

## Then I Shall Know Fully (1 Corinthians 13:12)

1 Corinthians 13 -- Lesson 8 -- Denny Prutow

1. Our basic premise: Love is the normative sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit for this present age. The special gifts, prophecy, knowledge, and tongue have ceased to be the normative sign of the presence of the Spirit in our lives.
2. Tongues cease (1 Cor. 13:8) as the normative sign when the perfect, Scripture, is complete (1 Cor. 13:10), when the canon is closed at the end of the apostolic age.
3. We need not worry if we have not had special experiences but have love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).
4. What about folks who appear to have great love but lack in Biblical understanding?
  - [1] The context of our passage includes 1 Corinthians 12:3.
  - [2] There is the possibility of the "muddle headed saint."
  - [3] Can a Catholic be a Christian?
5. First Corinthians 13:12 seems to contradict my understanding of the "perfect" of verse 10. "Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."
6. The word translated "know fully" or "fully known" means to recognize, understand, acknowledge, or have a more exact knowledge. It refers to more exact knowledge or understanding gained by ordinary means such as through the study of Scripture. Verse 12 might be understood as follows: "Now I know in part; then I shall know more exactly, even as I have been more exactly known."
7. A study of our word will validate this understanding.

[1] 1 Corinthians 14:37, "If anyone is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment." Here our word is translated "recognize." And the interesting point is that Paul wants the Corinthians to know or recognize certain things from what he has written. He wants them to recognize the Lord's commandment. The word Paul uses means to have a *more exact knowledge*. It does not refer to full or comprehensive knowledge. The word is often translated recognize. And, as in this case, it is used with reference to knowledge possessed in this world.

[2] 1 Corinthians 16:18, "For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men." The word translated "acknowledge" is our word. Here, the Corinthians are to recognize the labors of Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus as fruitful. These men are to be acknowledged through subjection to them (1 Cor. 16:15-17). Again, the word has to do with a more exact knowledge of people and knowledge in this world and life.

[3] 2 Corinthians 1:13, "For I write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end." The word "understand" is our word. In this case, the Corinthians are to read the letter Paul writes and gain understanding. They are to gain a more exact knowledge of the various subjects he addresses. Once again we have earthly knowledge rather than heavenly knowledge.

[4] 2 Corinthians 6:9, "... as unknown, yet well known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death..." Paul was "well known." Although he was not fully known by his enemies, they recognized him, despised him and fought him. He was known very well; that is, known exactly. Here is exact knowledge exercised by enemies of the cross. It is not the knowledge received only in heaven.

[5] 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" Again our word is translated "recognize." Believers in this life are to put themselves to the test. Their lives are to reflect the love of God. Specific outward manifestations are to be present. They stem from the life of Christ residing within. Because of the criterion set forth by the apostle Paul and by the apostle John, believers should recognize or have a more exact knowledge about themselves. Need I mention that this is knowledge possessed by the believer in this life?

[6] Colossians 1:6, "... which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth." Again, our word is "understood." Reference is to knowledge of the gospel. The NASB margin translates the word, "came really to know." When the Colossians gained a more exact knowledge of the gospel and understood it, that same gospel bore fruit in their midst.

[7] 1 Timothy 4:3, "... men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth." We are to "know" the truth. We are to have an exact knowledge of the truth. This is not comprehensive knowledge but it is correct knowledge. It is knowledge we are to possess now. It does not wait until heaven.

Given what we have learned so far, allow me to suggest a couple of alternative translations to 1 Corinthians 13:12. "Then I shall know exactly just as I have been exactly known." Or perhaps: "Then I shall recognize [others] just as I have been recognized [by others, or by Scripture]." Have I taken too much liberty with the text? I do not think so. Paul's use of the word with which we are concerned in other passages leads us to the suggested

translations. Furthermore, if the suggested translations are accurate, 1 Corinthians 13:12 does not refer to knowledge in heaven. And we have another confirmation of the interpretation I am suggesting.

The proper interpretive procedure is to first investigate Paul's use of the term in question. And so, we have taken a look at the word translated "know fully" and "fully known" in his letters. Now we now we widen our inquiry and we turn our attention to the book of Acts and Paul's companion, Dr. Luke. How Paul's close associate uses the term in which we are interested should help us. I am attempting to show that the word used by Paul does not refer to the knowledge obtained in heaven but, in point of fact, it is knowledge gained in this world.

[1] Acts 3:10, "And they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple." After Peter healed the lame man, the people of the city "were taking note" of him. In other words, from previous encounters, they recognized him.

[2] Acts 4:13, "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." Our word is translated "recognize." When Peter and John appeared before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish elders knew more keenly that these men had been with Jesus. Unbelievers gain this more exact knowledge.

[3] Acts 9:30, "But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus." The disciples "learned"; this is our word. The disciples learned of the threats against Paul; they rescued him. Here again, there is an exact knowledge of a situation, which is learned, not heavenly knowledge, which is imparted.

[4] Acts 12:14, "And when she recognized Peter's voice... " When an angel released him from prison, Peter went to a meeting place of the disciples. Rhoda went to the door. Upon hearing Peter, she "recognized" his voice. From previous experience, she had an exact knowledge of who was on the other side of the door. Once again we have human knowledge gained through reflection.

[5] Acts 19:34, "But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all for about two hours, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.'" In Ephesus, the people, through observation, "recognized" Paul to be Jewish.

[6] Acts 22:24, "The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason they were shouting against him that way." Our word is translated "find out." The Roman commander wanted to know exactly why the Jews were in such an uproar. This is very human knowledge gained by examination.

[7] Acts 22:29, "Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains." Paul informed the centurion that he, Paul, was a Roman citizen. When the commander "found out," our word again, and he had a more exact knowledge of who Paul was, he was afraid.

[8] Acts 23:28, "And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council." Our word is "ascertain." Claudias writes to Governor Felix. He tells Felix he wanted to have a better knowledge, a more exact knowledge, of the charges against Paul. Here is human understanding gained through examination.

[9] Acts 24:8, "And by examining him yourself concerning all these matters, you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him." Same as Acts 23:28. Here is more exact knowledge gained by examination.

[10] Acts 24:11, "... since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship." Defending himself, Paul tells Felix he can examine the facts and gain an exact knowledge of his, Paul's, activities.

[11] Acts 25:10, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know." Paul appeals to Caesar. He tells Festus, "You 'know' I am innocent."

[12] Acts 27:39, "And when day came, they could not recognize land." Before wrecking on Malta, the sailors looked, but could not "recognize" the island.

[13] Acts 28:1, "And when they had been brought safely through, then we found out the island was called Malta." Once on the island, the crew "found out," they gained the exact knowledge of, where they were.

In every case in the book of Acts, the word in question has to do with a more exact knowledge gained through ordinary means. This use of the word is confirmed by Luke 1:4. Why did Luke write his gospel account? "So that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught." Luke wanted people like us to have an exact knowledge of the history concerning Christ.

Now we again look at Matthew 7:16 and 20. "You will know them by their fruits." And, "So then, you will know them by their fruits." How are believers and unbelievers to be known more exactly? We examine their fruit. This is exactly the point in 1 Corinthians 13:12. How was Paul known? He was known by his fruit. How did he know others more exactly? He knew others by their fruit. He recognized other Christians by their fruit. The primary fruit is love. Paul, having a more exact understanding of true Christian affections could then identify more exactly those affections within himself and within others. When we have a more exact understanding of love through the perfect Word of God, we can recognize the fullness of the Spirit. We can grasp true Christian affections more thoroughly. We can know just as we are known. We can recognize just as we are recognized. The proposed interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:12 is, therefore, justified.