

The Knowledge of God. Study 1

The scriptures call man to know God. "Acquaint now thyself with him [God] and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." Job 22:21.

The least a person needs to know:

1. That God is infinite wisdom, goodness, truth and life - and there is no other
2. That God is the creator of the world and all that is in it.
3. That God is the righteous judge who will act severely against all who fail to keep his law.
4. That God is merciful to all who seek Him for grace and favour.

(Distilled from writings of John Calvin)

How God is to be known?

General revelation is a help.

- a. The Ontological argument for the existence of God.
The argument from man's innate idea of God.
- b. The cosmological argument for the existence of God - the argument from creation.
- c. The moral argument - including conscience.
- d. The universal desire among all peoples of the world to worship. All men are religious.
God is known in history, creation and His dealings with His people, particularly in His names.

Special Revelation is a must.

God can only be known in so far as He reveals Himself. God is known through the scriptures, which is special revelation. A gift from God that is as precious as the gift of His Son.

The W.C.F. begins with the Scriptures. This may be called pre-suppositionalism. It does not get into the above arguments for the existence of God. It pre-supposes that He is, just like Genesis 1:1.

God's transcends over all things

When we accept that God is the Creator of the universe we admit that God is above all His creatures and beyond our comprehension.

[Job 11:7](#) Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

Job. 40:4

[Isa 40:28](#) Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding.

Dan.4:35, Is. 40:15 – 18. Ps. 89:6, Ps. 139:6.

The partial knowledge of God by which He reveals Himself is still true knowledge. No-one can fathom God in His entirety. He is incomprehensible, but in so far as He reveals Himself, our knowledge of God is true, and through the inspired revelation of the scriptures it is dependable.

Knowing that God is self-existent and transcendent will guard us against pantheism – that God is in the creation, or that created matter contains God. There is always a clear line to be drawn between God's own nature as Creator and His creatures and all of His creation.

God reveals Himself by His Names

The name "God" is of Germanic origin. We must depend on the names of God in the Hebrew and Greek texts, in which the word of God was written, to study the character of God.

What's in a Name? In the variety of names God used to reveal Himself He made His character known. The names of God are not of human invention. God named Himself with various titles which refer to His own perfections, or attributes. They are revelations of God Himself – His true person. In His names, therefore, God condescends to give us a window into His nature.

Ex. 20:7, Ex. 23:21. Deut. 28:58, Judges 13:17-18, Ps. 8:1, Ps. 48:10, Ps. 76:1-2. Ps. 148:13, Eze. 36:22. John 17:6.

So we learn that God's names are more than mere identifiers. They reveal aspects of God's character in similar ways as when men or women had their names changed to designate their role or part in God's kingdom. Jacob was named Israel, after his wrestling in prayer, to declare that he was a prince with God. Abram was named Abraham, to declare that he was to be the father figure of the church.

EL, This means mighty One. It was also used for the gods of the other nations, but the God of Israel was prefaced with the definite article ["the"]. See. Is. 44:10, 45:20. The name "el" is also found in the names of people: Eli, Elijah, Eliakim, Israel, Bezaleel. Thus God allows His people to use His name.

ELOHIM As with the name El, the name Elohim, refers to God as **the strong and mighty One**.

The Hebrew "IM" ending means that God's name is masculine and plural. Hence it is proper to call Him Father, as opposed to mother. The fact that His name is in the plural demonstrates fullness of character and that there are multiple persons in the Godhead. The Hebrews, however, never spoke of God as plural. They were monotheists and referred to their God as one. The doctrine of the Trinity is the fullest expression of God as three in one. Right from Genesis 1:1, the Hebrew word for God is "Elohim" and the plurality of God's name lays a foundation for God as a Trinity.

Study #2

EL-SHADDAI This name for God is found 48 times in the O.T. and is first recorded in Genesis 17:1, when God appeared to Abraham to announce the covenant of grace. It reveals God to be all powerful in heaven and in earth, as the all-conquering One. This is seen repeatedly in the use of God's name as El-Shaddai in: Gen. 28:3, Gen. 35:11, Gen. 48:3. El-Shaddai, then, it is the name of the destroying God, and the redeeming God (Ex. 6:2-3). It also refers to God as all powerful in provision.

He is therefore to be known as the God who is able to perform His covenant promises. Abraham understood from God's name, El-Shaddai, that he was, "able to perform" what he promised. This was the apostle Paul's comment in Romans 4:17-21.

JEHOVAH This name for God is recorded 6521 times in the O.T. and declares God's self-existence. Rev. G. H. Kersten states: "The name Jehovah includes three periods of time; the past, the present, and the future. He is always the same, the unchangeable and faithful covenant God." This name appears various times in Genesis Gen. 2:4, Gen 3, 4:26, 14:22, Gen. 15:7 and is denoted in the KJV by the use of capital letters "LORD".

Jehovah is God's covenant name that identifies Him with His people.

"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty [El-Shaddai Gen. 17:1], but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." Exodus 6:3

The fullest significance of the name Jehovah as the covenant keeping God was revealed to Moses Ch. 6:3 - 7.

Note:

- a. When it seemed as if the Lord had forgotten His promises to Israel anymore He explained His Name JEHOVAH to Moses.
- b. With this name God bound Himself to His elect in the covenant of grace. Genesis 17:1-7.
- c. It gives God's people cause to plead His faithfulness. Exodus 3:14-15.
- d. It also gives cause to plead His unchangeableness. Malachi 3:6

He is the God of Israel as opposed to the gods of other nations. It carries the meaning of infinite strength. – The STRONG ONE, which He will exercise on behalf of His people.

God's name as Jehovah stresses the covenant faithfulness of God: Ex. 15:3, Ps. 83:19; Hosea 12:6; Isa. 42:8

JEHOVAH is God's Sacred Name

"Unlike Elohim, the name Jehovah is never given to any creature. Isaiah 42:8. It was given without vowels at first, so had only the consonant letters, JHVH. It was considered to be so sacred, and the warnings of the 3rd commandment were taken so seriously, that it was often substituted by O.T. people with the name Adonai, which means "master", or "possessor".

Dr. Easton stated in his dictionary: "This Jewish practice was founded on a false interpretation of Lev 24:16. The meaning of the word appears from Exo 3:14 to be "the unchanging, eternal, self-existent God," the "I am that I am," a covenant-keeping God. (Compare Mal 3:6; Hos 12:5; Rev 1:4, Rev 1:8.)"

What do we learn from the name Jehovah?

We learn that as Creator God is eternal and totally distinct from all His creation. He is to be worshipped by his creatures in total submission due to His self-existence from all eternity. See Exodus 3:14-15

We learn that God is relational. He takes His people into His family and becomes a Father to them. The name Jehovah in particular reveals God as the God of His covenant people. This is the God who interacts with His people. He chooses them, covenants with them and binds Himself to them in His word and promises.

Jehovah is the God of self-revelation who sovereignly elects a people to be his own, and covenants with them to redeem them through His Son in order to bless them with His grace in this life and to finally bring them home to glory. Jehovah loves His own elect children and will be a God unto them according to His own faithful and righteous character. Genesis 17:7-8, Exodus 3:11-16, Ex. 6:6-8, Deut. 31:6, Eze. 11:16, Eze. 34:24.

The Free Presbyterian Church in Cloverdale Adult Sunday School

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Knowing God Study 3.

Comparative texts that show the Lord Jesus Christ also refers to Jehovah

Jehovah	The Lord Jesus
Psalm 102:25 “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens <i>are</i> the work of thy hands.	Hebrews 1:10
Isaiah 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth <i>in</i> righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.	Philippians 2:10-11
Deuteronomy 10:17 For the LORD your God <i>is</i> God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:	Revelation 17:14
Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I <i>am</i> the first, and I <i>am</i> the last; and beside me <i>there is</i> no God.	<u>Rev. 22:12-13,</u>
Psalm 130:7-8 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD <i>there is</i> mercy, and with him <i>is</i> plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.	Titus 2:14
Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for <i>his</i> only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for <i>his</i> firstborn.	Revelation 1:7
Joel 2:32 “And it shall come to pass, <i>that</i> whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”	Romans 10:13

DID JESUS EVER SAY THE EXACT WORDS, "I AM GOD"

No, Jesus never said the exact three words, "I am God." But Jesus also never said the exact four words, "I am a prophet," or the exact four words, "I am a man," but we know He was both a prophet and a man. It is not necessary for Jesus to say the exact phrase, "I am a man," for us to know that He was a man. Likewise, it is not necessary for Jesus to utter the exact three words, "I am God," in order for us to determine whether or not He is divine. Jesus may not have said the exact sentence, "I am God," but He did claim the divine name for Himself (Exo. 3:14 with John 8:58), and He also received worship (Matt. 2:2, 14:33, 28:9; John 9:35-38).

When Moses was up at the Mount speaking to God, Moses asked God what His name was. God said, "I AM WHO I AM," and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14). In John 8:58, Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Right after this, the Jews picked up stones to throw at Him.

Later, in John 10:30-33, Jesus claimed to be one with the Father, and the Jews wanted to stone Him again because they said to Jesus, "You, being a man, make yourself out to be God." Jesus had claimed the divine name for His own, and the Jews wanted to kill Him for it. Therefore, from Jesus' own mouth we see that He was claiming to be God. Notes by Matt Slick (carm.org)

Questions:

What difference does it make when God graciously covenants with a particular people?

What is the problem with Deism?

Is the Lord Jesus Jehovah?

Are Jehovah's Witnesses true to their name?

As He is Jehovah we need to be careful how we use the name Jesus. Should we constantly refer to our Saviour as Jesus, or as the Lord Jesus?

What can we deduce from the fact that the Lord Jesus referred to God as His Father.

Passages such as John 17 show the eternal relationship between God the Father and the Son.

It certainly refers to his deity due to His incarnation by the Lord's virgin birth.

Father is the name for the first person in the Trinity.

Father is also the name of the covenant relation He has with His people.

Father is God's covenant name in the N.T. 1Cor. 6:18. There is no nearer term for God's favour and relations with His people than Father.

Father is the name given in the Lord's prayer for believers to use in prayer.

Dr. Louis Berkof points out that the name Father is used of the Godhead even in heathen religions.

Refs. to Father in the O.T. declaring God's relation as a Father to Israel include Deut. 32:6, Ps. 103:13, Isaiah 63:16, Is. 64:8, Jer. 3:4,19, 31:9, Malachi 1:6, 2:10.

In the sense that God is creator He is the Father of all men. But in the gospel sense He is Father only to His elect and only those who are His redeemed are truly the children of God.

“The Trinity is the point in which all Christian ideas and interests unite; at once the beginning and the end of all insight into Christianity.” Charles Hodge 1873

The truth of the Trinity is vital in all worship, in prayer, to understand and preach the gospel as well as to defend the Christian faith. We could not comprehend a covenant God who is relational with men if God is not relational within His own Being.

It is commonly, and mostly frivolously, objected that the doctrine of the Trinity makes three God’s, while the Scripture teaches “there is one God.” Another objection is that God cannot be both one and three. Such objections either miss the point or set out to misrepresent the orthodox position.

“Each Trinitarian person possesses the undivided essence, not a fragment of it. To imagine the three persons of the Godhead each having a third of the divine essence is an absurdity, for infinity cannot be fragmented or fractionalized.” Dr. Alan Cairns Theo Dictionary Pg. 416

As the **Shorter Catechism question six** puts it, *How many persons are in the Godhead? Ans: There are three persons in the Godhead: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.* Deut. 6:4, Jer. 10:10, 1John 5:7, Matt. 28:19.

Divine Characteristic/ Attribute/ Personality	The Father	The Son	The Holy Spirit
Called God	Philippians 1:2	Hebrews 1:8	Acts 5:3-4
Speaks	Matt. 3:17	Read the Gospels	Acts 13:2
Has a Will	Luke 22:42	Luke 22:42	1Cor. 12:11
Indwells the believer	John 14:23	John 14:23	John 14:16-17
Uses pronouns	Luke 22:42	Luke 22:42	Acts 13:2
Creates	Genesis 1:1	John 1:3	Genesis 1:2
Eternal	Deut. 33:27	John 5:	Heb. 9:14
Omnipotent	Gen. 17:1	Rev. 19:6	---
Omnipresent	Exodus 3:14	John 1:48, Matt 28:20	Psalms 139
Unchangeable	Malachi 3:6	Heb. 13:5	---
Raises the dead	John 5:20 1Thess 1:10	John 2:19; 5:20	Romans 8:11
Life Giver	John 5:21	John 5:21	2Cor. 3:6-8

God is three in one and one in three.

Since there is one God, and since the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and since these three are clearly distinguished in Scripture, we are left with the glorious truth of the Trinity – one God eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, each indwelling the other and each possessing , not in part, but entirely the infinite essence of the one divine Being.” Dr. Alan Cairns Theo. Dictionary Pg 417

In light of the doctrine of the Trinity it is essential to worship God as a Trinity. Where the Trinity is denied and the divine nature of each person, or one person of the Trinity is rejected the result is a false gospel. The first and foremost aspect of Christian worship is the knowledge of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as the one true God.

Study 5 THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Definition of attributes of God -- God's attributes are His Divine perfections, where perfection means the absence of limitation or defect. Job. 11:7-10, Ps. 145:3, Matt. 5:48.

God's perfections qualify all aspects of God's existence and nature. Every one of his attributes are infinitely perfect.

God is perfectly perfect. "God is good all the time."

God's perfections are essential to His own nature and to receive worship from men.

God's perfections are divided into two groups: His communicable and incommunicable attributes.

God's incommunicable attributes are: Those that belong to God alone that can never be communicated unto, shared with, or possessed by his creatures. They set God apart as the self-existent and transcendent God of the universe.

1. Immutability
2. Eternity
3. Immensity or infinity
4. Unity of God-head

God's communicable attributes are: Those that are shared with His creatures.

Wisdom, power holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

GOD'S INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

God's immutability: Definition: God cannot change for the better or for the worse, because he is constantly perfect. Ex. 3:14, Ps. 102:26-28; Isa. 41:4; 48:12; **Mal. 3:6**; Rom. 1:23 Heb. 1:11,12; **Heb. 13:8, Jas. 1:17. Rev. 1:8.**

God's Eternity: Definition: This is the infinity of God in relation to time and is called His eternity. Proof texts: Psalm 90:2; 102:12; Eph. 3:21.

"Our existence is marked off by days and weeks and months and years; not so the existence of God. Our life is divided into a past, present and future, but there is no such division in the life of God He is the eternal "I am." His eternity may be defined as that perfection of God whereby he is elevated above all temporal limits and all succession of moments, and possesses the whole of His existence in one indivisible present." Louis Berkof.

God's Immensity: Definition: God's filling all space with His whole Being. When God's infinity is viewed in reference to space it is called His immensity. It simply means that God's is present in every point of

Q: What is God?

Ans: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

John 4:24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Psalm 90:2. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Malachi 3:6. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore are ye sons of Jacob not consumed.

James 1:17. The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

space simultaneously with His whole Being. Proof texts: Psalm 139:7-8, Jonah 1:3, Jer. 23:23 – 24. Is. 6:3. He is also called: “The Lord of the whole earth.” Psalm 97:5, Is. 54:5, Micah 4:13, Zech. 4:14.

God’s Unity: He is single. There is no-one else. He is the only God that is entitled to the name Jehovah. This sets God apart from all polytheistic conceptions of God. 1Kngs 8:60,1Cor. 8:6, 1Tim. 2:5, Ex. 15:11.

God’s Unity: He is simple. He is free from division into parts. It is wrong to think of God as partly holiness, partly good, partly just, partly wise. Every one of God’s perfections is infinite and indivisible.

God is Invisible and Indivisible

Questions:

Is man unchangeable?

Can man become eternal?

How could the Lord Jesus change into man, if he was the eternal God?

Will man ever become a god?

Is God’s immutability a good thing?

How can an immutable God respond to different situations and different needs of His people?

Is morality included in God’s perfections?

How can God repent as when he repented that he made man?

How does the immensity of God affect our worship and prayer life?

Could we worship an imperfect God?

Is God part love and part wrath?

Study 6.

The Wisdom of God. 1Tim. 1:17 Again, this is one of God’s perfections. He possesses all wisdom in Himself and is the only one who possesses such wisdom perfectly.

This perfection of God comes under the heading of communicable attributes. Wisdom can be given/communicated in measure to God’s creatures. Deacons were to be men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom (Acts 6:3). Solomon was granted a greater measure of wisdom than others.

Wisdom is different from knowledge. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge to achieve a desired

purpose. This is God's specialty. In His wisdom God makes all things come to pass for our good and His glory.

God's knowledge being perfect, is different from the knowledge of men. It is not only total knowledge of all things, but inherent knowledge as the architect of all things. We are forced to study a building from the outside, while the architect knows it from the inside due to his first conception of it in his own mind. He also knows the building from the drafts on paper that he has used to represent the complete structure.

So, God, as the architect of all things, sees the end from the beginning. Nothing is partial or piecemeal with God. Because God dwells in the eternal now, all his works are before His eyes. God's knowledge does not result from observation, or a process of reasoning. God knows everything in totality. He does not gain knowledge as men learn things by study and step by step experience.

Due to God's perfect knowledge as the architect of all things He is omniscient—all knowing. God sees not as man sees. God sees the purpose as well as the means to achieve the purpose. Proof texts for God's omniscience include: 1Sam. 16:7, Psalm 139:1-4, Jer. 17:10. Ps.1:6, Ps. 37:18. The life story of Joseph, the dreams he received from God and the interpretations God's gave him, which were exactly fulfilled, all show God's omniscience.

The perfect knowledge and wise use of His knowledge leads to the veracity of God. When he speaks we can be sure we receive truth. Louis Berkof stated this well in his treatment of the communicable attributes of God:

“When God is called the truth, this is to be understood in its most comprehensive sense. He is the truth first of all in a metaphysical sense, that is, in Him the idea of the Godhead is perfectly realized; He is all that He as God should be, and as such is distinguished from all so-called gods, which are called vanity and lies. (Ps. 96:5, Ps. 115:4-8).

He is also the truth in an ethical sense, and as such reveals Himself as He really is, so that His revelation is absolutely reliable, Heb. 6:18.

Finally, He is also the truth in a logical sense, and in virtue of this He knows things as they really are, and has so constituted the mind of man that the latter can know, not merely the appearance, but also the reality of things. Thus the truth of God is the

foundation of all knowledge....It is because of this perfection that He is the source of all truth, not only in the sphere of morals and religion, but also in every field of scientific endeavour. Scripture is very emphatic in its references to God as the truth.” Exodus, 34:6, Deut. 32:4, John 17:3, Titus 1;2, 1John 5;20,21.

God's faithfulness is rooted in His veracity as a God of truth. “This faithfulness of God is of utmost practical significance to the people of God. It is the ground of their confidence, the foundation of their hope, and the cause of their rejoicing. It saves them from the despair to which their own unfaithfulness might easily lead, gives them courage to carry on in spite of their failures, and fills their hearts with joyful anticipations, even when they are deeply conscious of the fact that they have forfeited all the blessings of God.

Num. 23:19, Deut. 7:9, Ps. 89:33-34; Isa. 49:7, 1Cor. 1:9, 2Tim. 2:13; Heb. 6:17, 10:23.

(Louis Berkof Pg. 69 Systematic Theology Banner of Truth)

The Hebrew word "AMAN" = "faithful" and has the meaning of permanent—always there, always dependable.

God's wisdom is the outflow of the perfection of His knowledge.

H. B. Smith defines the divine wisdom as:

**"that attribute of God whereby He produces
the best possible results with the best possible means."**

God's final end in all his works is His own glory therefore he works in wisdom to devise means that serves the purpose.

God's wisdom is seen in:

Creation Psalm 19: 1– 7

Providence Psalm 33:10,11. Romans 8:28.

Redemption. Eph. 3:10 Rom. 11:33 1or. 2:7

Questions:

Why do we depend on the Bible to know what God knows?

Is it reasonable that God does not know the workings and inner issues of His own creation, including man?

How can we say that the truth of God is the foundation of all knowledge?

What is the Bible definition of faithfulness?

Are Christians always faithful?

Are they always truthful?

STUDY 7 The Power of God

The Power of God.

The very name El-Shaddai, which is translated, "the Almighty God" in our English Bible, is a basis for ascribing to God all power over all His created universe.

Once we accept that God is the creator of all things as recorded in the Genesis record then it is proper to attribute all power to our God.

The Hebrew word for "strong" signifies a conquering prevailing strength. There is no limitation to His strength. Jehovah Himself asked of Abraham, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Gen. 18:4. The N.T. parallel text is "With God all things are possible." Matt. 19:26.

God's Power is Sovereign

He has a sovereign right and authority to reign over man. Dan. 4:35.

He raises up one and puts down another at His will. Ps. 75:6-7

Ps. 46:10.

He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Rev. 19:16.

God's Power is twinned with His authority.

What is authority without power. He is free to act as he chooses and He possesses all power to fulfil His own will. Unlike man, who may have authority but not the power, or power without authority, God has both. Romans 13:1, Proverbs 8:15.

God's power is demonstrated in the world

In Creation

God worked Exnihilo - without matter

God worked by his word—he spoke and it was done

God worked for His own glory— Psalm 19

God made man in His own image—to worship Him.

God made the creatures of the world to display His power— Man cannot make a fly.

In Conversion

The conversion of a rebellious sinner to know and serve God is called a new creation. 2Cor. 5:17. In the first creation God worked unopposed, but in a sinner's conversion God must overcome depravity and the devil.

In the miracles of the OT

Moses before Pharaoh with the rod—was to set forth God's power and majestic Name in the earth.

The Sun standing still in the day of Joshua—God can reverse the laws of creation.

He can make water stand still. He can bring water out of a rock, and send manna and quail to furnish a table in the wilderness for His people.

Elijah's and Elisha's miracles were many and varied to demonstrate God's power over the natural world.

In the Miracles of Christ

The Lord's first miracle, or turning water into wine, was a work of creative power. He did in an instant what takes months by the natural processes over the course of the seasons, when he turned water into wine. He was demonstrating that he was making all things new. Rev. 21:5.

All the miracles of Christ were intended to give a lost and hopeless world hope in God's final new creation. When sickness and death will be banished.

God's power is behind His promises of the resurrection and the new creation.

The gospel hope is not in reclaimed this world—either its earth that is cursed or its culture that is corrupt, as this world will be destroyed by fire.

The gospel hope is in the resurrection of the saints and life in the new heavens and the new earth.

We have confidence in God's power to do all that he has promised eschatologically because we have

witnessed His power already in the first creation, in conversions and in the resurrection of Christ. It is the living resurrected Christ who promises our resurrection and eternal life with Him.

God's power cannot fail to fulfil all that he has promised His church.

There are certain things that God cannot do:

Deny Himself

Contradict Himself

Lie Hebrews 6:17—20

He cannot fail to deliver all what he has promised or threatened.

Lessons:

1. God's promises are sure and certain. He is not only full of truth, but also full of power to honour every promise.
2. We should learn to lean on the Lord for all that He has promised to do. We can do this by prayer and daily confidence so that we fret not. We show our faith by waiting on Him. As believer's God's power works for us. Romans 8:28.
3. Tremble for the wicked who fight God, whom He will destroy with the power of His glory. 2Thess. 1:7-10.
4. Christians should happily and peacefully submit to the will and works of the Lord. Those who resist His will cannot prosper. To get in line with His will shall bring untold blessings. This is the primary task of the Christian of which we are taught in the Lord's prayer in the second petition: "Thy will be done, Thy Kingdom come."
In doing so, we will know the joy of being linked up to the power of God.
5. Seek the blessing of the Holy Spirit whose ministry is to dispense the power of God to His people. Acts 1:8. Eph. 5:18. It is the Spirit of God who gives the power to do the will of God. The Christian life is one of enjoying the power of God through the Holy Spirit so that we "walk in the Spirit," "pray in the Spirit," "preach in the Spirit", "witness in the Spirit."

Questions:

Is God limited to work by natural causes according to the laws of creation?

Is God at work in the world, or does he let the world work its own will?

Was Christ's earthly ministry designed to make the world a better place, or to demonstrate the future state of things in the new creation?

Is God's power communicable to His people?

How may we receive a measure of the power of God in our lives?

Is the bestowment of God's power to live godly a part of the covenant of grace?

Study 8

The Free Presbyterian Church in Cloverdale Adult Sunday School

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Knowing God Study 8

The Holiness of God.

"The Old Testament clearly and emphatically teaches that God is "holy." He is "the Holy One of Israel" ([Isa 1:4](#)), the "holy God" ([Isa 5:16](#)), and "the Holy One" ([Isa 40:25](#)). His name is "Holy": "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" ([Isa 57:15](#)). The negative statement, "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none besides thee: neither is there any rock like our God" ([1Sa 2:2](#)), explains that He is most "holy" and that no one is as "holy" as He is." _Vine's OT word studies.

1. God's holiness consists in his perfect love of righteousness, and abhorrence of evil. Hab. 1:13, Psalm 11:7, Hebrews 1:9,

"The holiness of God is so great that, rather than accept a sinner, He has seen fit to slay His very Son." _Reformed Heritage KJV Study Bible Pg. 166.

2. Holiness in God is His essential nature and sets the standard for all His attributes. He is infinitely holy, eternally holy, and unchangeably holy. His holiness is characterized with infinite wisdom, power, justice, goodness and truth. No part of God is without essential holiness.

3. Holiness in God is His glory. "His power makes him mighty, his holiness makes him glorious." _ Thomas Watson Without holiness we could not worship Him now, nor in eternity. Rev. 4:11. Holiness is His beauty. 1Chron. 16:29, Psalm 96:9.

4. God's holiness is the original pattern. All holiness in God's creatures, either angels or men are patterned after God's own holy nature. He is the fountain of all holiness. Before he created angels or men He existed as the altogether holy One.

5. God's holiness is transcendent. 2Sam. 2:2

God's holiness is above that of his saints, whose holiness is as gold in the ore, a mixture of flesh and spirit. God is pure spirit. Our holiness is borrowed, or drawn from the original. We may tarnish our holiness and lose our first love. God's holiness is unchangeably infinite in extent and efficiency..

6. All of God's works are holy.

He cannot act unlike Himself. He must remain true to Himself in his works, actions and words.

7. God is Holy in His Word. His word bears a stamp of His holiness upon it, as wax bears the impression of a seal. "Thy word is very pure." It is compared to "silver refined seven times." Psalm 119:140.

Thomas Watson, the puritan, wrote: "Every line in the Word breathes sanctity, it encourages nothing but holiness. God is holy in his operations. All he does is holy; he cannot act but like himself; he can no more do an unrighteous action than the sun can darken. 'The Lord is holy in all his works.' Psalm 145:17."

"Sin will keep me from my Bible, but my Bible will keep me from sin." Anon.

Our Holiness

Every child of God is called unto holiness. Lev. 11:44,-45, 1Peter 1:14-16, 1John 1:10, 2Cor. 3:4. Heb 12:14.

"Describing the holiness of believers, Stephen Charnock identifies the Father as the fountain, the Son as the pattern, and the Spirit as the imprinter of holiness.

- The Father is the spring of holiness that sanctifies us (John 17:11,17). To cleanse our filth, the Father sends Christ to remove the guilt of sin and His Spirit to remove its stain (Eph.1:4, Col. 1:22, 2 Tim. 1:9).
- The Son is the model for our holiness, for it is to His image that we are conformed (Phil. 2:5-8). Even as Christ is pure, so are those who hope in Him (1John 3:3).
- The Spirit is the One who stamps us with the holiness of God. He makes sinners holy, bringing us into submission to His mind (1Cor.2) and sanctifying us to pursue the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5).

God calls us to walk in His holiness: Prov 23:26

That means that our holiness is our responsibility and our action. We are commanded to be holy. We are not to passively wait for holiness to happen to us. We are to seek after holiness with all our hearts. We are to conform our lives in every way possible to the will of God and do so heartily in a spirit of praise and worship to the One who is worthy of our devotion.

Thomas Watson said, "Our holiness consists also in our subjection to the will of God. As God's nature is the pattern of holiness, so his will is the rule of holiness. It is our holiness when we do his will, Acts 13:22; when we bear his will, Micah 7:9; when what he inflicts wisely we suffer willingly. Our great care should be to be like God in holiness."

God's holiness has to look like something. It is seen in our attitudes and actions of obedience and submission to God's will.

God's holiness makes Him to hate every expression of sin.

Because God loves holiness in Himself and in His creatures, it is natural to God to hate all forms of sin, which is unrighteousness (1John 3:4). As God loves what resembles Himself with a zeal for His own glory, so He hates what is contrary to himself with a passionate hatred. As this holiness is God's intrinsic nature, the nature that makes God to be the God He is, His jealousy for His own holy nature is intrinsic or natural to Himself. God cannot but hate sin. Hab. 1:13, Amos 5:21,22, Is. 1:14, Is. 63:10, Jer.44:4, Ps. 5:5

“...sin being only evil, and an unmixed evil, there is nothing in it that can abate the detestation of God, or balance his hatred of it; there is not the least grain of goodness in it, to incline him to the least affection to any part of it. This hatred cannot but be intense; for as the more any creature is sanctified, the more is he advanced in the abhorrence of that which is contrary to holiness; therefore, God being the highest, most absolute and infinite holiness, doth infinitely, and therefore intensely, hate unholiness; being infinitely righteous, doth infinitely abhor unrighteousness; being infinitely true, doth infinitely abhor falsity, as it is the greatest and most deformed evil.” _ Stephen Charnock
“The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.” Ps. 11:7.

Questions: Does God hate the sin and love the sinner?

How can a good God be filled with fury against his own creatures?

What is righteous indignation? Do we have it?

The Free Presbyterian Church in Cloverdale Adult Sunday School

May 08 2016

Knowing God Study 9

The Justice of God.

All of God’s perfections flow from His one divine essence. However, God’s holiness and His justice transcend every other attribute, or perfection of God. Everything about God is holy and everything about God is just. God may suspend mercy, but He cannot suspend justice.

“Shall not the God of all the earth do right?” Genesis 18:25. He certainly will, for it is His nature to do so.

The moral law comes from God’s nature

God’s holiness is revealed in the moral law. The same law which God put in man’s heart came out of His own heart. God’s holiness and God’s justice of necessity go together. There can be no concept of holiness apart from a holy standard as the basis of righteousness.

Louis Berkof stated, “The fundamental idea of righteousness is that of strict adherence to the law. Among men it presupposes that there is a law to which they must conform. It is sometimes said that we cannot speak of righteousness in God, because there is no law to which He is subject. **But though there is no law above God there is certainly a law in the very nature of God**, and this is the highest possible standard, by which all other laws are judged.”

God’s justice is absolute. Just as God is unchangeable He cannot deviate from His own moral uprightness.

God’s justice is relative. God maintains his holy nature by exercising justice to reward good and punish evil according to His holy nature.

The Bible terms for “righteous” carry the idea of conforming to a set standard. God does so to perfection and is never guilty of deviating from what is absolutely upright. God is inflexible in justice.

The out-workings of God’s justice:

God rules the world by a moral government by which He recognizes and rewards all that keep God’s holy standard, or law, and punishes all who neglect, or break His law.

Is. 33:22, Is. 3:10,11; Deut. 7:9,12,13; 2Chr. 6:14,15; Matt. 25:21,34.

God punishes the wicked with penalties in an expression of His divine wrath: Rom. 1:32; 2:9; 12:19, 2Thess.1:8

Note: **A.** That even as the law-giver, God is also the Saviour of His people Is. 33:22. This is because His rewards are not based on merit, but on promise and covenant. This must be the case because fallen man’s law-keeping is always imperfect.

B. That while man does not merit the rewards of righteousness, for they are given by grace, he does merit punishment as a result of his guilt.

“Divine justice is originally and necessarily obliged to punish evil, but not to reward good”. _ Berkof. Luke 17:10, 1Cor. 4:7, Job 41:11. Can this be correct?

God’s justice is the reason behind the judgment day.

God’s justice is the basis on which all moral creatures shall receive their due reward on that final day when they stand before God at the judgment seat. Angels and men shall be judged according to God’s law and all the wrongs that are left unsettled in this world will be put right on that day. Then they shall receive their just reward. Then the wicked will be pronounced guilty and unfit for the kingdom of God, and the righteous will be glorified with Christ. Matthew 25.

God’s justice is the reason for eternal punishment.

Sin is a breach of God’s law and an offence to His holy character. While that offence remains, there is no reconciliation and no hope of release from punishment. It is due to God’s justice that punishment for guilty sinners will be eternal.

God’s justice is the basis for God’s wrath upon His Son at Calvary. The doctrine of penal atonement is based on God’s insistence upon perfect payment for the broken law. That law demands infinite payment to the justice of God.

God could not save sinners on the basis of love alone. He must satisfy His divine justice by accepting the payment offered by His Son who stood in the place of sinners. The wrath of God due to us fell on Him. By this means God could be merciful to law-breakers and still maintain his strict justice. The death of Christ on the cross, therefore, was the vindication of God’s holiness. Sin was not passed over arbitrarily. God’s justice was brought to bear upon the Son, who paid the wages of death in full. Romans 3:24-26.

The gospel message is based on the penal sufferings of Christ. The doctrine of justification is solidly founded on the justice of God. This was demanded suffering and the death of Christ, but reassures believers that they are saved on the terms of justice, and God's justice is satisfied. So there is no more wrath against them.

This is the solid ground of assurance and peace to believing souls. Romans 5:1, Romans 8:1, 32-34.

“God cannot payment twice demand.
First at my Surety's hand and then again at mine.”

Penal = relating to punishment

Questions:

Why does the way of the wicked seem to prosper in the world?

God doesn't care.

The wicked are sometimes instruments of God's work

God gives the wicked opportunity to repent. Rev. 2:21.

God's forbearance is not forgiveness.

“The longer God is at taking his blow, the heavier it will be at last. Justice may be as a lion asleep, but at last the lion will awake, and roar upon the sinner. Do not Nero, and Julian, and Cain, now meet with God's justice?” Thomas Watson

Are Christians to imitate God's justice as the essential part of God's holiness and ours?

How can God be just when he chooses to save some souls while bypassing others?

Is God unrighteous because he shows mercy to His elect?

Romans 9:14. Souls who perish, destroy themselves. Hosea 13:9.

“If two men owe you money, you may, without any injustice, remit the debt to one, and exact it of the other.” Thomas Watson

Should a Christian pray for what he deserves?

Does God reward righteous deeds in His redeemed people?

Does God reward righteous deeds in the unconverted who never repent?

The Free Presbyterian Church in Cloverdale Adult Sunday School

May 15 2016

Knowing God Study 10

The Goodness of God. Exodus 33:18—34:6; Psalm 103. Romans 8:28-30.

There are many aspects to the goodness of God. He Himself is good in the sense that He meets the perfect ideal for men have as the supreme good, or “God.”

As creator and preserver of all life He is the fountain of all good. We wouldn't have existence never mind any enjoyment of life if God was not good. God's care for his creatures—even the sparrow— is recorded in Psalm 145:9,15,16.

The seasons of spring time and harvest all display the goodness of God who gives us the rain and the sunshine.

God is love

Berkof defines love in God as,

“that perfection of God by which He is eternally moved to self communication.”

Think of God before creation. Think of the love that flowed between the persons of the Trinity. So we understand that God is glorified in loving Himself. After creation God displayed or exercised His love toward his rational creatures—angels and men. He held communion with them and causes them to enjoy fellowship with Him. He also takes delight in their love and devotion toward Him.

God has a general love even for unrepentant sinners

“He does not even withdraw His love completely from the sinner in his present sinful state, though the latter's sin is an abomination to Him, since He recognizes even in the sinner His image bearer.” (John 3:16; Matt. 5:44 - 45). Lois Berkof

As God commands us to love our enemies and pray for them, and as God bears the highest idea of love, we must recognize that God has a love toward His enemies too. This helps us to see that God loves sinners in the sense that they are His creatures and made in His image, though spoiled by the curse of sin.

An example of God's general love for an unrepentant sinner is found in the case of the rich young ruler, who was invited to sell all and follow Christ, but would not. We are told in Mark 10:21, “Then Jesus beholding him *loved* him, and said unto him one thing thou lackest.” We know the young man turned away from the Lord because he loved his riches more, yet, in that unrepentant, and idolatrous state of heart, the Lord had a love toward him.

We must learn not to despise the ungodly, who are under the sentence of God's judgment, as if they are of no value, or of no interest to the Lord. We are to pray for them, minister to them and even feed and clothe them. Our heavenly Father cares even for the falling sparrow. It was in this way that the Lord could eat and drink with sinners. He did not withdraw from them as the Pharisees who despised them as no better than dogs. Christians are commanded to withdraw from idolaters, or rebels to God to protect our hearts and our testimonies, but we are still to care for them and pray for them.

God has a special love for His elect.

This is the grace of God moving Him to institute a plan of mercy to undeserving sinners. His electing love is sovereign and therefore it is free grace, as God is free to bestow His mercy on whom He will.

Hence it is sovereign grace associated with His divine purpose for His own glory. Eph. 1:6,7, 2:7—9.

Titus 2:11, 3:4-7

Louis Berkof state: “His love to man is always unmerited, and when shown to sinners, is even forfeited. The Bible generally uses the word to denote *the unmerited goodness*

or love of God to those who have forfeited it, and are by nature under a sentence of condemnation. The grace of God is the source of all spiritual blessings that are bestowed upon sinners.”

- Redemption is the result of God's grace Romans 3:24, 2 Cor. 8:9.
- Repentance and faith are the result of God's grace Acts 18:27, Eph. 2:8.
- Justification through the blood of Christ is bestowed by grace Rom. 3:24, 4:16, Titus 3:7.

Every spiritual gift is bestowed upon the believer through grace. This is God's way of ensuring that He receives all the glory for man's salvation. He freely and fully bestows salvation to unworthy and incapable sinners so he receives all the glory for all eternity from their redemption. There will never be an hour in heaven's eternity [if there be time] when glorified saints will not display the majesty of the Lord's grace.

"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness [moral goodness] toward us through Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 2:7

God is merciful. That means he is full of tenderness and compassion toward those who are in distress, misery or hopeless, irrespective of their deserts. The Hebrew word RACHAM is translated tender mercy and demonstrates that God is of a nature to help, minister to human needs.

The Old Testament scriptures display God's character as merciful in abundant references revealing that God is abundant in mercy. Mercy is God's delight. Ex. 34 Deut. 5:10, Psal 57;10, 86:5, 1 Chron. 16:34, 2 Chron. 7:6, Psalm 136, Ezra 3:11.

Other terms used to display God's tender mercy are "pity", "compassion" and "lovingkindness." God excels in extending such help because He is truly a God filled with compassion in His own heart. Mercy in god is infinite and perfect along with all his other attributes.

Another term for God's mercy is "longsuffering." Louis Berkof, stated, "It is that aspect of the goodness or love of God in virtue of which He bears with the forward and evil in spite of their long continued disobedience. In the exercise of this attribute the sinner is contemplated as continuing in sin, notwithstanding the admonitions and warning that come to him. It reveals itself in the postponement of the merited judgment."

We are to imitate God in showing mercy.

As God is the Father of mercy, show yourselves to be his children, by being like him." Thomas Watson.

"The sum and definition of religion is, Be rich in works of mercy, be helpful to the bodies and souls of others. Scatter your golden seeds; let the lamp of your profession be filled with the oil of charity. Be merciful in giving and forgiving."
Ambrose.

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Luke 6:36

