

## Knowledge Rising Above

*"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 'See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship' (Exodus 31:1-5). Many will look at these verses and say, 'I want God to give me knowledge and skill in this same miraculous way.' They forget that these workmen had spent years in the bonds of slavery, learning the skills necessary through the labors forced upon them by the Egyptians. To gain knowledge the same way, you would be a slave, forced to learn what the slave driver wanted you to know.*

God allows His providence to place His desires before people and instill knowledge in them by hearing and reading. Moses spoke the law to the people to explain the writing on the stone tablets. The priests and Levites were to maintain that practice until Messiah came. When the priests failed in their duties, God called the prophets to remind the people of their obligations. Then, when the people still refused to know God, He allowed other nations to oppress and finally to enslave them. Without the Temple and the priestly teaching, they learned a difficult lesson in Babylonian captivity. Upon their return from Babylon, they hungered for the Word of God and stood listening to the scriptures and their explanation (Nehemiah 8:1-8).

Jesus understood the amount and kind of knowledge His apostles would need. He taught the general public broad lessons on many topics, but the twelve required more preparation. *"He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles"* (Luke 6:13). Although the Holy Spirit would be available to *"teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you"* (John 14:26), the apostles needed more in-depth preparation. For example, note the explanation He gave to the twelve concerning "The Parable Of The Sower" (Matthew 13:18-23).

The Bible gives evidence that gaining knowledge is a continuous operation and is expected to produce one of the fruits of a Christian. Paul acknowledged Timothy's level of knowledge this way. *"You must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 3:14-15). But note the admonition Paul gave to Timothy earlier. *"Be diligent (make an effort or study) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). Timothy continually encountered situations where he needed to refer to scripture for guidance.

In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he tells them, *"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit"* (Galatians 5:24-25). Knowing what to crucify and how to do it is far above the knowledge that the Son of God came to earth as a baby and died on a cross for our sins. And how does one live by and walk by the Spirit? Other questions that demand answers are "How is Jesus a prophet? How is Jesus a priest? How is Jesus a King? And the big question many ask is, "Why do I really need to know?"

Jesus said that *"Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins"* (John 8:24). What is involved in the belief that Jesus is the "I Am" spoken of by Isaiah? And Jesus also said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing"* (John 15:5). How does one bear the fruit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23? *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."* The world has many ways to define each of these "fruits." However, God and Christ have specific ways to describe each fruit and give examples. We need to remember that the Bible contains everything God wants us to know and do. Jesus said, *"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth"* (John 17:17).

Paul wrote. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* (2 Timothy 3:16). To know, and then obey, God's Word, we must transfer that knowledge to ourselves through dedicated study. Jesus said that the entire Bible is pointing us to the Son of God *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"* (John 5:39). No matter where you start a Bible Study, you will rise above your current level and know more about Jesus, the Son of God.

What knowledge do you need to acquire in 2022? Let us all "Rise Up" and learn more!