



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Corinthians 2:6-14

“Human Illumination”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Remember in the last two times together we have studied two important Bible doctrines, the Doctrine of Revelation and the Doctrine of Inspiration. And so tonight in our third introductory lesson, we are studying the Doctrine of Illumination. Now just a brief word of review, remember when we studied the Doctrine of Revelation, we said that revelation is the unveiling of God’s truth to men. And to simplify it, for it is a little more complicated than just this, we have singled out two ways in which God has revealed himself to men. The first part is revelation of God, his revelation of himself, in nature, and the second, his revelation of himself in holy Scripture.

We pointed out from Romans chapter 1 that God’s revelation of himself in nature is a revelation of his eternal power and his divinity. We could not, if we had only his revelation in nature, we could not know him in his grace, as the one who gave the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior. We could know his power. We could know his divine nature, but we could not know his grace. So revelation in nature is addressed to man as a man. Revelation of God in Scripture is addressed to man as a sinner, for it is only in holy Scripture that we come to know God as the one who has made a way for return of man to God and acceptance in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we studied the Doctrine of inspiration which has to do with the means whereby God secured an infallible communication of his will to men. Revelation has to do with the content of the truth of God. Inspiration has to do with the manner in which this content has come to us. And we saw how that the Holy Spirit used the ear, the hand, the pen of the writers of Scripture to produce the holy Scriptures. Inspiration, then, has to do with this methodology whereby God has given us holy Scripture. So it is the means whereby he has secured an infallible communication of the revelation to men.

Now we talked about this inspiration, and we said that this inspiration extended to the very words of the original texts. Inspiration does not extend to the translations. It extends to the autographer. Now that's a technical term that means the writings themselves, or the original manuscripts. For example, when Paul finished the Epistle to the Corinthians, which we are reading here, the very manuscript on which he wrote this epistle, that piece of papyrus roll, that is one of the autographer of the New Testament. And inspiration extends to the autographer. It does not extend to the translations which were made by men who were not necessarily under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as they translated.

Tonight we are taking the next step which is how are we to understand the Bible, and so we're going to study the Doctrine of Illumination which has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in granting us understanding of the Divine Revelation which has come to us by means of Divine Inspiration. So tonight we are going to talk about how to understand the Bible. This is how we got our Bible, inspiration. And revelation, of course, in its second volume and its most important, is the holy Scriptures itself. To put it popularly, illumination is the divine side of the understanding of the Bible. The human side is interpretation. Now illumination comes from God. Interpretation is done by men. Men who interpret under the guidance of the Spirit interpret correctly. Men who do not interpret under the guidance of the Holy Spirit do not interpret correctly. And this is why we have differences of interpretation in Scripture. It is not that the texts are contradictory.

It is not that the Spirit of God teaches one man one way and another man another way. It is that, somehow or other in interpretation, the interpreter has lost contact with the infallible author of Scripture, the Holy Spirit, who is also the infallible teacher of Scripture. And this accounts for the fact that occasionally you will find men differing in their interpretations of the holy Scriptures.

The important passage on illumination is 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 6 and following, and so, now let's read it together. First of all in the 6th verse through the 12th verse Paul describes the wisdom of God. Let me, before we read it, just introduce the context of this particular passage. Paul wrote to a church at Corinthians which he, himself, had founded. In the preaching of the word there a number had come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so some time later, writing from the city of Ephesus, he wrote, having heard of certain divisions that existed in the church, of certain problems in the church, and also having a desire to instruct them in some things in which they needed instruction.

One of the reasons was they were dividing over the men through whom truth had come to them. Some were saying, “I am of Paul. I like Paul's teaching. I'm a follower of Paul.” Some were saying, “I am of Apollos. I like the outstanding rhetoric of the brilliant Alexandrian. So I follow Apollos. I love to hear him, and I follow his line of teaching.” Others were saying, “Well I am of Peter. I understand Peter he is a man of like passions with me. And I like Peter, and I like his teaching, and I like his emphasis. And furthermore, Peter goes right back to the original apostles, and he, himself, was the chief of them. So I feel that I have just a little bit more authority in following Peter.” And some were saying, apparently, “I am of Christ. I do not follow human teachers but I follow Jesus Christ.”

Now I'm not suggesting necessarily that this latter one is wrong. It so happens that in the 4th chapter there is evidence to support the fact that this was the correct position. But sometimes it is possible to take the correct position in the wrong Spirit.

And that may be the sense of the text here in chapter 1. At any rate, they were thinking of the gospel as a kind of wisdom which was given to men, and they may receive it as they would listen to philosophers. And so Paul spends some time telling them that the gospel is not like the philosophies of men. It is a salvation. It is not a system of truth which is to be perceived purely upon the intellectual plain. But it is addressed to man's moral nature, as well as to his intellectual nature. It is a salvation, and it has to do with sin and judgment and righteousness.

Now, you might, if you had been one in the Corinthians audience, or had heard Paul, you might have said, “Well, now, wait just a minute, Paul. Do you mean to tell me that the gospel does not require any intelligence at all? Is it a system of truth that does not require anything of man's intellect? Is it not wisdom at all?” And so, Paul now turns and emphasizes the other side by saying yes, it is a wisdom. And the gospel contains a wisdom. But it is not understood like the wisdom of the world. So we pick it up here in verse 6, with that as background.

“Howbeit, (Paul says) we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Now, Paul's point in these 4 verses that I have read, 6, 7, 8, and 9, is that this wisdom which God has given for men to understand from him is hidden from the world. It is the wisdom of God which has come in a secret. Now when in verse 7 Paul says, “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,” you are not to think of something mysterious.

You are not to think of thriller, or what shall I say, some mystery TV program. That isn't the point of the term mystery. Actually, the term “mystery” is the equivalent of our English “secret.” And so he means, “we speak the wisdom of God in a secret even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” And the proof that it is hidden from this age is that they crucified the Lord of glory.

Now in the 9th verse, I think it's interesting that Paul here refers to the way in which we understand things. You know we understand things by the five senses, normally, by our eye, by our ear, by our nose, by our mouth, and by our hand. But Paul says this kind of understanding is insufficient. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” You see spiritual truth is not discerned as we discern ordinary truth. We do not discern spiritual truth by our eyes, by our heart, by our nose, by our ears. We discern spiritual truth through the Holy Spirit.

Now this is obvious, if we just think for a moment about the nature of God. Take your Bibles and keep the place here, for we'll turn right back, but let's turn over to John chapter 4 and read verses 23 and 24 together. I think we shall see that it is obvious that God must be understood in different fashion from the way in which we understand other realms of knowledge. John chapter 4 and verse 23, the Lord Jesus is speaking to the woman of Samaria, and he says, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Now I mentioned to you in the first lesson that we had in connection with Revelation that the astronomer LaPlace turned his telescope on the heavens and swept all across them and said that he saw no evidence of God. And I commented upon the fact that President Sawyer, when he heard this said, “He might just as well have swept his kitchen with a broom as far as finding any evidence of God is concerned.” He did not

have the proper instrument for understanding or discovering God. You do not discover God with a telescope. You do not discover him with a microscope. “For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Divine truth must be revealed. God cannot be put in a test tube.

As I said also, Titov, when he circled our universe here, our earth, he said he saw no evidence of God or angels. Why should he find any evidence of God or angels if he’s looking from the standpoint of physical sight? Eye hath not seen, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” God is a spirit, and we do not have the capacity for understanding God naturally. God must reveal himself to men. Only upon this basis can we know God. We must have a revelation from him. This is why it is so foolish for us to think that we can find out God by searching for him with our human facilities, we cannot.

So, Paul says this wisdom is hidden from the age in verses 6 through 9. By the way, that 9th verse is often used as a text for a funeral service. It is very poorly chosen. In one sense it’s alright, but Paul doesn't really say these things are to be understood only when we come into the presence of God, as the very next clause says, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” So these things that God hath prepared for those that love him are not things that we are to see when we come into the presence of God. It is true we shall see many wonderful things then but these things that Paul is talking about are things that we are to understand now. “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

So while Paul says this wisdom is hidden from this age. He says here it is known by the spirit. This is, by the way, the locus classicus. Whenever I use that term the “locus classicus” I mean the classic place for discovering a doctrine of Scripture. So if we say the locus classicus of a certain doctrine, we mean this is the chief passage on this doctrine. It

doesn't mean it's the only passage but the chief passage on this doctrine. Here we have the locus classicus on the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. There are some people who think of the Holy Spirit of God as just a divine influence. And if we have the Holy Spirit all we have is just some divine influence. Or some even speak of him as a feeling. Some ignorant people speak of the Holy Spirit as a person, but the Holy Ghost as the feeling you get. That is, of course, ridiculous because these two terms are translations of the same Greek expression. But the Holy Spirit is a person for he knows. “What man knoweth the things of a man,” the 11th verse says, “Save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” So the spirit is a personality, he knows and furthermore, he is divine. For he alone understands the things of God and only God can really, ultimately, know all about God.

Paul's illustration here is very, very appropriate in the 11th verse, and I want to show you how that if this be true, we are utterly dependent upon revelation. Suppose I were to say to you in the audience right at this moment, “Mr. Pierson, would you tell me what I'm thinking right now?” Well, he would say, probably, “Well, I'm not a mind reader. How can I tell you what you are thinking right now. Only you know.” Now if Madam Blavatsky were here she might understand for she is a mind reader. We, of course, smile because we don't believe that's possible. Occasionally, I might guess what's on your face. I can read my wife's mind quite frequently, [Laughter] especially when she's angry with me. [Laughter] It shows you know. [Laughter] But actually, when Paul says, “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man,” it should be in the Greek text. The spirit of the man which is in him, he acknowledges a general truth. We cannot know what another person thinks. The only person who knows what another person is thinking is the spirit of that man. Now I'm fully aware of the things that I am thinking about you. You might want to string me up for murder or slander or disrespect. But you'll never know what I'm thinking about you as you sit in this audience. But my

spirit knows. I know. You see the spirit of the man knows the things that the man knows.

Now Paul says, likewise, the knowledge of God is only available through the spirit of God. So you see we are utterly dependent upon the Holy Spirit for the knowledge of God. He alone understands God. This is why we must have him reveal truth to us. Oh, if men would just recognize this, how much heresy we would not have. Most of our heresy, if not all of it, ultimately, has come because some men have thought that they could know God apart from the spirit of God.

So Paul says this knowledge, these wonderful things that God hath prepared for them that love him is known by the spirit. And in the 10th verse, at the beginning of the verse, and especially the 12th verse, he says it is revealed to believers. The first part of the 10th verse had said, remember, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,” unto us who are Christians. Now Paul is not talking to men in general. He’s writing this letter to a group of believers. Suppose you were to come in my house and you were to see, on the inside in the hall, near a little lamp that is sitting on a bookcase, a letter addressed, “Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., 217 Bon Air Drive, Dallas 18, Texas, 75218.” And suppose you were to say, “I think I’ll read that.” And so you take it and you read it. And you see someone is dunning me for some money that I owe them. [Laughter] Now, would that be fair? “No,” you would say, “I wouldn’t think of doing that because the letter is addressed to ‘Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.’. It is his letter.”

Now when we read the epistles of the New Testament, we must always remember the addressees. You see these epistles, and particularly this epistle, is addressed to the church of God which is at Corinthians, “To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord both theirs and ours.” In other words, Paul wrote this letter to the church at Corinthian, and he included within it all who had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. An unbeliever has no more right applying the texts of the Epistle to the Corinthians to him

than you would have in reading my private mail. It does not pertain to you. So when Paul says, “Us,” he means us who are believers.

So, let’s read the 12th verse now, “Now we,” that is we believers, “We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” Now here Paul states one of the most amazing truths that is found in all of Scripture. We have said that the Holy Spirit is God, and we have said that he is a personality, a person. Now Paul says here that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has received the Holy Spirit of God. Now think of that, do you know what that means? That means that the simplest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is indwelt by God himself. Now I don’t think that we could possibly find a more amazing fact than that. When you and I believe on Jesus Christ, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Think of it, think of the fact that God has come and taken up his residence in the heart of the man who has believed in Jesus Christ. Now I want to tell you that is one of the most amazing things that has ever taken place. That is more wonderful. That is more amazing. That is more astonishing than the fact that the Dodgers beat the Yankees four straight. [Laughter] Amazing truth, just to think of it, I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God.

Now, I’m not going to say, right now, what effect that should have upon our lives. I think you can sense something of the tremendous change that ought to be produced in the life of a Christian. If God dwells with him permanently, we’re not aiming to stress the ethical, we’re aiming to stress what it has to say about the understanding of Scripture. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” These are the things that he said up in verse 9 were, “The things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” So, the Holy Spirit has come to take up his dwelling in us in order that we might know some truth. He, in other words, has come to be our teacher.

Now you thought, as you came to these classes on Monday night, that I was to be your teacher. You are mistaken. You are mistaken. I am a teacher, but the teacher is the Holy Spirit. And all of the things that I say to you are to pass through the filter of the Holy Spirit. And those things that are not of God, he will show you. Those things that are of God that you hear, he will confirm them in your experience, as well as in your understanding. So the teacher is the Holy Spirit, and you have the teacher of the word of God. You have no excuse. You have the best teacher in the world. You have the Holy Spirit. He wrote this book. He knows it perfectly. He never misinterprets any passage of Scripture. He knows the Greek, and he knows the Hebrew. He knows the autographer. I have the Greek, and I have the Hebrew. This is the Greek, and this is the Hebrew. And I can read them both, but he can read them better than I. And I can interpret these, but I am human, and I can make a mistake. But he cannot make a mistake. And so you see if you are to understand God, and understand his word perfectly, you must learn to listen to the Holy Spirit who indwells you, and who desires to take of the things of Christ and show them unto you.

So we have the teacher. Now that means also this that you don't have to have any special kind of intelligence to understand the Bible. You don't have to have a University degree. Surely a University degree is a help, but you don't have to have a University degree to understand the Bible. For the Bible is not only an intellectual book, it is a moral book. And frequently the man who is willing to obey the truth understands truth, whereas those who have great intellectual capacity stumble over it because they are disobedient and do not want to obey it. So you do not have to have outstanding intelligence. You do not have to have degrees upon degrees. They may help you in other spheres. They may help you in this sphere, but they are not essential in this sphere. An open heart is essential. So, isn't that wonderful? You see that puts us all pretty much on the same level. I would have expected that God would do it this way. He's not going to give me a great advantage over you just because I went to University and went to

Graduate schools, and then went to theological seminary and studied through there and have been teaching in theological seminary. Oh surely there are some things, perhaps, that I know that you don't know yet, but anything in God's word is available to the man who is willing and will allow the teacher to teach him.

Well, now having described this wisdom of God, Paul, in the 13th verse, tells us something about its communication to men for he preached the word constantly, remember. “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” This last clause has been interpreted in several different ways. If you have the Authorized Version before you, it reads “Comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” If you should happen to have the American Standard Version before you, it reads, “Combining spiritual things with spiritual words.” And this is based upon the classical meaning of the word that is found in the Greek text here. “Combining spiritual things with spiritual words,” in other words, Paul says here I have some spiritual truths that I want to communicate with you and now I have taken words which the Holy Spirit has given me and I have taken this truth and I have wedded the truth to the words and so what I am giving you is the word of God, the truth, which he has given, wedded to the words which the Holy Spirit has given me. This is a wonderful meaning and surely represents truth.

If you happen to have the Revised Standard Version before you, it reads, “Interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the spirit.” Now this is based upon a meaning of the word that is found in the Old Testament Greek text, the Septuagint where this word is found and frequently means interpreting. It was the word, for example, that was used in Genesis of Joseph's dreams, or rather, the dreams that Joseph interpreted. So, Paul means, if that be the case, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the spirit. In other words, I am here bringing you things from God, and I am interpreting these things to you who possess the Holy Spirit.

Now I'm inclined to think that perhaps the meaning combining spiritual things with spiritual words is Paul's point, but, at any rate, regardless of how this text must be translated, the meaning is that Paul is teaching and preaching words that have come from God.

Now, moving on to the 14th verse, he begins to talk about how we understand these truths more in detail. He says in the 14th verse, “But the natural man.” Now let's stop for a moment. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” What is the natural man? We might think the natural man is the ordinary man, but this happens to be a technical term, “the natural man.” It is the “*psuchikos*” man. I'm transliterating a word. *Psuchikos*, now *psuche* is a word that means “the soul” and *ikos* is just the way the Greeks made certain adjectives. So this is the equivalent of soulish in English. A long time ago, in expounding this, I used to have to say, “Now we have no such word as soulish in English, but that is probably the equivalent English word for ‘*psuchikos*’ translated ‘natural.’” In the latest dictionaries you will find the word soulish. So it is now a word. The “soulish” man, he is the man dominated by the soul. You see men are made up of three parts, if I may put it that simply. Man has a body. This is that with which he is world conscious. He has a soul. That is that part of the man by which he is conscious of himself. And he has a spirit, the New Testament says. And that is the part of the man which is conscious of God. So, man is a tripartite being, possessed of body, soul, and spirit.

Now the soulish man is the man who is dominated by the soul. Let's for a moment just imagine a three story building. This is a very small three story building, but here the first story, the second story, and the third story. If you were in Europe, as you know, this would be a two story building. That is, this would be the ground floor, and this would be the first floor, and this would be the second floor. But over here, we say first floor, second floor, and third floor. So here we have a three story building. Let's just say for the sake of illustration that story number one, since this is the story that is in

contact with the men who walk the streets, represents the body of a man. Now, this is an illustration. And let's say that the second story, because this is the middle story, let's say this represents in our illustration the soul of man. And let's say the third story, since it's the nearest to heaven, is the story that represents the spirit of a man. So man is composed of body, soul and spirit.

Now let's think of this building in London during World War II. And let's think of a bombing raid, and let's suppose that a bomb drops right on the top of this building on story number three, and story number three is so demolished that it drops into story number two. So that now we have a two story building. Now the spirit, the third story, is in the man, but this spirit is now dead. This is a picture of man outside of Christ. He possesses body. He possesses soul, but his spirit, which he possesses and by which he may know, is dead toward God. He lost contact with God when he sinned in the Garden of Eden. So when Paul says here the soulish man he means the man who is dominated by the second story, the man who is dominated by himself. He is the man who has self consciousness and world consciousness, but his relationship to God has been shattered by the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. He does not possess the Holy Spirit.

Turn over to the Book of Jude, the next to the last book of the Bible, Jude. Jude verse 19, now Jude here is speaking of those who are false teachers. This is page thirteen twenty-nine, Jude revelation, and one chapter in this sixty-fifth book of the Bible. Jude 19, now talking about these false teachers, these unsaved, non-Christian men, he says, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual.” Now if you have a Bible with a marginal note, you'll discover that his has been translated, “natural” in some editions. It is the same Greek word that is found in 1 Corinthians 2:14 and translated “natural.” So let's translate it that way. “These be they who separate themselves, natural, having not the Spirit.” “Having not the spirit,” the natural man is the man who does not possess the holy Scripture of God.

So, with that be true then, and I need to ask you to turn to one other passage. Turn to Romans chapter 8 and verse 9. Romans chapter 8 and verse 9, here Paul says, this is page twelve o-one, Romans is just before 1 Corinthians, Romans 1 Corinthians, Romans chapter 8 and verse 9, do we all have it? You must see this with your own eyes so you won't go out of there and say, “Now I don't agree with those interpretations that Dr. Johnson was giving.” Because you see, it's not really a question of agreeing with me or not, it really is a question of “Do you agree with the Bible?” Now if you can show me a better interpretation that's a different matter but if it's just a matter of objecting to these passages that we're pointing to, well then, there's no excuse you know before the Lord. Now verse 9, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” Paul says to believers, “If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” If we don't have the Holy Spirit, we do not belong to Jesus Christ. That's what he means. The test of Christianity is the possession of the Holy Spirit, you see. That's the experiential side. The other side is faith in Jesus Christ. So the experiential side is if we do not have the Holy Spirit, we do not belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, coming back to 1 Corinthians 2:14, since we have pointed out that the natural man is the man who does not have the spirit, and since the man who does not have the spirit does not have Christ, we can translate verse 14 then by, “the non-Christian receiveth not the things of the spirit of God,” the soulish man, the man who is dominated by his self-consciousness, by self we might say. The man who is dominated by self, “The unsaved man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” Now isn't that interesting? What does that say to us then? Why it says simply this, we cannot know anything about the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel, the good news concerning him, until we have been born again, until we have become Christian. Until we have believed in the Lord Jesus, we do not have the faculty for understanding divine truth. And this is

why so many people look at the Bible and say, “I don’t understand all of this in the Bible. The Bible to me seems to be a foolish book. It’s just stupidity as far as I’m concerned.” Of course, it is to the natural man. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him.” They are stupidity to him. “Neither can he know them,” he’s not even qualified to understand them because they are understood by the spirit, or spiritually.

A few years ago, a Christian conference was being held on the coast. A Cal Tech student came up to one of the teachers who was there and said, “I don’t understand all of this that’s going on in this conference. Einstein is easy for me, but this Bible and this literature stuff,” as he put it, “is beyond me. I cannot understand it.” And the teacher took the opportunity to point out to this brilliant young man that understanding Einstein was simple to trying to understand the Bible apart from the spirit. But with the spirit, the Bible becomes a lot simpler than Einstein. But you see until we possess the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand divine truth.

How many of you have been to Carlsbad? Probably most of you in the room have been to Carlsbad. You are Texans and you know that a good part of Carlsbad is under Texas so you’re happy about that, no doubt. One of the most interesting things about Carlsbad Caverns is the bats. And we all, if we’ve been to Carlsbad late in the afternoon in the summertime, we want to be there to see the bats come forth and forage for food. Do you know how many bats are in Carlsbad Caverns? Well, they say from five to eight million bats are in the Caverns. They live in Mexico in the winter time. They come to Carlsbad in the summer time, and in the late afternoon, they fly out.

Now if you’ve been in Carlsbad Caverns you know that down in those Caverns it is fairly dark. In fact, when you go half way down and the guard turns off the lights, then you understand for the first time what the Scriptures mean when it says, “The blackness of darkness forever.” For you literally cannot see your hand before your face. But those bats can fly in and out among the stalagmites and stalactites without running into a single

one of them. Why is it? Because bats fly by means of an echolocation, a kind of natural sonar and they emit little squeaks from their mouths which bounce off of those stalactites and stalagmites, or whatever you call them, and those sounds come back to their ears and they steer themselves in and out through them by means of that natural sonar. Now this is the interesting about those sounds, the human ear cannot detect them. We can detect a sound that a bat makes when it fly's. We can hear the beat of his leathery wings. And we can detect the sounds that he makes when he squeals from rage or pain. But we cannot hear the sounds that he emits from his mouth as he guides himself in the caverns. For you see our ears can only hear sound waves which are of certain frequencies. The human ear can hear sounds down to approximately twenty, what is it, twenty wave lengths or something like this a second?

[Comment from the audience]

Cycles per second, or we can go up to, oh, into the thousands. There are some sounds, however, that are too high for us which insects can hear, but the human ear cannot hear, and some sounds that are too low. You see we need capacity. In this room, for example, if you had the ears that you might have, theoretically, suppose, for example, you were able to tune in sounds that radios could tune in. Why you would hear all kinds of sounds in this room. You would hear a disc jockey telling us what is the top hit in the Dallas area. You would hear news broadcasts. You would hear some advertisement of some soap, “Why Duz does it better than any other kind of soap,” and so on. All of these sounds are with us in the room. We just don't have the capacity for hearing them. If our hearing apparatus had the proper capacity, we would understand.

Now you see these are all illustrations of spiritual truth. The reason we cannot understand the Bible is that we do not have the spiritual apparatus for understanding the Bible. We're not able to grasp spiritual truth because we have no receiving apparatus

naturally. We need a receiving apparatus that is adjusted to the waves of divine revelation, and only the Holy Spirit is able to teach us the things of God. So, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” They are discerned by the spirit.

Suppose you and I were to go in a room, a dark room, such as I have been in, and on the floor there are all types of rocks, and we were to turn on a light, such as this, on the rocks. Well, in this dark room we would just see drab brown and perhaps black rocks. But now if we were to take ultraviolet rays and shine on certain types of rocks, these rocks instead of being drab brown and gray and black would fluoresce with all types of beautiful and brilliant, what shall I say, all types of brilliant color.

Now ultraviolet rays are the unseen part of the violet spectral band, and the action of ultraviolet rays upon normal rocks is very similar to the action of the Holy Spirit upon the Bible. When we look at the Bible, apart from the Holy Spirit, what do we see? Well we see nothing but just an ordinary book. You read it. It’s a history book. It tells us, perhaps, some interesting thing that’s about ancient cultures. But when we look at the Bible with the Holy Spirit’s light suddenly the Bible begins to fluoresce with all of the beauties of divine truth. And you see understanding the Bible, studying the Bible is an entirely different thing when we possess the Holy Spirit who is able to take the Bible itself and make it just as these stones under ultraviolet rays. This is what Paul is talking about when he says, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” This is of the utmost importance in understanding the Bible.

Now I don’t have time tonight to talk about the other types of men that are here. Next time I want to say another word or so about the things that Paul has to say here in just a moment about the spiritual man and the carnal man. But I think it’s quite obvious from what I’ve said that the basic necessity for understanding the Bible is to possess the

Holy Spirit of God. And if we don't have the spirit, we cannot understand the Bible. If we have the spirit, then we have the teacher who can throw light upon Scripture.

Well that brings us, of course, to the question, “How may I possess the Holy Spirit of God? How may I be sure that I have within me the teacher who can teach me divine things?” Let's read a couple of passages in closing. John chapter 7 verses 37 through 39, page eleven twenty-five,

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

Now notice the expression, “Which they that believe on him should receive.” So, you see the Holy Spirit comes and takes up his dwelling in the heart of a man when that man believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn to another passage Acts chapter 11, John, Acts, the very next book, chapter 11, Acts chapter 11. Now Peter in Acts chapter 11 is describing the things that happened in Cornelius' house when the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and those who were there as Peter preached to them. Now Peter is telling what happened at a later time and he says in the 15th verse of Acts chapter 11, we all have it,

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning, (that is on the day of Pentecost), “then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift, (that is, the Holy Spirit), as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When

they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

And the important expression is in verse 17, “The like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.” So you see the Holy Spirit comes when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, what does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is simply when the gospel is proclaimed that Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried, and that he was raised again on the third day, to believe the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. And God has said Jesus Christ is the Savior of men. He has died for the sins of the world, and the man or woman who believes in him possesses everlasting life. To believe is simply to acknowledge the truthfulness of God’s word. It is simply to say, “Thank you Lord for giving Jesus Christ to die for me.” That is faith. That is trust. “God, the testimony is true. I accept it. I may not understand it, all of the details of it, but I accept it. I thank Thee for the gift of eternal life.” That’s how simple it is to believe. And the moment that we believe in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit of God comes to take up his residence in us. And then, as we read the Bible, the pages of this book will fluoresce to the teaching ministry of the spirit. And wonderful things will be discovered in them that we never dreamed were there before. “The things which God hath prepared for them that love him,” as Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 2.

Shall we bow in prayer?

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we are so grateful to Thee that Thou hast not only given us revelation, by means of inspiration, but Thou hast also provided for illumination. And now we may study the Scriptures under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit of God.

Accept our thanks for all of the things which Thou hast so freely given to us in Jesus Christ. We ask in his name. Amen.

[Message] Questions now, until about 9:15 or until we give out of questions and then close definitely. So if you have any questions, why you just feel free to ask them and I'll try to answer them the best I can. Yes ma'am,

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well, if these teachings are teaching that involve the moral life of a believer, particularly, then, of course, we lose fellowship with the Father. And when we lose fellowship with the Father, it is like a little child that is disobedient to its parents. It does not lose its relationship in the family, but it loses the right relationship to its parents. And there must be a confession of its wrong doing to the parents and the parent's forgiveness will take place. So likewise in spiritual things, when we have been disobedient to the teaching of the spirit, we are to confess our sin and be restored to the fellowship which we lost when we began to believe false doctrine.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well, this may happen in several ways. You may be misled by someone. You see you may follow teaching that you do not subject to the word of God. For example, you might listen to me and you might suddenly say, “Well I believe Dr. Johnson. Whatever he says is gospel truth as far as I am concerned. He seems to have thought this true, and so I accept his teaching. If he says it, I believe it.” There are people like that you know. [Laughter] And this is true of very many teachers. They usually have their following, you know.

Now human teachers can be wrong, and so I might say something that is contrary to the teaching of God. The chances of my saying this, with regard to any important doctrine, are very remote. After all if a man has studied the word of God for twenty years under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, he should have the major things correct, but occasionally, on some points, I might not see that truth exactly as God desires me to see it. So it's possible for me to mislead you if you are not very, very much under the teaching of the spirit and walking very closely to him. And, of course, it's also possible, not only for me to mislead you. It is possible for Satan to mislead you. You step away from the word of God. Anytime that you do not go to the Scriptures like the Bereans and search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so, you are liable to be misled. So you may be misled by Satan. You may be misled by a good teacher, a Christian. And there are probably some other ways too that you may be misled. These come to my mind now. Now there was another question there.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Yes, I am, 15, 16, and also 3:1 though 4 I wanted to do at the beginning next time. Time ran out on me. I want to try to stop about 9:00 every night. Any other questions? Now if you have a question, you just feel free to ask, yes sir.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Now, I think that almost always, we have to recognize this that though we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and though we now possess the Holy Spirit, we still have the old nature. We still have sin. Now, however, there is a conflict. There is a part of the Christian that wants to do that which pleases God, but there is a part of the Christian that wants to do that which displeases God. And the strength of sin is so great

in a believer's life that he always tends to fall away from God. He always tends to lose fellowship. See there is, Paul says, a law of sin dwelling in me which is stronger than this desire to do that which is right and it brings him into captivity. And so there is always this tendency to yield again to sin.

So if our spiritual life is purely neutral, it will become negative almost immediately. But now from the positive standpoint almost always that is caused because you or I neglect maintaining our fellowship with God positively through the fellowship with him in the word of God. For this is a cleansing agent. The word of God cleanses the believer from defilement. God operates through the word, and through the word he touches this part of our life and that part of our life and so on. And so it is absolutely essential that we stay in the word, day by day.

This is our food. If we don't feed ourselves we become weak. We lose our strength. We tend to fall away from God. We become indifferent and then we find that that experience that we had is far back in the past, and now we must confess sin, and we must come back into the presence of God by means of confession, fellowship. So there is that tendency always and it's usually aided and abided by failure to maintain contact with God through the word and allow the word to cleanse us and strengthen us. It's like the man who wouldn't eat. He would get weaker and weaker wouldn't he, and soon he couldn't make his way about. The word is our strength giver. It is our food, and if we neglect, and if we neglect the prayer life, we get weak. I don't think I've ever run across a Christian who drifted away in whom it wasn't true that he had neglected the food of the holy Scriptures. There may be some, but almost always, that is the cause. Any other questions? Well, I'll give you five minutes then, it's ten after nine. You may go. Remember the outlines are here and it would help you an awful lot if you would...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]