

Discernment

"...It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment." (Philippians 1:9)



"But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap." (Luke 21:34)

*Parable of the Ten Virgins
(Matt 25:1-13)*



The Berean Lamp
For the Body of Christ.

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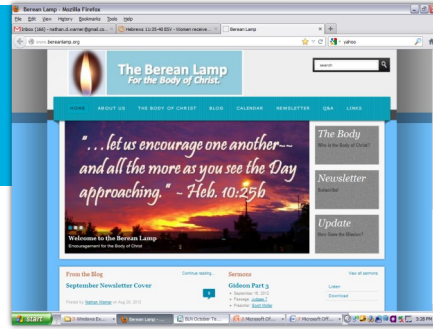
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The Bernean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller





Fear of the Lord

By Scott Moller

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

(Proverbs 9:10 NIV)

The Bible uses the phrase "the fear of Lord" approximately 30 times. In most cases, the writer is referring to reverence, respect, and/or awe of God. There is also a proper place for legitimate fear of God as our Judge and fear of His wrath. For the most part, we find ourselves living in a generation that has lost its "fear of the Lord" as described above. Unfortunately, this is often true in both the world and the Church. The world is taking the position, by and large, that God does not even exist. The Church has also lost much of its understanding of God's Holy character and His abhorrence towards sin.

Once we come to the understanding that there is very little "fear of the Lord" in society today, the foolishness of this age makes more sense, because according to Scripture, "fear of the Lord" is the "beginning" of wisdom. In effect, if one does not start seeking wisdom from the true source, it will never be obtained. Many people in this world are seeking wisdom and understanding, but they do not start out with "fear of the Lord." Without this "fear of the Lord," one never starts on the correct path of finding wisdom. Therefore, according to the Bible, it is impossible to obtain true wisdom apart from God.

The Apostle Paul addresses this in Romans 1:21-22: *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...."* Here Paul holds all mankind accountable to the knowledge of God's existence. Even though

man knows this in his heart, he willingly chooses not to glorify or give thanks to God. According to Paul, when man turns his back on God in this manner, it causes his thinking to become futile. Even though man claims to be wise, God declares that he has actually become a fool. The prophet Isaiah declares this warning: *"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight"* (Isaiah 5:21).

As Christians, we must be careful not to become wise in our own eyes. This is a form of pride and is dangerous. We must be aware that we are all susceptible to this temptation. We must acknowledge first and foremost that our source of wisdom and understanding in all things must come from God. He is the beginning of wisdom; therefore, we should always start with God first. James encourages us with these words: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5). By humbly going to God first for wisdom, we put matters in proper perspective. It demonstrates our dependence on God. It acknowledges that God is the source of true wisdom. And God promises that He will give generously to those who ask Him. Let us not behave as the world does, seeking wisdom apart from God, but let us always turn to God as our source of wisdom. God will not disappoint.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

(Isaiah 55:9)

**“Ignorance
Is Bliss”**

*“They are darkened
in their understand-
ing, alienated from the
life of God because of
the ignorance that is
in them, due to their
hardness of heart.”*

(Ephesians 4:18)

*“For this is a people with-
out discernment; therefore
He who made them will
not have compassion on
them; He who formed
them will show them no
favor.”*

(Isaiah 27:11b)

**Guide To Getting Along
with the World**

**HEAR
NO
EVIL**



**SEE
NO
EVIL**



**SPEAK
NO
EVIL**



Discerning Sorceries in Babylon

By Nathan Warner

“Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.” (Hosea 14:9 ESV)

The word “**deceive**,” from the Latin, means “to turn aside, ensnare.”¹ To **discern** is “to see or understand the difference; to make distinction.” As Believers, we do not rely solely on the intellect for our discernment, for we are given spiritual discernment by the Holy Spirit: “*The things of the Spirit of God...are spiritually discerned*” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

We walk in “the ways of the Lord” if we follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Deceptions often rise up on the way, attempting to turn us aside. Spiritual discernment is needed to understand the difference between God’s will, which keeps and leads us in His ways, and the will of the world that turns us aside with deceptions, attempting to ensnare us. Paul reminds us to “*not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect*” (Romans 12:2).

While Babylon was a real nation, God uses “Babylon” as the spiritual name of a system that has dominion over world governments (Revelation 17:18) and deceives mankind, turning them aside and ensnaring them. The Babylon described by Isaiah in chapter 47 exists nearly verbatim in John’s account of the fall of Babylon in Revelation (18:4b-8). Babylon stands throughout Scripture as a great enemy of God’s children, whether Israelite or Christian. What other spiritual nation is responsible for all blood that has been shed on earth? “*And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth*” (Revelation 18:24).

In Revelation, God tells Babylon that “*all nations were deceived by your sor-*

cery” (Revelation 18:23b). This is not just a warning for the last days. In Isaiah, Babylon is described very similarly when God tells “her” that “she” will be destroyed in “spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments” (Isaiah 47:9b). Spiritual Babylon gains and keeps power over people and nations by deceiving them through sorceries and enchantments. Let’s look a bit more at what these words mean since they are at work in our world today.

Sorcery, n. Magic; **enchantment**; witchcraft; divination by the assistance of evil spirits, or the power of commanding evil spirits.

Enchantment, n. The act of producing certain wonderful effects by the invocation or aid of demons, or the agency of certain supposed spirits; the use of magic arts, spells or **charms**; incantation.

1. Irresistible influence; overpowering influence of delight.

Charm, n. 1. Words, characters or other things imagined to possess some occult or unintelligible power; hence, a magic power or spell, by which with the supposed assistance of the devil, witches and sorcerers have been supposed to do wonderful things. Spell; enchantment. Hence, **2. That which has power to subdue opposition, and gain the affections; that which can please irresistible; that which delights and attracts the heart; generally in the plural.**

Charm, v.t. 2. **That which has power to subdue opposition, and gain the affections; that which can please irresistible; that which delights and attracts the heart; generally in the plural.**

1. **To subdue or control by incantation or secret influence.**

2. **To subdue by secret power, especially by that which pleases and delights the mind; to allay, or appease.**

3. **To give exquisite pleasure to the mind or senses; to delight.**

By these English definitions we see that Sorcery, Enchantment, and Charm are all demonically or satanically motivated. We also see, however, that the effect they have describes things we may experience in the world every day. Babylon comes to power and subdues opposition by gaining the affections, irresistibly pleasing and influencing opponents, delighting the mind and attracting the heart. This pleasing, attracting, delighting influence is not inspired by God, and it turns us aside to ensnare us, which is why God describes Babylon as the Mother of Harlots and abominations, beguiling all humanity from its walk with God in order to ensnare them and empower itself. There are many things in our world today that are not of God that please, attract, delight, and influence us.

Now would be a good time to remember that “sorcery” is a work of the flesh: “*Now the works of the **flesh** are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, **sorcery**, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions*” (Galatians 5:19-20). All the works of the flesh were evident in Babylon, who is seen “*holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality*” (Revelation 17:4b). Paul describes Believers as once belonging to this Babylonian system: “*You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our **flesh**, carrying out the desires of the **body** and the **mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind*” (Ephesians 2:1-3).

Peter describes the war against our soul as coming from our flesh: “*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the **flesh**, which wage war against your soul*” (1 Peter 2:11). Babylon gains power and subdues opposition by waging war against souls with the passions of the flesh that carry out the desires of the body, the mind, and the deceitfully wicked heart (Jeremiah 17:9). This is a tactic of war as seen in Sun Tzu’s 5th

century BC Chinese classic, *The Art of War*: “The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”² The US Department of Defense defines psychological warfare as “the planned use of propaganda and other psychological actions having the primary purpose of influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile foreign groups in such a way as to support the achievement of national objectives.”³ This “supreme art” is Babylon’s staple – avoid open conflict but rather tempt, lure, and deceive into submission. As Peter warns us, we are at war with the passions of our flesh, which Babylon employs against us.

Just as our bodies are to be temples for God (1 Corinthians 3:16), our minds must be renewed by God (Romans 12:2) to keep them from the delightful intellectual sorceries that often turn us aside. “*For the **mind** that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot*” (Romans 8:7).

Throughout our walk as Believers, we follow Jesus who is the Truth, the Way, and the Life (John 14:6). We obey Him and He keeps us from the passions of the flesh. Along the way, however, we also meet people or come upon doctrines that seduce us with their pleasing promises or delightful notions, which distract us from the simplicity of the Gospel. Paul warned the Corinthians of this because they readily accepted anyone, no matter what they preached: “*I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully*” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4 NASB – or “*you put up with it readily enough*” in ESV).

The deceptions Babylon weaves are as numerous as the sand of the sea. We should not be surprised if we are surrounded by these deceptions even inside the Church, for Babylon works tirelessly in its “many sorceries” and is

“wearied” with its many councils to gain and maintain its power over peoples and nations (Isaiah 47:12-13) and destroy all who witness against its sorceries and enchantments. The “witnesses of Jesus” (footnote to Revelation 17:6 ESV) reveal through the discernment of the Spirit of God that Babylon’s alluring powers are nothing more than soul-destroying illusions. For this, Babylon persecutes and seeks to destroy them. In Isaiah, God taunts Babylon: “*Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed; perhaps you may inspire terror.*” (Isaiah 47:12)

“Terror” is from the Latin word meaning “extreme fear.” Anything in our world that causes fear may be a product of the sorceries of Babylon that lure or herd people like sheep aside from safety to ensnare them.

For a Believer, what greater fear can we have than the fear we are deceived and will not be saved? We are told over and over in Scripture to be cautious in our walk. While this is true, we should not become fearful of being deceived. Many false teachers prey on this fear by warning people of hidden dangers and offering to lend their “wisdom,” “teachings,” and “discernment” to help these ailing Believers navigate the dangers, take back their country, rescue their children, grow spiritually, discover their spiritual gift, feel useful for God, etc. Whatever the perceived desire or need is, they have a solution or a “product.” All that is required is that you part with your money or come under their interpretation of Scripture, their teaching, their authority, their church, their law, ministry, etc. These Babylonian harlots lure people into their fold with various enticements and lock them down with a false sense of security.

We must not depart from the simplicity or sincerity of the Gospel, for outside of this all these charms are employed against Believers. Let us say with Paul, “*And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except **Jesus Christ and Him cruci-***

fied” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). Our weapon in this war on our soul is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. To us, the Word of the Cross is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18). “*Let the **word** of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God*” (Colossians 3:16). Let us not look to man to solve our needs but to our Heavenly Father and His Holy Spirit, who tests our minds and hearts and “*bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*” (Romans 8:16). At the same time, look to the life of Christ and the Believers in the New Testament – “*those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*” (Hebrews 13:7-8). Let us be always looking for His coming.

*“Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous— you who test the **minds and hearts**, O righteous God!”*
(Psalm 7:9)

1. All definitions from Noah Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language (**emphasis added**)
2. III. Attack By Stratagem #6. different translation: “Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy’s troops without any fighting”
3. Phil Taylor (1987). "Glossary of Relevant Terms & Acronyms Propaganda and Psychological Warfare Studies University of Leeds UK"

Law of the Lord
By Natalie Madsen



How *blessed* is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked...
But his *delight* is in the *law* of the *LORD*...
He will be like a *tree* firmly planted by steams of water...

Psalm 1:1-3

Learning Discernment

By Caleb Tvedt

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

(Proverbs 1:7 KJV)

We need wisdom and discernment every day in both our physical and spiritual lives. We all start small – a baby – then we grow and learn. As we get older, the problems get larger, and the temptations get bigger. We need understanding and discernment. *“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age,*

even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:13-14). This growth comes through God. *“For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him”* (Isaiah 28:26).

We make a lot of decisions in the physical realm of life every day, such as what to eat, what to wear, what to do, and how to talk. Should I get angry at that person for what they said to me or about me? God's Word and His Spirit gives us direction, and we gain discretion. *“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression”* (Proverbs 19:11).

So, too, as Christians, we also have to exercise spiritual discernment. *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they*

are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:1-6). James tells us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

We only need to ask, and the LORD will give us wisdom we need.

But do we ask? Do we start each day with our Saviour in reading His Words of Wisdom to prepare us to discern what is right and what is wrong? I know I haven't been as faithful to do this, and I see the results: I get angry quickly, everything seems to go wrong, I make the wrong decisions, or I have a terrible day; but when I make the time to begin each day by reading His Word and going to Him in prayer, the day goes better. I see that I make better decisions, am not as frustrated, and am not so quick to get angry. It is easier to know and do the right things.

Like me, be challenged to get into God's Word so we can do His will and discern what is right and wrong, what is the spirit of truth and what is the spirit of evil.

*"For the WORD of God is alive
and active. Sharper than any double-
edged SWORD..."*

*"...It penetrates even to dividing SOUL
and SPIRIT, joints and marrow; it
judges the thoughts and attitudes of the
HEART." (Hebrews 4:12)*

Discernment Through His Living Word

By Betty Harstad

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.”

(Hebrews 4:12 NASB)

What astounding power there is in the Word of God to be able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Even as believers, we may be tempted daily to succumb to the disorder of the World System caused by sin in the hearts of man. There is not a family or government that is left unaffected by this fallen world.

To read that *“the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword”* helps us wake up and pay more attention to the Word. We discover that we do gain discernment and understanding as we respond to the living Word. We learn that all our sustenance and life comes from our Lord Jesus Christ, as His Word reminds us that our own strength is extremely weak. *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not of ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing”* (2 Cor. 4:7, 8).

His Word is specially prepared so that we can confidently go to it each day to have our Lord and Savior patiently teach us and direct us. We see what is truth and error through the living Word, so we need not blindly believe any falseness that may be taught by a church, a teacher, or a discernment ministry. God has His faithful, humble, and truthful teachers of His Word, who are very important and necessary to help bring us to maturity and to be guardians of His Word. How thankful we can be that His Word is alive and brings comprehension and wisdom to every willing believer's heart. As we encounter the seemingly

endless troubles and wickedness in the world, we find that it is not wise to stray from our own personal fellowship with our Lord and Savior or allow ourselves to be away from the true body of Christ as we are a vulnerable people.

John, in his first epistle, calls us “children” and goes on to remind us to walk in the Light to have fellowship with the Father. With sober warnings mixed in with words of assurance, John tells us of the enemies and false teachers that we will face. We are reminded that hearts can be deceitful and so we need the warnings in 1 John and elsewhere to test our own hearts also: *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is of the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever”* (1 John 2:16, 17). Thankfully, there is not only this epistle but many books written for us in the Bible from which we may glean insight and continue to learn to abide in Christ and know God's ways through the power of the Holy Spirit.

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

(1 John 5:20)

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us
UNDERSTANDING*, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”*

(1 John 5:20)

Make Your Ear Attentive

By Natalie Madsen

*“My son, let them not vanish from your sight;
keep sound wisdom and discretion,
So they will be life to your soul and adornment
to your neck.*

*Then you will walk in your way securely and
your foot will not stumble.”*
(Proverbs 3:21-23 NASB)

In the early years of the United States, whenever gold was found or claimed to have been found, settlers’ ears perked up, and they flocked around general stores and swapped dream stories. Many settlers uprooted themselves and sometimes their families to journey to areas potentially filled with treasure. Most of these pioneers gave up their very livelihoods and threw everything aside to seek their gold. During the California Gold Rush, a flood of “forty-niners” sacrificed their income, farms, health, and sometimes family to get a taste of the gold nuggets found in the West. The surge of settlers to California caused towns to grow and communities to plant.

Most settlers dedicated long, hard hours toward tedious panning, mining, and picking for gold. Despite the hot sun and often dangerous environments wearing them down, they were determined to persevere. Some, however, wilted at the work and returned home without a single piece of gold dust. Some settlers’ families stayed in California’s new settlements to prosper from their town businesses. Some men died. Some, though, worked hard until finally giving up and returning home. A few struck rich.

Was it worth the laborious months apart from their families? And for those who died in pursuit of their gold – was their labor all in vain? Whatever their motives, most of the settlers worked diligently and attentively, seeking their treasure and inclining their hearts toward this endeavor. As Christians, we are called to do likewise in seeking wisdom and discernment.

*“Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline
your heart to understanding;
For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice
for understanding....”*
(Proverbs 2:2-3)

Each of these statements has an action verb – we should be *making* our ears attentive and *inclining* our hearts to understanding! We must diligently seek the wisdom of the Lord, and we must seek it from Him because “*the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding*” (Proverbs 2:6). And not only must we be actively seeking discernment from the Lord, but we must be diligent to pursue it at the cost of our own desires and our own dreams. I experienced something last year that was difficult for me to get through because I knew I had to seek the Lord’s Will and ask for Him to be my wisdom in this situation. I knew what He wanted me to do and did it, despite its difficulty, but I also knew very clearly how much easier it would have been if I had ignored this calling to seek His Wisdom! But He doesn’t call us to an easy journey.

*“If you seek her as silver and search for her as
for hidden treasures;
Then you will discern the fear of the LORD and
discover the knowledge of God.”*
(Proverbs 2:4-5)

Oh, the trials those settlers must have gone through – and their families! What they sought was worldly gain – temporary wealth – or an adventure to benefit themselves. If they sacrificed their own wants in order to pursue these precious metals, how much more should we work to seek wisdom and discernment, whose “*profit is better than the profit of silver*” and whose “*gain better than fine gold*” (Proverbs 3:14)! When the Lord is our wisdom, “*discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the way of evil*” (Proverbs 2:11), for the Lord “*is a shield to those who walk in integ-*

...*ity, guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones*" (Proverbs 2:7-8).

Seeking is a continual action until a need for it is satisfied, and we will never be so wise in ourselves to not need to cry out for discernment from Him! We serve a Creator God, who *"by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens"* (Proverbs 3:19). With His help and His wisdom, He will deliver us from *"those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness..."* (Proverbs 2:13). We lack the discernment needed to avoid the pitfalls and landmines through this world that is our temporary dwelling.

How do we seek it? Seeking is not sitting still and hoping it'll come, and seeking is not testing the Lord's answers in different situations. We need to seek for wisdom as we would precious stones – we must spend *time* and *effort*, humbling ourselves before the Father in Heaven and *asking* Him to show us His Will – to be *our* wisdom. We need to soak ourselves in His Word so that His truth permeates through us...our lives should be beating to the heartbeat of His Gospel, His Truth! We must fear Him! Fear our King with a reverent fear: *"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones"* (Proverbs 3:7-8).

I encourage you to view discernment as a precious stone and seek for it diligently! Seek for it in Him – the only True Wisdom...seek it in prayer and reading His Word...seek it continually, tirelessly. I pray you will take to heart the determination of those settlers in seeking such a worldly gain in your own search for His discernment. I pray you *make your ear attentive* and *incline your heart* and

cry out to the Lord for wisdom, a treasure far greater than any fine metals and a precious thing incomparable to the world's riches.

*"My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments;
For length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.*

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck,

Write them on the tablet of your heart."

(Proverbs 3:1-3)



*"But at midnight there was a cry,
Here is the BRIDEGROOM!
Come out to meet him."
(Matthew 25:6)*

Mary's Gift

*What gift has He brought you Mary?
What did the angel say?
What gift did He bring you Mary?
Tell me why do you sing?
Sing...sing His praise!
My soul does magnify the Lord
And my spirit...
Rejoices in God my Saviour
For He that is mighty...
He hath done great things!
And Holy...Holy is His name!*

*What message did He bring you Mary?
Nothing is impossible with God.
The Son of God now lives within you,
And now this is why you sing...
Sing...sing His praise!
My soul does magnify the Lord
And my spirit...
Rejoices in God my Saviour
For He that is mighty...
He hath done great things!
And Holy...Holy is His name!*

*Because you believed Him, Mary,
Oh so blessed are you!
What He promised was accomplished
And now in your heart you sing...
Sing...sing His praise!
My soul does magnify the Lord
And my spirit...
Rejoices in God my Saviour
For He that is mighty...
He hath done great things!
And Holy...Holy is His name!*

*This gift I want to bring to you now
If you will so believe
The Son of God can live within you
Like Mary...you will sing!
Sing...sing His praise!
My soul does magnify the Lord
And my spirit...
Rejoices in God my Saviour
For He that is mighty...
He hath done great things!
And Holy...Holy is His name!*

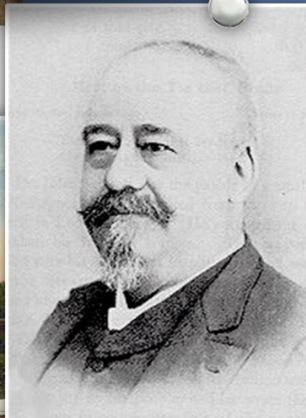
by Ginny Larsen

Sing A New Song

Words by Eliza Edmunds Hewitt

Music by John R. Sweney

“More about Jesus let me learn,
More of His holy will discern”



More About Jesus Would I Know 339
But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. II Pet. 3:18
 Eliza E. Hewitt, 1887
 SWENEY L.M. Ref.
 John R. Sweney, 1887

1. More a - bout Je - sus would I know, More of His grace to oth - ers show;
 2. More a - bout Je - sus let me learn, More of His ho - ly will dis - cern;
 3. More a - bout Je - sus; in His Word, Hold - ing com - mun - ion with my Lord;
 4. More a - bout Je - sus on His throne, Rich - es in glo - ry all His own;

More of His sav - ing ful - ness see, More of His love who died for me.
 Spir - it of God, my teach - er be, Show - ing the things of Christ to me.
 Hear - ing His voice in ev - ery line, Mak - ing each faith - ful say - ing mine.
 More of His king - dom's sure in - crease; More of His com - ing, Prince of Peace.

Refrain
 More, more a - bout Je - sus, More, more a - bout Je - sus;
 More of His sav - ing ful - ness see, More of His love who died for me.

HOPE AND ASPIRATION

More About Jesus

By Maggie Moller

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our
 Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 To Him be glory both now and forever!
 Amen.”

(2 Peter 3:18 NIV)

What hymn better summarizes our desire as Believers than “More About Jesus”? The second stanza declares:

More about Jesus let me learn,
 More of His holy will discern;
 Spirit of God, my teacher be,
 Showing the things of Christ to me.

Here, we see the scriptural truth that as we learn more about Jesus, we should discern more of His Holy will. Paul reminded us to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2), and that “the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The Lyricist: Eliza Edmunds Hewitt

Eliza Edmunds Hewitt was born on June 28, 1851, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A diligent student, she graduated as valedictorian of her high school class. Eliza turned to teaching after receiving her diploma, but a spinal injury a short time later severed her dream. While

she was trying to discipline one of her students, Eliza suffered a blow to her back by a slate. Her back never fully healed, and she was forced to stop teaching.

Eliza stayed in Philadelphia for all her years and for some time worked as a Sunday School superintendent. Most notably, however, is that Eliza chose to focus her attention on writing hymns, and she wrote over seventy beloved hymns over her lifetime. She and her close friend, hymn-writer Fanny Crosby, visited each other and discussed their music and their Savior. The exact time Eliza penned words for "More About Jesus" is not known. Eliza also wrote "My Faith Has Found A Resting Place," which was highlighted in the October issue of the *Berean Lamp*. Eliza passed away on April 24, 1920.

The Composer: John Robson Sweney

John Robson Sweney was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, on December 31, 1837. From a young age, John developed his musical gift. With his German professor Bauer instructing him, John took leaps and bounds in fine-tuning his skills. He learned to play the piano and violin and led choirs, school performances, and concerts.

After the Civil War began, John enlisted, and the leadership of the Third Delaware Regiment band was given to him. Following the war's conclusion, John returned to his musical profession and worked for twenty-five years as the professor of music at his hometown's Pennsylvania Military Academy.

His gift of music played out in over one thousand compositions of hymns, including Miss Eliza Hewitt's "More About Jesus" (although the date of this composition is unknown), up to his death on April 10, 1899.

* For more information, visit www.cyberhymnal.org

The Source of Truth

By Ginny Larsen

I've had this subject on my mind lately because of some recent events, as well as things I've seen on the internet claiming to be truth. Like Pilot as he questioned Jesus, many may wonder, "What is truth?" There is one source of truth and only one source – Jesus Christ Himself and the written Word He has given to us. He is not only *the* source, but **He is** the truth Himself. We must first of all have Christ before we can ever have truth. He must dwell in our hearts by faith before we can know Him - the Truth. "*Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'*" (John 14:6).

There are many today who claim to teach *the* truth, to have ministries of "truth," and to be lights in the darkness. They claim to have discernment, and they claim you must get it from their teachings. How do you discern what the truth really is? Many people follow teachers who claim to be teaching the truth but instead teach their own thoughts, doctrines, and ideas as the truth. Although they use the Word of God, they are not teaching people to go to the Word of God themselves to see if what they say is true. They want people to take their word and understanding as the truth. They do not trust in the Holy Spirit to show them their errors, and they do not humble themselves to be corrected. Instead, they insist that what they teach is the only truth, and if you reject them, you reject God's truth. They are deceived, thinking their own thoughts on God are complete and that they can't be wrong. They are arrogant, they won't discuss the Word, they have to have the last word, they hold onto their own teachings arrogantly, and they disregard anyone who thinks differently. They don't examine themselves before God, but they judge everyone else wrong **who do not accept their teaching**. They use the Word to promote **themselves and their ministry**, instead of opening it and drawing people to the One alone Who is the truth. **Are we trusting**

in God's Word or someone's teachings about God's Word?

In the Body of Christ, we are all to come to the "unity of the faith" – the "unity of the Spirit" – and not the unity of any man's thoughts and teachings about God. **“The faith” is only one faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.** One who teaches the Word is to teach it with the understanding that those who listen will examine his teaching by the Word. He is to teach it humbly, allowing himself to be corrected by the Word. Correction by the Word is different from those who try to correct others by prideful contention because they want to force their own way of seeing it on you. Those who correct fellow Believers by **their own word** (using God's Word wrongfully with lack of understanding) will not learn “in the unity of the Spirit” what God’s Word is truly saying. **The Holy Spirit alone is to be the teacher** of our hearts, convicting us of His truth in His Word (1 John 2:26-27). We are all at different places in the Body of Christ in our understanding, our growth, our walk with the Lord, and our experience with the Lord. We are to "judge nothing before the time" in another person's heart, because "the Lord is able to make him stand." *“For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God”* (1 Corinthians 4:4-5).

When you show a brother or sister something in His Word that God has taught you (not that you learned "intellectually" by studying someone's teachings on a subject or doctrine, but a personal lesson the Holy Spirit brought home to your heart by His Word and made it living and opened up your understanding in its application to your life) and another does not see that, then you cannot force it on someone. You cannot argue with them or become arrogant and judge their hearts as not wanting the truth. Trust that just as God has taught you, as long and as patiently as He suffered with you

in that learning process, He is able to teach others and show them also as they seek the Lord to understand His way themselves. Most times, our hearts have to be in the right place before God is able to teach us something we do not see.

How do we know what to listen to, what the truth is, or when to receive correction by someone else? We know by humbling ourselves truthfully under God's mighty hand as He teaches us, submitting to **Him** and truthfully coming into the light of His Word to examine our hearts daily, asking Him to "see if there be any wicked way in me" and to "lead us in Your way everlasting." If we rely on our own *intuition*, our own *intellect*, our own *senses*, or our own anything, we WILL be deceived because only the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of His Word. He only does so to those hearts that are humbled before Him and submitted to Him. We can argue doctrine with each other until we're blue in the face. We can all go away sure we are right and the other is wrong, sure we are righteous and the other is deceived. Or, when we disagree, we can pray and agree to both go to the Word and seek God TRUTHFULLY on the matter in our inward hearts with a humble spirit. If we are truly right, God confirms Himself and His Word to us. Our hearts are tested by what we hear, how we hear it, and how we respond. This freedom and humility in Christ leads us to a true unity in the Spirit.

I've been there, thinking I was right and could not be wrong. I've been shown by the Lord that I was deceived. I had blindly followed what my teachers taught in the denomination I was in. It is the hardest and the most humbling place to be in. One thing to look for in someone who tries to push their insights onto you and will not hear your responses when you give them Scripture God has opened up to you is how they respond to the Word you give them. Do they discuss (not argue) the Word itself, or do they attack your person and begin judging and accusing you because you are not listening to THEM - not because you aren't believing the Word but because you are not believing THEIR word. There is a huge

difference. You can try to tell them you have studied the Word, that you love God's Word, that you seek God's truth yourself, and that this is what the Lord showed you in His Word, but if you reject THEIR word about the matter, they **belittle** you, **accuse** you, **judge** your heart and motives, and look down on you before others to lift up themselves. They have to have the last word, and they have to make others believe they are right. They boastfully and arrogantly proclaim their own teachings, not leading people to the Word itself, but to their own teachings on the Word. Huge difference! **God and His Word alone are the authority of every single believer.** No man is to raise himself up as an authority that cannot be challenged or judged. Don't let them intimidate you. When someone tries to do so, I have learned to run the other way and to not even argue, because #1, they are too arrogant to listen: they are not in a place to receive - only to force themselves upon others. And #2, only God can open the eyes of the blind as they become willing to see that they are blind and need to have their eyes opened. You have to commit them to God's correction and not take it on yourself, and you have to take all that was said before His Word, His Light, and His Spirit. The Lord will clarify all to your heart.

If we rely on ourselves in any way, we are blind. If we walk in our fleshly understanding, no matter how much we study the Word, we are blind. If we don't know that we need to go to the Lord daily to let Him open up our hearts and minds to examine them in His Light, we are blind, not walking in His Light but in our own flesh. If a person does that, his own spirit will come forth in his character and the way he treats others, especially those who do not cater to him. Pride, harshness, and a desire to outdo a person and win is brought forth if the love of God and humility (to know what he has received comes from God and not himself) is not there. Such a person has to make sure everyone else also knows how right he is and how spiritual he is. He boasts in having the "truth." His heart won't let him see or receive anything from anyone else.

Nobody has a corner on the truth. The truth

comes from God's Word, and all his children have access to it. God alone will have the last word as we stand before Him, and He judges us by that Word—how we handled it and how we responded to it. He will judge our hearts by His own Word, His own love, and His own understanding, as He sees all things clearly. He sees the inner being. We cannot even judge our own hearts because we will defend our hearts (Jeremiah 17:9). We can only bring our hearts before God and let the light of His Word penetrate, separating soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents there. He will reveal them to us, and it is painful to see, requiring us to be able to receive the humility that goes along with it. However, it is the most freeing thing there is. Nothing is more freeing than to have our own pride exposed and to accept the humility it brings! It opens our eyes to see Jesus Himself! And how glorious that is! How life-giving that is, as compared to the ego-centered glory we receive out of our own pride of being right and having others look to us!

I've been told many terrible things by those I would not listen to because I chose to listen to the voice of my Shepherd instead. I've been told I've committed the unpardonable, that I am slow to learn, that I do not want the truth, that I was in trouble with God, etc. I've been attacked verbally like a dagger in my heart as they sought to destroy me with their words, but the Lord has not let it destroy me or cause me to waver because each time I've been reminded by **Him** that He is my **truth**, my **shield** and **buckler**. His **Word** is what I stand on and He is my solid Rock. I don't have to **receive in my spirit the accusations of the enemy** through those whose flesh is not yielded to Him. I can immediately turn to my Lord and submit myself to Him, saying, "My heart is open to You my Lord, and You know all things, bring forth Your light and Your truth, let them lead me" (Psalm 43:3). I can trust my Lord to Whom I have committed my heart to lead and teach me. I can know that if I need correction, He will convict me through **His Word** as I yield my heart to Him and ask for His Word to do so. I do not have

to accept the word of a man no matter how authoritative or even "Scriptural" he seems to be or what his claims to the truth are. If God corrects me, He will show me in His Word. If someone is misusing God's Word, He will also convict me of that as I bring it before Him. All things are to be brought into His Light and examined. *"Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it"* (1 Thessalonians 5:20-24).

Sadly, too many Christians cater to these types of people and feed their egos. Instead of being corrected, they continue to vindicate themselves and lead more and more astray after themselves, rather than after Christ. We have **one Shepherd, one Teacher, one Father, one Spirit** to Whom we listen, yield our souls and hearts to, and obey. We are to follow only Christ. When allowing ourselves to be taught by others, it is only as they are taught of Christ. It is not their actions or words we listen to but those of Christ, as His Spirit teaches our hearts – we are to listen, receive it into ourselves, and obey. So many in the church today have idols in Christian leaders and teachers. It grieves the heart of our Abba. It grieves the Holy Spirit. We are to "hold fast" only to that which is "good." Only the Word of God is good. We are all human and prone to error. Even as His children, we can be used by the enemy. In our zeal, we think we are right, just like Peter thought when he took Jesus aside and rebuked Jesus! Jesus said to him, *"Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men"* (Mark 8:32-33). **If you don't think you can be used of satan, you don't know your own flesh yet.** If you don't fear that you can be wrong, then you haven't been made aware of how subtle your flesh is yet. Learn to fear and hate it and cling to the cross. You haven't seen yet that you need to cry out to the Lord to deliver you from your own flesh. It isn't the devil or his demons

that are your worst enemy—it is your own flesh. They are powerless to touch you when you keep your flesh on the cross and rely on the Holy Spirit daily to keep you in His Light, raise you up to His newness of life, and fill you with His will and His love and His Word.

"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:6-7).

May we take all we hear before Him in our prayer closet and, **with truth in our hidden part**, allow Him to examine our hearts, which are laid bare before Him, that we may stay in His Light always. I pray, dear Father, that it will be so for each of us today. In Jesus name, Amen.



What Do We “Buy Into”?

By Lynn Warner

We live in a time of great deception and are in danger of being misled and deceived in many areas of life, including our faith. How can we see our way in Christ? The hymn “Abide With Me” has been coming into my heart the past few months as a prayer.

1. Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

6. I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

As we abide in Christ and He abides in us, He teaches us that abiding in Him means repentance. For example, Jesus states, “*He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day*” (John 6:54 NASB). We are to continually repent and crucify the deeds of the flesh to abide in Jesus. The Bible has several lists containing deeds of the flesh. One list is found in Galatians 5, where the Fruit of the Spirit is also listed. Paul begins by stating, “*Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities*” (Galatians 5:19-20a) and continues by listing 15 different deeds of the flesh. The deeds of the flesh list contains a lot of “bad fruit.” The flesh loves deception. Jeremiah describes the heart as “*more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?*” (Jeremiah 17:9) Next, Paul lists the Fruit of the Spirit, which is “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*” (Galatians 5:22b-23a).

This fruit, Jesus taught, only grows on one vine, the True Vine, which is Jesus Himself. He declares, “*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). The Father, who is the Vinedresser, takes away branches that do not bear fruit. The fruit-producing branches are pruned or cleaned so that they will bear more fruit. The Fruit of the Spirit, grown on the vine Who is Christ, is good fruit. Paul says that there is no law against the Fruit of the Spirit. But the flesh that produces bad fruit must be dealt with. He says, “*Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*” (Galatians 5:24). If the flesh is not pruned or cleaned by the Father, if it is not crucified with its passions and desires, it will hunger and lust to fulfill its desires. This means that it is both deceitful and open to being deceived. The flesh will “buy into” deception.

God has given His people the Spirit of Truth, yet many of us seem to “buy into” deception. Being deceived by different people and ideas has been a challenge in my own life. In Ephesians, Paul speaks of maturing Christians, who are “*no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ*” (Ephesians 4:14-15). Furthermore, Paul told the Corinthians he would not speak to them “*as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ*” (1 Corinthians 3:1). He asks them, “*Are you not walking like mere men?*” (1 Corinthians 3:3b – the NASB notes “according to man”) Since they are not spiritual but men of flesh, they are not crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts and maturing in Christ.

Babylon, as described in Revelation, appears to not only be a country but also the World System. God commands us to come out of Babylon, which will be destroyed by God, as we read in Revelation 18:4: “*I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ‘Come out of*

her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues.’” Her sins are the same ones we saw listed in Galatians. “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality...for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery” (Revelation 18:3, 23b).

We participate in Babylon’s sins when we sin through immorality, sensuality, idolatries, and are deceived by her sorceries. The merchants are everywhere, buying and selling, including in the Church. Even in Jesus’ time, He cleansed the Temple “and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise” (John 2:16 KJV). Deception by sorcery is everywhere and in every field – political, economic, religious, medical, “news” media, all media and entertainment, military, etc. Only as we abide in Christ, asking Him to show us our immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, and enmities, repenting of them and crucifying them, can we “come out” of Babylon.

The walk described as “abiding in Christ” is

one of repentance, crucifying the flesh and producing the Fruit of the Spirit on the True Vine, Jesus Christ. In this way, we are less likely to be deceived and fall into deception, because the flesh is being dealt with. It cannot “buy into” deception when it is crucified. Still, one thing is lacking, and that is discernment. The Bible states that discernment takes practice and training, “for every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:13-14).

So, the mature Christian, because of practice, has his senses trained to discern good and evil. He is not only reading and hearing the Word but also practicing abiding in Christ. The Holy Spirit trains and disciplines us in discernment of the truth about ourselves, about God, and about the deceptions in the world. He still shows us why we at times “buy into” deception – that there are passions and lusts of the flesh that must be crucified. His people are in the great exodus out of Babylon into “abiding in Christ and He in us.” The Father cleans or prunes out the bad fruit, so we can produce the good fruit of the Spirit, while abiding in the True Vine, Jesus Christ. As the darkness deepens in our world, only God’s

Grace can foil the tempter’s

power, as Christ is our guide and stay and will be with us “even unto the end of the world.

Amen” (Matthew 28:20b KJV).

February Newsletter Theme—Obedience

Submission Deadline: February 3

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Theme: Obedience, disobedience, obedience of faith, obedience of Christ - obedient unto death, obedience to rulers, “Obey My voice, and I will be your God” (Jeremiah 7:23), Prodigal Son, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19), “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6), etc...

