approach these Christians are taking, to separate themselves from other believers, even in the name of the Lord, is fleshly. Paul then asks three questions to help them see how the Body of Christ is one and as such is not divided.

Only Christ

Paul presents that Christ is One, not many. Paul was not crucified for them neither was any other servant of the Lord. Only Christ was crucified and only Christ is the head of the Body of Christ. Another aspect of their carnality is alluded to in this verse and is addressed here by Paul, their approach to baptism. They were practicing different baptisms by being baptized into the name of the teacher or group they were choosing to join. Of course, Paul corrects their perception and practice by reminding them that they were not baptized into his name, but into Christ.

In Closing

The Lord's desire, as expressed through Paul, is to have His people proclaiming and teaching the same Gospel and developing together toward the same perception and judgment as to the Truth in Christ. However, unity in the Body of Christ can only be expressed through renewed and transformed minds. There is no shortcut to maturity in Christ. The first phase of growth is as a babe in Christ, each of us begins as a carnal Christian. Each of us must feed on the milk of God's Word and **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. Not one of us arrives at maturity by some special, fleshly version of the anointing of God. One of my mentors told me that if everyone teaching the Word of God had the same tools and understanding of the Word, there would be no differences in the Body of Christ. I scoffed at what he said then; but now, some 35 years later, I see Paul's message to the Corinthian church in my mentor's statement. The Body of Christ must take the time to grow and be transformed so that it can **rightly divide the Word of truth**.

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

I Corinthians 3:1-4 Literal English Translation

- 1) And I myself, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly,¹ as to babes in Christ.
- 2) I gave you milk to drink, and not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it, but neither yet now are you able;
- 3) for you are still fleshly. For where there is² jealousy and strife and divisions³ among you,⁴ are you not fleshly, and are you not walking according to man?
- 4) for whenever anyone should say, "Indeed I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not fleshly?

I Corinthians 1:10-13 Literal English Translation

- 10) Now I encourage you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that you should all speak the same thing, and that there should not be⁵ divisions⁶ among you;⁷ but that you should be⁸ being knit together⁹ in the same **mind (νοῦς)** and in the same judgment.
- 11) For it was made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by the ones from out of the family¹⁰ of Chloe, that there are quarrels¹¹ among you;¹²
- 12) now I say this, that each of you is saying, "I indeed am of Paul," and, "I am of Apollos," and, "I am of Cephas," and, "I am of Christ."
- 13) Has Christ been divided?¹³ Paul was not crucified on behalf of you, was he?¹⁴ Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?

¹ The Greek word translated *fleshly* is **σαρκικός** (Strong's 4559). This adjective refers to the appetites of the flesh or animal nature. It is translated *carnal* by some translations. Some other Greek texts use the adjective **σαρκινός** (Strong's 4560) which means *made of flesh*. In this verse, both words are presenting a natural condition of carnality, in which every believer starts on his way to maturity.

² The implied verb is **εἶναι**: *there is*.

³ The word translated *divisions* is **διχοστασία** (Strong's 1370). It is a compound word from **δίχα**: *to separate or divide*, and **στάσις**: *to stand*. **Διχοστασία** means that some were taking a stand to separate or divide from the rest of the church and refers to internal dissension.

⁴ In this context, the prepositional phrase **ἐν ὑμῖν**: *in you* is translated **μεταξύ σας**: *among you*.

⁵ The translation of the present subjunctive **ἦ**: *should be* is **νὰ εἶναι**: *that there should be*.

⁶ The Greek word for *divisions* is the Greek word **σχίσματα**, which is literally *schisms*. This denotes a division caused by tearing or ripping apart rather than a split.

⁷ In this context, the prepositional phrase **ἐν ὑμῖν**: *in you* is translated **μεταξύ σας**: *among you*.

⁸ The present subjunctive **ἦτε**: *you should be* is translated by **νά εἴσθε**: *that you should be*.

⁹ The translation *being knit together* is from the perfect passive participle of **καταρτίζω** (Strong's 2675): *to mend or to knit together*. **Καταρτίζω** originated as a medical term for the mending of broken bones. In Matthew 4:21 it is used to describe the action of three men who were "mending their nets." The perfect participle expresses a process that began in the past and is continuing at the present time. The passive voice denotes that believers are receiving the action of being knit together.

¹⁰ The Greek prepositional phrase **ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης**: *by the ones' of Chloe* is translated by **ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκ τῆς οἰκογενείας Χλόης**: *by the ones' of the family of Chloe*, whether direct family members or representatives of the family of the Lord that meets in Chloe's home.

¹¹ The Greek word translated *quarrels* is **ἔρις** (Strong's 2054). When **ἔρις** is in the singular, it is translated as *contention* or *strife*. When **ἔρις** is in the plural form, as it is here, it is translated as *quarrels*.

¹² In this context, the prepositional phrase **ἐν ὑμῖν**: *in you* is translated **μεταξύ σας**: *among you*.

¹³ The Greek word translated *has...been divided* is **μερίζω** (Strong's 3307), which means *to divide or split into groups*. **Μερίζω** is in the perfect passive form, which would express that Christ now exists in a divided condition. The question is asking if the Christ is one or has He been divided.

¹⁴ This question contains the negative particle **μὴ** (Strong's 3361) which means Paul is expecting the answer to be "no."