

THE KEY TO GOSPEL UNDERSTANDING – ELM 77

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

There is a Key to Gospel understanding which will open up the Bible, and particularly the New Testament to reveal things that have puzzled scholars and Bible students alike.

In the Old Testament, in Genesis 17 and Exodus 12 it was clear that circumcision was absolutely essential for Salvation. Also there is not one statement in the Old Testament that even suggests that it would ever be rescinded. In fact, in Ezekiel 40-48 it makes it clear that it will be required and enforced during the Millennium after Christ's return!

Yet the New Testament made it clear that physical circumcision was no longer necessary as it stated that circumcision was now of the heart, of the spirit. Also it is clear that animal sacrifices were no longer necessary because Christ's sacrifice and spilt blood did away with the need to shed the blood of animals which never really did pay the penalty for sin anyway. The Levitical Priesthood was essential also in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament it was clear that Priesthood was replaced by the Melchisedek Priesthood.

These matters were relatively simple to resolve. The Old Testament was certainly inspired of God, was God's Word, and all true, at the time, and for the period it held true, and was seen that changes in those things were made as time progressed. It was clear that the physical laws of the O.T. were replaced by the Spiritual Laws of the heart of the N.T.

But also in the New Testament, there were matters in the Gospels which later appeared to be contradicted by Paul. Why, we scholars asked, did the Gospels say one thing and Paul another?

In Mathew 19 under inspiration, Matthew wrote that Christ told the rich young man who asked what he had to do to be saved that he had to keep the commandments, this on His Authority. This was plain enough. When Christ says something, we had better pay attention, but then...

Then Paul says in Romans that keeping the commandments is not necessary for Salvation which certainly appeared to be a direct contradiction! The Law and the Commandments appeared to be two words to describe the same thing. This to say the least was confusing to Dr. Martin at the time, as indeed it was to the officials of the organization he had left.

In Acts 15 there is described the conference at Jerusalem to discuss circumcision. Peter and others saw the Holy Spirit was being given to Gentiles who were not circumcised which appeared to contradict the Law and the Words of Christ. So they decided that there needed to be a conference to discuss the matter of such seriousness.

As a result of that conference it was decided that the Gentiles would only have to observe four things, one of which was that they were to abstain from, and ordered not to eat food that had been offered to idols. This was stated very clearly, yet only about six years later, Paul is telling the Corinthians that under some circumstances it is perfectly all right to eat meat that had been offered to idols. This was another apparent contradiction. How could these two statements be squared away with one another?

If the Corinthian Christians had had to abide by the decision made in Jerusalem by Peter, James, Paul and the others, then they would have had to become vegetarians!

In former times when Dr. Martin and thousands of others were attached to an organization that claimed to be the only true church on earth, the principle elders of that Church were certainly not able to answer questions of this nature, and the matter was patched over.

Even as the head of Theology, Dr. Ernest L. Martin was not able to come to completely satisfactory answers at that time, and it troubled him. He says that he had a secret prayer at that time where he would ask God and Christ Jesus that they would speak to him and make the position clear. That prayer was never answered in that manner. Included in that prayer were three requests:

1. That he Dr. Martin could go back to N.T. times, and ask Christ the question in that era.
2. Was the Sabbath essential for Salvation? And...
3. Was there a true church extant in the world of today?

He did not have to go back to New Testament times, as he had the answers from the ' church' officials, but they were the wrong answers!

Dr. Martin had total conviction in the inspiration of the entire Bible, but these anomalies were problematical.

What Paul says in Romans in 55 A.D. is clearly very different from what the other Apostles were teaching. Then in 61 A.D. Paul writes that he has new inspired teaching directly from Christ, new revelations concerning the Gospel.

When Jesus Christ was a man, did He have all the knowledge He had before he became a man? No! The Bible says that He learned by the things He suffered, but not everything *at that time*. He said did not know when the second advent would occur, and that not even the angels knew that.

He explained many things to His disciples, but not the developments in the Gospel message that were revealed later after His death and resurrection. It was sixteen years later that the matter of physical circumcision being abolished was made clear.

We now know that this was another example of 'Progressive Revelation', another vital Key to the understanding of the scriptures. This 'Progressive Revelation' is clearly a major 'Key' to understanding the scriptures where there are apparent contradictions. The Gospel was not revealed all at once, it was revealed step by step over time, 'Progressively' over time.

Ephesians 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Colossians 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

It became clear that the "works of the Law" were not needed for Salvation. However for those who would 'grow in grace and knowledge' 'work' is certainly required. But what sort of work?

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** the word of truth.

Reading the Bible can be enjoyable, and studying the Bible can also be enjoyable and even more inspiring, and study requires '**work**'! It is necessary to be a 'workman' to study the Bible. Paul just before his death

is telling his good friend Timothy that study of the scriptures is of vital importance.

The next part of that verse also tells us **how to work** at our study of the scriptures: **'rightly dividing'** the Word of Truth. 'Rightly dividing' involves even more diligence as we study. We need to compare other scriptures, to pay attention to when things were written in the timeline of chronology; note to whom matters were addressed; compare translations of some words; and sometimes we need to check with the original language of the manuscripts; and it is always very important to be very careful about the context; these are all very essential factors to enable the 'workmanlike' Bible student to be involved in 'rightly dividing' the Truth, and all these aspects of study take **work!**

So can we really 'rightly divide' the Word of Truth? Yes we can, it is not that difficult, it is actually easy and simple despite the technicalities if we use the study tools in the previous paragraph.

Paul wrote about 'rightly dividing' the truth to Timothy in 65-66 A.D. just before his death, and it most certainly applies to us today. Paul goes on in a really direct manner with Timothy, warning him not to entertain other notions or 'gospels'.

2 Timothy 2:16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Paul goes on in the next several verses to admonish Timothy on other matters of keeping to the straight and narrow, which of course also apply to us today.

So very shortly after they were made, Eve first, then Adam sinned when they allowed Satan to enter and control their minds, who made out that God was a liar. Who was the liar? Satan was the father of lying, and still is.

Then the first murder, was no doubt inspired by Satan who was a murderer from the beginning.

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,

because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Seeing how His precious children were so quickly going against Him, God repented, was sorry that He had created man.

Genesis 6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

God knew of course that this would happen, but God is clearly learning by what He is experiencing. That might sound blasphemous, but the Bible, written under inspiration of course, gives many instances where it is clear that God changes His mind about certain matters over time.

So after only 1,656 years after God created Adam He is talking to Noah, and telling him that he needs to build a boat as He is going to destroy all flesh apart from Noah's family from off the face of the earth. Many people dismiss the Noatian flood as fictional folklore, but it is described in great detail in the inspired word of God, so it certainly happened.

Genesis 6:7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

This should be very comforting to all human beings, and tell us of the character of God, who when humans are obedient, they will receive the protection of their Father in Heaven.

B Jeremiah 31:31

The New Covenant is in type, and in a sense has come into existence, but as yet as it is not

Who was celebrating Pentecost in Jerusalem 50 days later? It was Peter, James, and John, and Jews; and how many Gentiles were there? None!

Peter went to Joppa, and he was sent on to Caesarea where he had the vision which told him he should eat unclean foods, and Peter was horrified, but after the Lord talked to him, Peter realized

Then 10 years after the crucifixion of Christ, Peter was being told to baptize Cornelius this hated Roman Officer in the Roman army, and Peter found it very difficult because he knew he was not circumcised.

Then when Peter went to Jerusalem, all the others were horrified, but had to accept the change, when they realized that Salvation had come to the Gentiles. Yet God had previously stated that Salvation was only for the House of Israel, for the Jews.

Now Gentiles are reckoned as the seed of Israel by virtue of their re

Romans 9: Symbol of the Olive Tree. Paul says to the uncircumcised Romans that some of the branches of the tree have been grafted in, and you have become Spiritual Israelites. If they had not become 'Israelites' they could not have been Saved or received the Holy Spirit because even the New Covenant required all who would be Saved had to be of Israel.

2 Corinthians 3: Corinthian Greeks were in a S

Galatians became Abrahams seed and heirs of the promises... and to the Israel of God. All had to be in a new relationship with God under the New Covenant.

Galatians up in Asia Minor were all Spirit

Covenants are always between two parties, and this was God on one side and Mankind on the other.

Grace is there but there are still limited works to be done under the New Covenant. God said I will do this, if you will do that. You do your part, and I will do My part said God. I will give you Salvation not only the land of Israel but Salvation. He had to believe on Jesus Christ, confess it with the mouth, be Baptised, take the Lord's Supper if not no life in you, part and parcel of the New Covenant. Everyone, Jew or Gentile, women not to teach in Church,

There is nothing in the Bible about anointed cloths, apart for special miracles by an Apostle, it is not a practice for today.

Acts 28: Last chapter ends abruptly, no amen. Paul is always talking first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. He told them they had to become Spiritual Israelites.

About 59 A.D. stops but this is not the end of Paul's ministry. They told him all about the New Covenant, but they, the Apostles would not hear it, and they rejected it.

In 60-61 A.D. Paul wrote Ephesians 3:2 Now that you have heard of the dispensation... the Mystery... of Christ. A brand new revelation of completely unknown material, unknown by Abraham Isaac Jacob etc., which in other ages was not known to the sons of men and that includes everyone, as it is NOW revealed by the Spirit that the Gentiles should be co-heirs of the Promise. I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable gifts of Christ.... Which was hid in God.

They knew the New Covenant was coming 6 centuries before, but they did not these things... the manifold wisdom of God, even Paul did not know this until it was revealed to him by Christ.

Eph 2: as long as they were Gentiles they could not be saved, they had to become Spiritual seed of Abraham, made both of one having broken down the middle wall of partition is broken down, and that means that does away with all the rituals of the Temple, outer wall, the inner sanctum, and the Holy of Holies, and the enmity...

Now Gentiles can walk up to the Holy Altar which is now open to the public because the wall is gone, then there was the curtain separated the Holy Altar from the Holy of Holies was torn down as Christ died, and everyone has access to the Holy and Holies, where previously only the High Priest could go, and only on the Day of Atonement. Curtain torn down from the top to bottom which shows God did the tearing at the exact moment of Christ's death. With that gone, there is no distinction, and in a sense being an Israelite has no importance as it is all open to everyone without distinction.

Was all that to do with another Covenant? No! Not at all, because there is nothing for humans to do, all the work is done by Christ

Eph 2:8 Faith is the gift of God, and Salvation have no works, without having to do one thing.

Should we therefore not do any works because we have Salvation? No!

Organisation of Church which had all kinds of physical things, but they were also Spiritual. There was an important transition, as all the Covenants God ever made with man were broken, so now there is no Covenant, we are saved by grace...

You will find things in the later Epistles that are different, as all those physical things were left behind, as Salvation is now

Faith we practice is from Him, should we confess to others? Of course but even that is a gift from God. Our works are done by God by the Holy Spirit not our own. Do not mix the dispensations that have been given to humankind.

Four compartments, 1. pre-Abrahamic period, 2. Moses Covenant Ratified, 3. Jeremiah said a New Covenant was coming along. 4 61 A.D. a brand New Covenant was ushered in, and there is nothing being

1 Timothy 2:5 Only One Mediator, Jesus Christ. There are only three in the Universe, God, Christ, and us! We do not need any men giving us this or that, or telling us was to do as all that was mediatorial, and that has all been swept away.

Should any of us deny Christ, all the Covenants involved a fault, was that fault of God? No of course not, but because man is involved.

We are 'in Christ', not a man, not an Aaronic Priesthood, the only One is Christ Jesus. Forget about men, the Key is Jesus Christ.

