Knowledge (1922) epignosis

Greek Word Studies:

Knowledge (1922) (epignosis from verb epiginosko [word study] from epí = upon + ginosko = to know) is a strengthened or intensified form of "gnosis [word study]" and conveys the thought of a knowledge which is fuller, larger and more thorough. It also conveys the idea of a more intimate and personal relationship than the simple term gnosis.

W E Vine says the verb form epiginosko suggests generally a directive, a more special, recognition of the object known than ginosko.

Epignosis - 20x in 20v - Ro 1:28; 3:20; 10:2; Eph 1:17; 4:13; Phil 1:9; Col 1:9f; 2:2; 3:10; 1 Tim 2:4; 2Ti 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1; Philemon 1:6; Heb 10:26; 2Pet 1:2, 3, 8; 2Pe 2:20. NAS = acknowledge*(1), knowledge(14), real knowledge(1), true knowledge(4).

Epignosis - 5x in the Septuagint - 1Ki 7:2; Pr 2:5; Hos 4:1, Hos 4:6; Hos 6:6

Epignosis is a full, more exact and thorough knowledge and is clearly a key word in this epistle (2Pe 1:2, 2Pe 1:3, 2Pe 1:8, 2Pe 2:20).

In fairness it should be stated that there are a few resources that suggest there is very little difference between gnosis and epignosis. This discussion holds the opinion that epignosis does have subtle but real differences.

Epígnosis refers to exact, complete, thorough, accurate, experiential knowledge, not just abstract, intellectual, head knowledge of God or even facts about Him. Epígnosis always describes moral and religious knowledge in the NT and especially refers to full and comprehensive knowledge of God’s will that rests on the knowledge of God and of Christ found today in His Word.

Vincent:

(Epignosis) signifies advanced or full knowledge. The difference between the simple gnosis and the compound word is illustrated in Ro 1:21, 28, and 1 Cor. 13:12....

(Epignosis is) Clear and exact knowledge. Always of a knowledge which powerfully influences the form of the religious life, and hence containing more of the element of personal sympathy than the simple gnosis knowledge, which may be concerned with the intellect alone without affecting the character. See Ro 1:28; 10:2; Ep 4:13. Also Phil 1:9, where it is associated with the abounding of love; Col. 3:10; Philemon 1:6, etc. Hence the knowledge of sin here (Ro 3:20) is not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance, faith, and holy character. Alford quotes Delitzsch as saying:

â¢œWhen epignosis is used, there is the assumption of an actual direction of the spirit to a definite object and of a real grasping of the same: so that we may speak of a false gnâiset; but not of a false epignosis. And the Writer (of Hebrews - referring to He 10:26-note)

"For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge (epignosis) of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins"), by the use of this word, gives us to understand that he means by it not only a shallow historical notion about the Truth, but a living believing knowledge of it, which has laid hold of a man and fused him into union with itself.â¢œ Thus it is clear that the Jew who committed this sin, was fully informed by the Holy Spirit of the issues involved between the First Testament and the New Testament, and also of the meaning and the implications of the New Testament, (He 6:4-note, â¢œwho were once enlightenedâ¢œ) and therefore, he sinned with his eyes wide open." (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

Wuest commenting on 2 Peter 1:2 writes that

Knowledgeâ¢œ or epignosis is full, perfect, precise knowledge as opposed to gnâis; imperfect, partial knowledge. Strachan says: â¢œepâ¢œgnâis; â¢œInvolving the complete appropriation of all truth and the unreserved acquiescence in Godâ¢™s will, is the goal and crown of the believerâ¢™s courseâ¢™ (Lightfoot) â¢œepignosis implies a more intimate and personal relationship than gnâis. It would be a useful word, seeing that gnâis had become associated with Gnosticism, then incipient in the Church.â¢¦ Grace and peace are multiplied in and through this more intimate heart knowledge of Jesus Christ, in contrast to a mere barren
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"Knowledge" is locative of sphere and instrumental of means. This grace and peace are in the sphere of this knowledge and are produced by it. The particular word for "knowledge" here, epignosis, speaks of experiential knowledge, that is, knowledge gained by experience. This knowledge of the Lord Jesus possessed by the believer therefore, is not a mere intellectual knowledge of the facts concerning Him acquired by a study of the Gospels, for instance, but a heart experience of what and who He is gained by such a study plus a personal association with Him by means of the Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a person with Person knowledge through intimate fellowship."

It is interesting to note that 8 of the 21 uses of epignosis occur in Colossians (where Paul counters persuasive arguments Col 2:4-note) and in Second Peter (where Peter counters false teachers). Some of these uses are noted in the following discussion.

Another interesting use of epignosis by Paul is as integral component of four prayers for the saints, all four epistles written in his captivity!

1) For example in Philemon we read

"I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge (epignosis) of every good thing which is in you for Christâ€™s sake." (Philemon 1:6).

John MacArthur has an excellent summary on the significance of epignosis in Paul's prayer for Philemon writing that epignosis

refers to deep, rich, full, experiential knowledge. It is the knowledge that comes through personal acquaintance with the truth. Philemon could read of forgiveness, or hear a sermon about it. But until he forgave, he could have no experiential knowledge of it. By forgiving Onesimus, Philemon would experience that good thing in him known as forgiveness. By walking in obedience to Godâ€™s will, believers experience the good things God has placed within them. There is a vast difference between reading a book on skiing and actually skiing. There is a certain flat, one-dimensional knowledge to be gained from a book, but it cannot compare to experiencing the exhilaration of a downhill run. The same thing is true in the spiritual realm. It is thrilling to grasp a truth from Scripture intellectually. But it is far more exciting to live that truth out in practice. Practicing the truths of Scripture leads to the epignosis that brings spiritual maturity (Ep 4:12,13; see note Eph 4:12; 4:13)v. It is wonderful to understand what it means to trust God, but more wonderful to experience His power in the times when we trusted Him with no strength of our own." (MacArthur, J. Philemon. page 210. Chicago: Moody Press)

2) Writing to the saints at Philippi Paul said

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge (epignosis) and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ" (Php 1:9, 10-note)

3) Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus

"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge (epignosis) of Him" (Ep 1:17-note)

4) And finally as he recalled the Colossian saint's love in the Spirit, he wrote

"For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge (epignosis) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge (epignosis) of God." (Col 1:9-note, Col 1:10-note)

Trench - Of epignosis, as compared with gnosis, it will be sufficient to say that epÃ¬ must be regarded as intensive, giving to the compound word a greater strength than the simple possessed." He goes on to explain that "Paul, it will be remembered, exchanges the ginosko, which expresses his present and fragmentary knowledge, for epignosomai when he would express his future intuitive and perfect knowledge (1Co 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know (ginosko) in part, but then I shall know fully (epiginosko) just as I also have been fully known (epiginosko). Trench explains that the idea in epignosis is that "It is bringing me better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off. That little portion of knowledge which we had here shall be much improved, our eye shall be raised to see the same things more strongly and clearly.â€™ All the uses of epignosis which St. Paul makes, justify and bear out this distinction (Ro 1:28, 3:20, 10:2; Ep 4:13, Php 1:9, 1Ti 2:4, 2Ti 2:25, He 10:26 see notes
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Ro 1:28; 3:20; 10:2; Ep 4:13; Php 1:9; 2Ti 2:25; cf. Heb10:26; this same intensive use of epignosis is borne out by other similar passages in the NT (2Pe 1:2, 8; 2:20) and in the Septuagint (Pr 2:5; Hos. 4:1; 6:6); and is recognized by the Greek Fathers.” (Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament. page 285)

Marvin Vincent says epignosis - Clear and exact knowledge. Always of a knowledge which powerfully influences the form of the religious life and hence containing more of the element of personal sympathy than the simple gnâsis knowledge, which may be concerned with the intellect alone without affecting the character.” Vincent goes on to comment on Paul’s use of epignosis in Romans 3:20-note (“...by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”) noting that “the knowledge of sin here (Ro 3:20) is not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance, faith, and holy character.” (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 3, Page 1-40)

William Barclay - Epignosis can be interpreted in two directions. (a) It can mean increasing knowledge. Gnosis, the normal Greek word for knowledge, is here preceded by the preposition epi (1909) which means towards, in the direction of. Epignosis then could be interpreted as knowledge which is always moving further in the direction of that which it seeks to know. Grace and peace are multiplied to the Christian as he comes to know Jesus Christ better and better. As it has been put: "The more Christians realize the meaning of Jesus Christ, the more they realize the meaning of grace and the experience of peace." (b) Epignosis has a second meaning. Often in Greek it means full knowledge. Plutarch, for instance, uses it of the scientific knowledge of music as opposed to the knowledge of the mere amateur. So it may be that the implication here is that knowledge of Jesus Christ is what we might call "the master-science of life." The other sciences may bring new skill, new knowledge, new abilities, but the master-science, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, alone brings the grace men need and the peace for which their hearts crave (2 Peter 1 - William Barclay’s Daily Study Bible Commentary)

Bishop Lightfoot commenting on the use of epignosis in (see note Philippians 1:9) writes that epignosis is an "advanced, perfect knowledge." (J. B. Lightfoot, bishop of Durham: Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. page 86. London: Macmillan 1913)

In his commentary on Colossians Lightfoot has the following discussion on epignosis noting that it is "A favourite word in the later epistles of St Paul.... In all the four epistles of the first Roman captivity it is an element in the Apostleâ€™s opening prayer for his correspondentsâ€™ well-being ("And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,") Phil 1:9-note; "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him” in Ep 1:17 (note), "I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christâ€™s sake." Philenon 1:6)...The compound epignosis is an advance upon gnâsis, denoting a larger and more thorough knowledge...So too St Paul himself contrasts ginoskein, gnosia, with epiginoskein, epignosis, as the partial with the complete, in (Ro 1:21 [note] where Paul uses ginosko > "for even though they knew (ginosko) God..." versus Ro 1:28 (note) where Paul uses epignosia > "since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge (epignosis) of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done." NIV)... Hence also epignosis is used especially of the knowledge of God and of Christ, as being the perfection of knowledge." (Bolding added. Page 203- Lightfoot, J. B. Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon 1886)

Vincent says that Paul’s use of epignosis in Ro 1:28-note indicates that the reprobates "did not suffer the rudimentary revelation of nature (cf "creation" Ro 1:20 [note]) to develop into full knowledge â€” â€œa penetrating and living knowledge of Godâ€• (Meyer)." (Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 3, Page 1-21).

In Romans Paul writes

"Brethren, my heartâ€™s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge (epignosis)." (Ro 10:1,2- note)

In other words the Jewâ€™s zeal for God was not conditioned nor characterized by a complete, vital, correct, experiential knowledge but by a partial, insufficient knowledge (which was no fault of God Who gave them written revelation), which because of its insufficiency led them astray as to how they could be saved.

In his letter to the Colossians Paul prayed

"and to ask that (the Colossian saints) may be filled with the knowledge (epignosis) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." (Col 1:9-note)

Paul was not praying for an inner impression, an abstract intellectualism, an occult experience or a feeling, but
a deep and thorough knowledge of the will of God that is finally and completely revealed in the Word of God. Paul desired that the Colossians be totally controlled by this deep, precise and thorough knowledge of God.

Wuest adds that gnōsis

"was a favorite word of the Gnostics who used it to designate the superior knowledge which they claimed as their exclusive possession. Paul prays that all the saints might become possessors of epignosis, indicating that it was open for all to appropriate, not a secret mystery into which only a favored few could be initiated. If the Gnostics had their superior knowledge, so did the Christian Church. The former was speculative and false, the latter, positive and true." (Wuest, K. S. Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans)

Paul uses epignosis 4 times in the Pastoral epistles. For example in his first epistle to Timothy Paul wrote that God our Savior

"desires all men to be saved and to come to the (full, thorough) knowledge (epignosis) of the truth." (1 Ti 2:4)

In this context epignosis is essentially synonymous with salvation. Paul conveys a similar meaning in Second Timothy writing that the Lord's bond-servant must correct

"with gentleness... those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge (epignosis) of the truth," (2Ti 2:25-note)

Comment: The Amplified Version emphasizes the full and complete knowledge adding that "that they will perceive and recognize and become accurately acquainted with and acknowledge" the truth. In the opening verse of Titus we read

Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness.” (Tittus 1:1-note)

NIV is better here “the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness”.

Epâ­gnosis, a deep, experiential, accurate and intimate knowledge of Truth should always reflect itself in godly conduct.

The OT use of epignosis in Proverbs is worth noting: Solomon in the context of "Wisdom" instructs us

"My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment (passionate pleading of one desperate to know the truth of God with idea that the an indifferent approach will leave one bereft of fullness of wisdom), lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver (describes a desiring intensive attitude like men do for material riches) and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover the (true, full, genuine) knowledge (epignosis) of God.” (Pr 2:1-5)

Warren Wiersbe has a poignant comment on this proverb noting that

Obtaining spiritual wisdom isnâ€™t a once-a-week hobby, it is the daily discipline of a lifetime. But in this age of microwave ovens, fast foods, digests, and numerous â€œmade easyâ€- books, many people are out of the habit of daily investing time and energy in digging deep into Scripture and learning wisdom from the Lord. Thanks to television, their attention span is brief; thanks to religious entertainment that passes for worship, their spiritual appetite is feeble and spiritual knowledge isnâ€™t â€œpleasant to [their] soulâ€- (Pr 2:10). Itâ€™s no wonder fewer and fewer people â€œtake time to be holyâ€- and more and more people fall prey to the enemies that lurk along the way." (Wiersbe, W. W. Be Skillful. An Old Testament study [on Proverbs]. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

The respected Lutheran commentator Lenski observes

The aim of this letter is to increase this knowledge in the hearts of the readers so that, when grace and peace are multiplied, they may abound in all godliness and be fully fortified against all libertinists and libertinism when this sort of thing arises to harass them.

Wuest commenting on (Php 1:9-note) says that epignosis

"Is from the Greek word speaking of knowledge gained by experience, as contrasted to intuitive knowledge, which is from another word (eido, 1492). A prefixed preposition (epi-) intensifies the word, and we have â€œfull knowledge.â€- The full knowledge which these Philippians needed to gain by experience was a better understanding of Godâ€™s Word as translated into their experience, and a clearer vision of the Lord Jesus in
all the beauty and fragrance of His Person.”

A Christian can have an αὐθεντική θέση - knowledge of the Word, that is, be able to explain its meaning to others, without having an experiential knowledge of the same. But when that Christian has put the Word of God into practice in his life, then he has what Paul is talking about here (Ed note: the full, true experiential knowledge of which epignosis speaks). This is the difference between a young convert and a matured believer. The former has not had time to live long enough to live out the Word in his life, the latter has. The former, if his life is wholly yielded, is a delight to look upon in his Christian life, as one would enjoy the vigor and sparkle of youth. The latter, in his mellowed, well-rounded, matured, and fully-developed Christian experience, his life full of tender reminiscences of his years of companionship with the Lord Jesus, has the fragrance of heavenly things about him. This was what the Philippian saints needed, but it would take time for this to be brought about.” (Compare Wuest's comments with those below by Dr. Wayne Barber) (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans or Logos)

In the knowledge is locative of sphere and instrumental of means. In plain English, the means of the experiencing of this increase in grace and peace are in the sphere of this knowledge (“locative of sphere”) and are produced by it (knowledge is the “instrument” by means of which we enable to grow in grace).

Dr. Wayne Barber offers the following insights on the attaining and application of gnώσις and epignosis...

1) GNOSIS or EPIGNOSIS causes a person to have SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT. If you're growing as a Christian, you should be increasing in discernment (He 5:14-note, 1Pe 2:2-note) How do you know whether you are hearing from God or from man? If you don't have spiritual discernment, "look out" because "every wind of doctrine" (Ep 4:11, 12, 13, 14, 15-see notes Ep 4:11; 4:12; 4:13; 4:14; 4:15; 4:16) will blow you. You cannot have spiritual discernment apart from spiritual knowledge.

2) GNOSIS or EPIGNOSIS is PERSONAL knowledge. You have to acquire this knowledge for yourself. Compare Acts 20:32 "And now I commend YOU (not your brother...not your sister...but YOU) to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

3) GNOSIS & EPIGNOSIS is the final product of the parallel verbs ginosko & epiginosko which are used three times in 2 Peter (2Pe 1:20, 2:20, 3:3-see notes 2Pe 1:20, 2:20, 3:3) which describe the act of acquiring knowledge. There is a process in getting this knowledge and the "process" involves primarily being obedient (cf Jn 7:17) to the Word of God. As I obey, I learn more truth. We all want gnosis or spiritual knowledge, but we don't want the ginosko--that is to say we don't want to go through the effort. Or stated another way we are not willing to obey what we know intellectually in order that this knowledge might become "heart" knowledge and not just "head" gnosis. If you don't want the ginosko, you won't get the gnosis! You get the gnosis by obeying the Lord Jesus Christ, by being totally "sold out " to Him.

There are 2 varieties of GNOSIS, one from MAN & the other from GOD.

1) Humanistic gnosis or Gnosticism - Gnostics claimed one could find knowledge apart from God. Gnosticism allowed the people to go to church, to not feel bad about sin and to not even have to obey and yet still be called "religious" (2Ti 3:5-note, Titus 1:16-note)

2)Spiritual Gnosis - comes from Knowledge of & Experiencing of Christ through obedience to His Word as discussed above and as taught specifically by Jesus in [Jn 7:17] where He taught that "If anyone is willing to do (obey) His will, he will know (ginosko) of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." In Dr Barber's sermon series on Ephesians he says

"The word for "knowledge" is the word epignosis , which means more than just fact. Heâ€™s already given them facts. He says, "Now I want something deeper for you. I want you to know God. I want you to have a deeper understanding of God." That word epignosis means "the fullness of knowledge." It means to not only know it but to understand it and literally, if you please, to experience God. In other words, it means to be drawn into God Himself and not just the facts about Him.....Look at the second thing it says (commenting on Col 1:10-note "increasing in the knowledge of God"). (The verb "increasing" is a) present passive participle. læ€™m not doing it, Godâ€™s doing it. It says, you start (to do what)? (You start) "increasing in the knowledge (epignosis) of God"

How am I going to get this knowledge (epignosis) of God? You donâ€™t get it by your own personal pursuit. You get it as you bow before Him, cooperating with Him and surrendering to what His word says. The Holy Spirit of God imparts wisdom by revealing it to you as He wills and in His own time and in His own way. Itâ€™s
by revelation. Man cannot discover on his own what God has hidden. What God has hidden only God can reveal. Man can discover what is hidden by man, but man cannot discover what is hidden by God. To me this is one of the real root thoughts of Paulâ€™s prayer. Heâ€™s leading them to a deeper understanding of God, but heâ€™s trying to show them that it doesnâ€™t come by their own intellect. It comes by the revelation of the Spirit of God. Yes, the intellect is needed because God gives understanding, but itâ€™s the Holy Spirit doing it in a personâ€™s life. (click full sermon text)

Wuest also discussing epignosis adds that...

"This knowledge of the Lord Jesus possessed by the believer therefore, is not a mere intellectual knowledge of the facts concerning Him acquired by a study of the Gospels, for instance, but a heart experience of what and who He is gained by such a study plus a personal association with Him by means of the Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a person with Person knowledge through intimate fellowship." (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans)

W E Vine in his Collected Writings has an excellent summary of epignosis elaborating on its use in (Phil 1:9) where Paul writes

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge (epignosis) and all discernment.". (Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson )

Vine says that if the Philippian saint's...

"love were to increase, its outgoings were to be directed and controlled. Love is not impulsive, as though it were a mere emotion; love is intelligent, and therefore seeks that full and accurate knowledge which enables it to bestow itself worthily... Epígnosis, like the simpler form, gnósis, is always acquired or experimental knowledge.

Gnósis is knowledge, true or false, (as used in) 1 Timothy 6:20 (O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called â€œknowledgeâ€ (gnósis)â€”21 which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.”). Epígnosis is always true knowledge; it may be either full knowledge or increasing knowledge, but it is always knowledge in the spiritual sphere. Godâ€™s knowledge, mentioned but twice in the New Testament, Ro 11:33 (note) and Col 2:3 (note), is gnósis, not epignosis, for there are no gradations in it, it is absolute. Cp. Psalm 139:6.

While in the Fall man lost the knowledge of God, he did not lose it completely. Though what he retained gradually diminished, yet it has never entirely left him; hence Paul says â€œas they refused to have God in [full] knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind,â€ Ro 1:28 (note). Cp. Hosea 4:6 (in the Septuagint, LXX, Greek of the Hebrew OT), â€œMy people are destroyed for lack of knowledge [gnósis]: because thou hast rejected [full knowledge] [epignosis], I will also reject thee.â€ Later he states that â€œthrough the application of the law [to oneself] comes the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of sin,â€ Ro 3:20 (note).

Later still, speaking of the Jews, he recognized that â€œthey had a zeal for God, but not according to [full] knowledge [epignosis],â€ Ro 10:2-note; such knowledge as they possessed had not increased so as to become fully mature; hence it was inadequate to direct their zeal into the way of true service to Him. All he could credit them with was â€œthe form of knowledge,â€ gnósis, Ro 2:20 (note) ("a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment (morphosis = outward shape and appearance) of knowledge [gnósis] and of the truth").

In a letter written to a church in which a false knowledge (Gnosticism) threatened the simplicity of the gospel, the apostle prays that the believers â€œmay be filled with the [full] knowledge of [Godâ€™s] will, and of God Himselfâ€”(Col 1:9, 10-see notes Cols 1:9; 1:10), and of â€œthe mystery of God, even Christâ€œ (â€œthat they may knowâ€ is, lit., â€œunto knowledgeâ€), Col 2:2-note; and this because he knows that they had â€œput on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge [epignosis] according to the image of the One who created himâ€”(Col 3:10-note).

For the Ephesian believers he prays that God may give to them â€œthe spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge [epignosis] ofâ€œ God, Ep 1:17 (note), for it is the gracious purpose of God to bring all those who put their trust in Him to the full knowledge of the Son of God, who is the Revealer of God, Ep 4:13 (note) ("until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge [epignosis] of the Son of God, to a mature man, to
the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ".

Since the idea of growth or increase is involved in each of these passages, epignosis is used in each, as it is also in Titus 1:1 (note). It is the will of God our Savior â€œthat all men should â€¢ come to the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth, â€“ 1Ti 2:4.

Some there are, however, who, â€œever learning, â€¢ are â€œnever able to come to the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth, â€¢ with the result that they know but little, and that little is confusion, and not coordinated with the completed revelation of God, 2Ti 3:7 (Note). For some such, happily, there is hope of recovery â€œout of the snare of the devil, â€¢ â€œif peradventure God may give them repentance unto the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth, â€¢ (2Ti 2:25, 26-note). In each case again epignosis is found, with evident appropriateness. The character of Christ, which is the fruit of the Spirit in the believer, Galatians 5:22-note, is also to be the object of [an increasing] knowledge (epignosis); that is, the Christian is to be exercised that he may discern more and more of Christ in others, that thus all may together be encouraged to grow in likeness to Him, Philemon 1:6.

Epígnosis is used in the same way in Hebrews 10:26-note; â€œif we sin willfully after that we have received the [full] knowledge [epignosis] of the truth, â€¢ By the truth, God Who is not an unreasonable or hard taskmaster, has provided against sins that may be due to defective knowledge. Peter also desires for those to whom he writes â€œthe [increasing] knowledge [epignosis] of our Lord Jesus Christ. â€¢ And later he warns them, in effect, that escape from â€œthe defilements of the worldâ€œ is â€œthrough the [increasing] knowledge [epignosis] of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. â€œ... (2Pe 1:2, 3, 8-see notes 2Pe 1:2; 1:3; 1:8). Thus, as the apostle shows in (Php 1:9-note), the knowledge [epignosis] of God regulates the heartâ€™s affections, directing them away from what is evil and guiding them in the ways of righteousness." (Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson )

Below are all 20 NT uses of epignosis for review (Note that epignosis is primarily a Pauline word)...

Romans 1:28 (note) And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer (to retain God in their knowledge = epignosis), God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

Romans 3:20 (note) because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Romans 10:2 (note) For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

Ephesians 1:17 (note) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Ephesians 4:13 (note) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

Philippians 1:9 (note) And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

Colossians 1:9 (note) For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Colossians 1:10 (note) so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Colossians 2:2 (note) that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

Colossians 3:10 (note) and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him

1 Timothy 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Timothy 2:25 (note) with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them
repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

2 Timothy 3:7 (note) always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Titus 1:1 (note) Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

Philemon 1:6 and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ’s sake.

Hebrews 10:26 (note) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

2 Peter 1:2 (note) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

2 Peter 1:3 (note) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:8 (note) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2:20 (note) For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

OF GOD AND OF JESUS OUR LORD: tou theou kai Iesou tou kuriou hemon

Jesus our Lord - this exact phrase elsewhere only in Ro 4:24 - note).

Genuine spiritual growth comes only from genuine, ”pure milk”, here referred to as epignosis of God and Jesus our Lord.

Note the order is God which suggests that in order to grow in the knowledge of Him we need to study the Old Testament for this is where the attributes of God are taught in greatest detail (see Attributes of God Chart on this site). Then Peter says ”and Jesus our Lord” Who is most clearly revealed in the NT.

Christianity is not a mystical or ”mysterious” religion, but is based in objective, historical, revealed, rational truth from God and intended to be understood and believed. The deeper and wider that knowledge of the Lord, the more grace and peace are multiplied.

Here Peter defines the specific Objects of this more exact knowledge. ”God” (theos) with the definite article pointing to the one Living and True God the readers had come to know personally through the gospel. Jesus taught

"This is eternal life, that they may know (ginosko, verb related to epignosis) Thee, the only true God, & Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (Jn 17:3).