

The Natural Man

By Elder David Pyles

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. – 1Cor 2:14

This scripture presents a principle that is unmistakably taught in numerous places in the Bible. By “natural man” the apostle simply means what man is by nature before he has been changed by the Spirit of God. Such a man will not receive the things of the Spirit of God. This means he will not accept the true gospel of Jesus Christ. The natural man may have a god and a religion, but both will be his own contrivances, tailored to suit his own carnal preferences. The true God of heaven he will not accept. This interpretation is confirmed by what Paul elsewhere said:

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. – Rom 8:5-8

Thankfully, there are many people in the world who receive and love the truth of Jesus Christ, but this is not because of any decision their natural being made. Such a claim would blatantly contradict what the above verses said. Rather, they do it from their spiritual being. Further, they did not acquire their spiritual being by some decision or action of their natural being. This too would contradict the principle taught in the above verses. It would also contradict the words of Christ when He said, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,*” (Jn 3:6). Flesh can only beget flesh. It cannot beget spirit. Only the Spirit can beget spirit. Men receive spiritual things because they are themselves spiritual; they are themselves spiritual because they have been born of the Spirit, and this birth of the Spirit was not because of any decision or action of their natural being; rather, it was because of the decision and action of the Holy Spirit of God. When describing those who had received Christ in his own times,

John said that they “...*were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,*” (Jn 1:13). This must be true because “*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.*”