

As sinners, we cannot discover God - we have discussed that in previous lessons. Our condition is made worse by the fact that we are actually enemies of God.¹ Our minds are so wicked that we cannot know Him. Listen to the prophet Jeremiah:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9.

If we were to stop there our lot would be dismal indeed but we need to read the rest of the context to get the "big picture."² We need to understand that God's loving provision for the godly is not because there is something inherently "good" about us but that we have been the objects of His redemptive work, including the regeneration of our minds so that we can *appreciate* who and what God is. Regeneration brings about the *capacity* to trust Him, to have hope in Him, to weather difficult times - not because of some *inner strength* but because of the regenerate mind that can put trust and have hope in the Lord. His life will not wither because of the heat of the drought (as alluded to in this word-picture).

So we are introduced to the issue of the unregenerate mind versus the regenerate mind. Let's explore this subject.

The Regenerate Mind was an Old Testament concept.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Psalm 51:6.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. [11] Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. [12] Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Psalm 51:10-12.

This is David's confession of his sin with Bathsheba. He had committed grievous sins but yet in his heart he prayed to God for not only forgiveness but also for God to restore his heart. Note the following benefits of the regenerated heart:

- The capacity to be the receptacle of God's truth *in the inward parts*.³
- The regenerated heart (*hidden part*) has the capacity to *know - understand and*

¹ Rom 5:10, Col 1:21.

² Have class read Jer 17:5 - 10.

³ *Heb = tuchoth*. Occurs here and in Job 38:36: "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?" Note the dichotomy here. One has to do with the ability to perceive knowledge, the other has to do with experienced understanding. TWOT suggests action by God to place wisdom in the heart. A secondary meaning would be a word-picture of being caught in a downpour and being drenched by His wisdom - interesting.

*apply wisdom.*⁴

- Such is not the case with the unregenerated heart. More on that in a bit.
- Vs. 11: note also that the regenerated heart allows the believer to be in the presence of the Lord.
- The regenerated heart has been cleansed from sin.⁵
- The regenerated heart enjoys the presence of the Holy Spirit and has joy.

The Difference between the Old Testament Believer and the New.

Without getting too technical - the Old Testament believer who was in right relationship with the Lord had the ability understand the things of the Lord. This is in sharp contrast to the sinner or the apostate Jew.⁶ The prophets had a lot to say of the unregenerate heart. It should be clear to all that the ability to know the Lord - to be in right relationship with Him - to understand His thoughts is not franchise of the unregenerate mind. Listen to Isaiah:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. [8] For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. [9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:7-9

This passage confirms Jeremiah's contention of the deceitfulness of the wicked's heart. There just *no* capacity to know the Lord in a personal way, nor is there any ability to understand Him.

The same is true today. Paul, in his well known passage on the sinner's condition,

⁴ *Heb = satham* - Qal, passive connotation. Rich in meaning - means to shut up sometimes with negative connotation. Here, however, it has a positive meaning to shut up in order to hide. Daniel is told to shut up the words of God's prophesy and vision. This is the innermost part of the heart of the believer - where understanding resides and is accessible only to the believer who has learned Bible truth and applied it. Here it suggests the secret place where David comes to know wisdom.

⁵ **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Titus 3:5**

⁶ **Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. [17] They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. [18] For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it? Jeremiah 23:16-18**

said this:

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
Romans 3:10-11.

At this point we see no difference between the sinner of Old Testament and of the New. The exciting difference is found in how we are "designed" as New Testament believers. This is alluded to in the Old as found in Ezekiel.⁷ The New Testament believer receives several works of grace from the Lord not the least of which is a heart that is made new. Listen to Paul the Apostle:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Romans 12:2.

Let's talk about the original for our word "...be ye *transformed*..." The original is the imperfect, present, passive of *metamorphoo*. Recognize that word? Yup - we get our English word from the Latin - our word is metamorphose - so, I suppose you could say "be ye metamorphosed..." This word occurs four times in the New Testament - twice in the Transfiguration and in 2 Corinthians 3:18 where we are changed as we look behold the glory of the Lord. My point here is that Paul is making a case for developing our *new, regenerated* mind. Let's look at the next word of interest in this text - "by the *renewing*..." This is the means of our transformation, so we should take special care with this word. It might be helpful for us to look at another reference where Paul uses this word:

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Titus 3:5.

Well, there's our "regeneration" word. Let's take a little detour and look at it. The original is *palingenesia*. It's a compound word - *palin-genesia*. *Palin* means to do something over again and *genesia* (our genesis) means birth. So we are referring to our New Birth. New Birth as it is used in this verse? We are washed by our New Birth. This regenerative process is also referred to in the Old Testament.⁸ It is important for us to understand that the regenerated mind is to be *cleansed* from the human viewpoint

⁷ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Ezekiel 36:26-27

⁸ Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Isaiah 1:16
O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? Jeremiah 4:14

that is there - and to the extent that we harbor human viewpoint we will struggle with this whole process of being transformed.⁹ Lenski puts this process in an interesting way: "bath of regeneration." I like that. Sort of invokes the picture of Ezekiel 16:¹⁰

On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths.

" 'I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. Ezekiel 16:4, 9

Well, there's more but I want to get to my point. This whole process of the New Birth involves not merely the forgiveness of our sins - it involves a cleansing from them *and* the miracle of a new mind - given to us by the work of the Holy Spirit where we take on the ability to *understand* the Lord's thoughts - and therefore pick up the ability to *act* like Him.

1 Cor. 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The inference here is that although it is impossible to know the mind of the Lord - the believer with the instruction of the Holy Spirit and the activity of his regenerate mind, e.g. the mind of Christ, can know His truth. See also vs' 13 - 15 of this chapter.

I've run out of time so we have to leave off here and pick it up next time, Lord willing.

⁹ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; [6] And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. 2 Cor. 10:4-6

¹⁰ I think the "bathing" here refers not only to cleansing from sin but the regenerate mind.