

Do You Know *Jesus Christ?*

By Jeff Pollard

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent" -John 17:3.

I

Are you aware that there is a difference between knowing someone and knowing **about** someone? It is possible to have a vast and detailed knowledge about a person and yet never meet him. For example, many people know **about** the President of the United States. One may know his age, height, race, religion (or lack thereof), and hometown. His political promises (and whether he keeps them or not) are a matter of public record, and one may know where he is just about any day of the week: the media keeps us informed as to whether he is visiting a foreign country, diligently making decisions in the White House, or taking a vacation. The sound of his voice is familiar, and it may be that the features of his face are more well-known to some people than those of their own family members. What his wife wears, where she visits, the issues she is most concerned with, and her health problems are all items that are easily known by simply pursuing the daily paper or watching the evening news. In fact, one may know so much about the President that he may feel as though he has a very intimate relationship with him, as if he were a close, personal friend--yet the President may be a total stranger to him all the days of his life because the two have never met: therefore, a personal relationship between them does not exist. Simply stated, knowing someone and knowing about someone can be two entirely different things.

II

As recorded in John 17, the Lord Jesus Christ prayed to His Heavenly Father for His beloved disciples. This is one of the most important passages in all the Bible; for in it the Saviour plainly states that "life eternal" is knowing the only true God and His Son

Jesus Christ.

"Life eternal" is not simply a head full of theological facts (though the Biblical doctrine of the gospel is essential to salvation); a heart overflowing with vague religious experiences (no matter how intense), membership in or baptism into a religious congregation (no matter how "biblical" its creed may be), or some "decision" that one has made in a religious meeting (no matter how sincere that "decision" may have been): "life eternal" is God's glorious work of breathing life into a spiritually dead sinner so that he trusts in Jesus Christ for the pardon of his sins and is thereby drawn into a living knowledge of God Himself by revelation of and personal union with His Son Jesus Christ.

Simply put, dear reader, the facts about Christ in the head without the life and power of Christ in the soul leave the sinner just as dead. Do you know Jesus Christ or do you only know about Him?

III

How does one come to this saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? Jesus called it being "born again" in John 3:3. He taught this to a religious leader (Nicodemus) who knew all about the Messiah, and yet, did not recognize Him as he spoke with Him! Nicodemus was a stranger to the One he thought he knew so much about: he did not know God.

This new birth (regeneration) is the Holy Spirit's gracious, omnipotent work of giving a sinner a new heart: it never has been nor will it ever be the product of men's religious efforts. "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5,6).

God sends His Spirit to reveal to the sinner his lost and rebellious condition; and when that sinner sees his sin for the hateful and loathsome cancer that it is and that because of it he is under the just condemnation of God, he will cry out for the Saviour. This is clearly seen in Acts 2:37,38: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what

shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The awakened sinner who thus believes will cleave to the Lord Jesus because God has given him a new heart; and he will walk in loving obedience to his Lord and Saviour, discovering the glories of His mercy and grace: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). To the sinner plucked from the fiery jaws of Hell, there is no one in all the earth as precious as his Saviour Jesus Christ: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious" (I Pet 2:7). Salvation is in a Person: do you **know** him?

IV

Jesus came as God's **Prophet** to man, so that man might know God's will. He said, "For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:49,50). Do you know Him as God's Prophet? If you want to know God's will, then you must hear Him.

As a **Priest** His purpose was to be man's representative to God: He came to offer an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of His people and to intercede for them. His sacrifice was His own body and blood: "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come... neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood... obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb 9:11,12). "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26). "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). Do you know Him as God's Priest? Have you trusted in His perfect sacrifice as your only hope for the forgiveness of your sins? Your debt of sin can only be wiped out through faith in His blood.

Jesus Christ also came as a **King**. He was and is the Sovereign Lord, the King of the universe, who grants His people faith and repentance, makes and keeps them holy, rules and reigns over them, and has prepared a glorious kingdom for them that they will inhabit after He returns for them. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a

Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). Jesus is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Tim 6:15), and it is He alone "that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Do you know Him as King? Have you bowed to this mighty Lord and cast your hope upon Him to save and keep you for all eternity? It is only Christ the King reigning supremely in your heart that can conquer your inward and outward sins and lead you in the path of righteousness.

Jesus Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King, is not only a real man: He is the **living, omnipotent God, the sovereign of the universe**. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1: 1). When Jesus the Living Word walked on the earth, He was "all the fulness of the Godhead" clothed in a human body: eternity stood robed in a veil of flesh (Col 2:9). Do you know Him as God? "This is the true God, and eternal life" (I John 5:20).

V

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:11-13). The Word of God makes it as clear and simple as possible: do you have the Son? Then you have life. If you do not have the Son, you do not have life, and your only expectation is eternal condemnation by the Holy and Just Judge of Heaven to a never-ending, fiery torment in Hell. Jesus Himself shall say to you, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt 25:4 1). Hearing that Jesus is the Prophet is not the same as **hearing** God's prophet; believing **that** the Priest died is not the same as faith in the Priest that died; nodding the head that there is a King is not **bowing** the heart to that King. "Knowing" Jesus Christ is the very life of God working in the soul of man, leading him into a living, personal relationship with the Son of God and conformity to His blessed Word: do you **know** Jesus Christ?