

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 2 - Study 3 **Go...and say, *Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:***

C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: We will consider Acts 28, Luke 19, and Luke 2. This study is for the Bible's words '**hear / understand**' and '**see / perceive / discern**'.

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These are brief studies, not
"teachings" or "doctrines".

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'...they *thought* that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.' (Luke 19:11)

This study is about the Bible's words 'hear / understand' and 'see / perceive / discern', and we shall consider three New Testament passages. I will *italicize* these and similar words.

The Bible uses 'ear' and 'hear' symbolically. To *hear* physically has to do with *catching* sounds by the ear. The Biblical word to '**hear**' for *mental comprehension* has to do with *catching* ideas. Once an idea is *caught* then more is required in the mind (i.e. thinking) for a conclusion of its meaning; that is, a conclusion arrives by a three-dimensional or time-consuming thought process. We say "I *hear* you!" upon having heard lengthy, repeated explanations: by it we mean "I *understand* what you have said!" (which may or may not have convinced us of something).

The Bible also uses 'eye' and 'see' symbolically: To *see* physically connects the eye with the mind as a one-dimensional snapshot or photograph or picture. And so the Biblical word to '**see**' for *mental comprehension* means that a person *recognizes* something as a *mental picture* (thus the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words"). It means to *discern* a concept without the three-dimensional process of thinking through it. That is, such a conclusion is quick and nearly instantaneous. Such a conclusion may or may not be correct.

(The Bible concept, *to discern a spiritual concept or perceive a word from heaven*, is to receive it...as a whole...from heaven instantaneously without the human mental process of thinking it over to a conclusion for understanding. Later upon thinking of it a person may or may not understand it; nonetheless, he "has it" inwardly and fundamentally. Simeon received such in Luke 2:26, see below.)

Therefore, bear with me as we go verse by verse and I will try to comment very little so that the Bible's meaning of these words within their passages become established in your mind.

Act 28:1-4) And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians *saw* the venomous beast hang on his hand [they *perceived* and], they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

28:5-6) And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked [i.e. observed, *saw*] when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had *looked* a great while, and *saw* no harm come to him, they changed their minds [i.e. *perceived* concept], and said that he was a god.

By their knowledge of such vipers and the consequences of being bitten, it was *obvious* (i.e. by *observation* within their knowledge) that Paul should die. Yet, by further *observation* they arrived at another conclusion.

28:7-11) In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also,

which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary. And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

After several months and much preaching and teaching by Paul and his close associates, and *hearing* from the witnessing of the ship's crew, we can surmise that the people of the island had much time mentally and spiritually to process all that they had been *seeing* and *hearing*. Therefore, in this process they had 1) offered much help to God's people and then 2) received much help in salvation from the God of God's people.

28:12-15) And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so [then] we went [by land] toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul *saw* [i.e. *perceived, discerned* that he was nearing Rome], he thanked God, and took courage.

28:16-18) And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

28:19-22) But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to *hear* of thee what thou *thinkest* [i.e. your *understanding* of what you have *heard* about "Christians"]: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

28:23,24) And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed [i.e. 'faithed', something spiritual happened] the things which were spoken, and some believed not [i.e. 'did not faith', nothing spiritual happened].

28:25,26) And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias [i.e. Isaiah] the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, *Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:*

Paul was quoting from his Bible to these Jews who believed not. That is, they have been *hearing* and *thinking it over* (by studying Paul's words as compared to their own understanding of scripture) and yet they cannot *hear in the sense of true understanding*. Isaiah had prophesied it and Paul was telling the prophecy to them, yet the prophecy was fulfilled in them because God in heaven was working out what He had said before hand through Isaiah's prophecy.

Paul also inferred (in the future when the believing Jews and Gentiles would come to him for teaching, and many would be brought for healing) that in *seeing* healings and

conversions, the non-believing Jews yet would not correctly *perceive* because of their hearts' condition.

28:27) [Paul is still quoting Isaiah] **For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**

On the positive side, we see how the Heart affects spiritual *hearing* and *seeing* toward true *understanding* as a person *thinks* (mental thoughts) and as he *perceives* (mental pictures). On the negative side, we see how the Heart *waxed gross* disables the spiritual element in one's *hearing* and *seeing*. Thus, *Heart understanding in the spirit* leads to *conversion and healing*.

28:28,29) **Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it** [i.e. with enough *understanding* to truthfully accept it]. **And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves** [with some believing, some disbelieving].

28:30) **And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.**



I had been in bed reading my small bedside King James Bible because something was on my mind and I was looking to see if the Lord might infer something about it to me in the Scripture. While reading the above passage I had become focused on 'seeing' and 'hearing' (as above) and enjoyed it, but my purpose still was not fulfilled. So I turned at random elsewhere and began reading; yet, 'seeing' and 'hearing' was again before me. So here is that passage -

Luke 18:31-33) **Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.**

18:34) **And [hearing Jesus' words] they understood none of these things: and [furthermore] this saying was hid from them, neither knew they [i.e. properly concluded] the things which were spoken.**

Rather than "they understood none of these things due to their hearts being waxed gross", they did not understand because it '**was hid from them**'. Thus, we see that, for such men, lack of understanding usually was not a matter of the heart, but rather of God's purpose and/or timing. They *heard* and therefore they *thought and thought*. We do not have in this passage what they thought, only that their conclusions were mistaken.

I cannot tell you how often this happens to me in my studies; but the blessed part of it is that the space or time between study (i.e. *hearing, thinking, etc.*) and eventually receiving something is not unreasonably long. And, even then, when I do receive something...it is as 'through a glass darkly'...and so I know there is much more later to receive.

18:35-38) **And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by [whereupon he quickly thought it through]. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.**

Here we *see* (i.e. a picture of) a man's heart prepared by God to *hear* and rightly *understand* the words just spoken to him.

18:39) And they which went before [Jesus] rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

18:42) And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they *saw* it [i.e. *perceived* that the Son of God, on an important mission to Jerusalem, would take time out to compassionately heal a blind beggar], gave praise unto God.

This man's heart had been prepared to receive Jesus' words and his faith became energized to believe the words. At this point, the passage is not showing us *seeing* or *hearing* as much as it is revealing *the prepared heart and the action of faith* as the Father in heaven had arranged and worked out in this *interchange between a man and Jesus and the Father*. ((God's Hook, my book about Biblical faith is about this very thing.))

19:1-4) And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was [i.e. he wanted a *mental picture upon which to contemplate* regarding all the things he had already *heard*]; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

Zacchaeus had heard much and thought much and now he thought that he needed at least a *view* (a mental picture) of Jesus to conclude his thoughts (i.e. "a picture is worth a thousand words").

19:5) And when Jesus came to the place, he *looked* up, and *saw* him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

Jesus *looked* and *saw* and *recognized* the man whom the Spirit had recently mentioned to Jesus inwardly.

19:6) And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully [to visit his home].

19:7) And when they *saw* it, they all murmured [at their *perceptions* of what they *saw*], saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

Just as the people on the island (see at the beginning) concluded that Paul had done something wicked, and then they concluded that Paul must be a god, similarly this crowd (Jesus' many followers) concluded (at *seeing* this interaction with Zacchaeus) that the Lord was going to do something "unheard of".

19:8) And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Here, too, is a man prepared both in heart and desire to *hear* Jesus' words, designed by the Father for just this occasion. *Hearing* the words, Zacchaeus rightly *understood*.

19:9,10) And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

We see that Zacchaeus already was 'a son of Abraham', which infers that he was *a son of the kind of faith that was in Abraham*. Zacchaeus, then, was no more 'lost' (i.e. in the way we evangelicals think of the word) than were Peter and the twelve disciples. Even as Jesus had 'found' each disciple, so he had 'found' Zacchaeus. Just as Jesus had very

quickly visited Peter's house, so upon finding Zacchaeus Jesus quickly visited his house.

19:11) And as they [i.e. Jesus' followers] *heard* these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they *thought* [from all they had heard from Jesus and from all of their discussions one with another] that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

They rightly *knew* or *thought* that something (i.e. scheduled from heaven) was going to happen soon, but their *understanding* was a function of their *thought processes* which so far did not have the correct knowledge, which '**had been kept from them**'.



Still in bed and having worked through the second above passage, and having enjoyed more on 'seeing' and 'hearing', before getting up I wanted one last time to see if the Lord might give me some inference about my initial purpose. Therefore, at random I again opened the Bible, and the left hand page began with -

Luke 2:18,19) And all they that *heard* it wondered [i.e. thinning] at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and *pondered* them in her heart.

Here is the *hearing* and the *thinking* and the *wondering* and the *pondering* all tied up within the *heart*; for in scripture the *heart* represents the inward place of our true desires. That is, a true heart toward God usually works to *figure out* and *understand* God, His Things, His Word, Etc.

Nevertheless, Paul tells us that by far the most important works within us have to do with Faith, Hope, and Love (Agape), these Three. Only these shall pass on with us into heaven at the end of our earthly stay; for these are of heaven's things, which come to us on the earth from heaven. Faith and Hope arrive automatically upon entrance into the family of God, but Agape will only arrive from heaven when God has prepared the Christian's inward parts to receive it. (This is discussed, among other things, in my book God's Hook... a book about Biblical faith.)

2:20) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had *heard* and *seen*, as it was told unto them.

2:21) And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

2:25-32) And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

2:33) And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

They *heard* the words, took them in by the *ear*, and began *thinking* upon them; but the dawning meaning of the words was so overwhelming that they simply *marveled*.

2:34) And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that *the [wicked] thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*.

2:36) And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

And so, the many people gathered round were *hearing* more of God's Plan of the Ages (i.e. as the Plan shall expressly use this little babe), and so they would *think* about the words and do their best in trying to *understand* the words.

2:39) And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they [i.e. Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus] returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

Three times in about one hour the Lord had worked His word to me about 'seeing' and 'hearing' while at the same time he had been implying to me that He would communicate to me what He wanted and not what I wanted. Thank you Lord!

In our hearing and reading and understanding, and in our seeing and perceiving and discerning, we miss so much...conclude too much wrongly...even as did the many following Jesus...even as did the disciples. Surely most of our *missing things* and *wrong conclusions* are due to failings in ourselves. Yet, we also need to understand that even when wonderful things and truths are right before us, that some (likely many) of them 'had been kept from' us purely for the Lord's reasons regarding you and me and His people and God's Plan of the Ages.

This study is composed much more of scripture than of my words and it would benefit the reader to go to the beginning and read through it again, because repetition works familiarity.

PS Here is a perfect example of the Bible's use of these words -

Acts 14:6,7) They [Paul and disciples] were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: And there they preached the gospel.

14:8,9) And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same *heard* Paul speak:...

Paul was in a meeting (large or small, we do not know) and was busy with what he normally did in preaching the gospel (i.e. looking to the Lord for his words).

At the same time, this man was *hearing* Paul's words. That is, he was thinking and mulling the words over...and something from heaven began occurring in him in conjunction with Paul's words...and this something began to manifest itself (perhaps outwardly so that Paul could *see* it, or at least spiritually so that Paul could *perceive* it).

...who [i.e. Paul] stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

The Greek word translated 'stedfastly beholding' is 'to fasten eyes upon'. This Greek word is not the same as 'to see' or 'to perceive' in the above study. Here Paul (surely directed by the Spirit) has fastened his eyes upon this 'certain' man, even as the man is *hearing* (in the sense of the above study), even as God is working this man.

And then, as Paul has fastened his eyes upon the man, Paul *perceives* (the Greek word is

'see' as in the above study) something.

To say it differently: The man is *hearing*, God is doing something in the man, and Paul's attention is directed to the man...whereupon Paul steadfastly gazes upon the man ...and then Paul himself *perceives or sees* something. (One thing is happening in the man and another thing is happening in Paul as he *perceives*.)

Ah, but the translation is incorrect in 'had faith to be healed'. Let me explain: the Greek for 'had' is 'to hold' (a verb showing action); that is, either the man or Paul has come into a condition of *actively holding faith* (i.e. 'faithing'); and the question is "which one".

Moreover, the correct Greek translation is '**to heal**' and not 'to be healed'. If it were 'to be healed' then it would be the man who is 'holding faith'. Instead, the correct word is '**to heal**', which means that Paul is '**to heal**' and the man is to receive the healing. So let me reword the sentence '...[Paul] **stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he** [i.e. Paul] **had** [energized] **faith** [from heaven] **to heal** [the man]...'.

The next verse shows the correctness of this: For it is Paul *who is active in his faith as the Lord impresses upon him this situation for a 'healing', even as Paul's gaze had just been directed by the Lord to the man*. Indeed, Paul is so energized from heaven by the Lord that he does not place his hands on the man, nor does he pray for the man, nor even does he evoke the Name of Jesus upon the man. Paul simply -

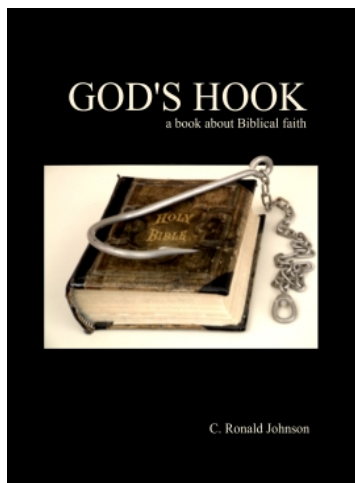
14:10) Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he [i.e. the man in whom great things were occurring] **leaped and walked.**

The man was *hearing* the word of God which engaged his thought processes and he was believing (i.e. faithing) Paul's words. Paul's attention was switched from the Lord giving words to preach to gaze intently upon a certain man. And then Paul received the notice from the Lord for healing even while the Lord was energizing Paul's faith for the healing. Paul had been used often by the Lord in healing, casting out demons, etc. Thus, Paul recognized this time of the Lord's healing...and to whom the healing would arrive.

You see, Paul had never been used of God in healing (or casting out a demon or proclaiming a man to become speechless, etc.) without Paul's faith being energized of heaven for the occasion. (This can be verified in many passages in Acts and elsewhere.) And so, as he experienced the energizing of his faith, Paul said to the man '**with a loud voice**' (perhaps Paul yelled in excitement) '**Stand upright on thy feet**'.

The man knew exactly to whom Paul spoke and he '**leaped and walked**'. Nothing tentative here in Paul's excitement or in the man's leaping and walking. No guessing or hoping and trying out doctrinal tenets.

These are short Bible studies by C. Ronald Johnson of Christian Wilderness Press.



a book
about
Biblical
Faith

the life of
Moses
and the
Exodus

