

140917w The Knowledge of God

Introduction:

- The main question in theology is that of the knowledge of God. Theology is the study of God.
 - Why study God? To get knowledge of Him.
 - As Christians we claim to have knowledge of God. It is not a fantasy, imagination or guessing of who God is. It is actual knowledge of Him.
- How is God known? Or what is the way of knowing God.
- Throughout all of human history people of every race have raised the question of the knowledge of God. At minimum what happens when man considers himself he gets back to the question of how did I get here, there has to be something bigger than man ‘in this picture.’

I. Scripture and the Knowledge of God

- A. The knowledge of God is major theme throughout the scriptures. From man’s perspective it looks like this:
 1. *“If only I knew where to find God, I would go to his court.”* (Job 23:3, NLT)
 2. *“Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.””* (John 14:8, NLT)
 3. The cry of the human heart is for finding God, beholding Him and coming into his presence.
- B. From God’s perspective it looks like this:
 1. God desires greatly that we come to know Him.
 2. *“This is what the Lord says: “Don’t let the wise boast in their wisdom, or the powerful boast in their power, or the rich boast in their riches. But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the Lord ... I, the Lord, have spoken!”* (Jeremiah 9:23–24, NLT)
 3. Is. prophesied, *“... for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the Lord.”* (Isaiah 11:9, NLT) or filled with the knowledge of the Lord.
 4. This is God’s highest desire that the whole world would know Him.
- C. The tragedy found in the Word of God is this, men lack this knowledge and many turn away from even finding it.
 1. *“Listen, O heavens! Pay attention, earth! This is what the Lord says: “The children I raised and cared for have rebelled against me. Even an ox knows its owner, and a donkey recognizes its master’s care— but Israel doesn’t know its master. My people don’t recognize my care for them.””* (Isaiah 1:2–3, NLT)
 2. As a result of that lack of knowledge, they (the people) are weighted down with guilt. And they continue to reject God. vs. 4
 3. *“Your country lies in ruins, and your towns are burned. Foreigners plunder your fields before your eyes and destroy everything they see.”* (Isaiah 1:7, NLT)
 4. Hosea 4:1-2 Declares that we are destroyed for lack of knowledge of God.
 5. ***What does God want? *“For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”* (Hosea 6:6, NKJV) Jer. 31:34 that all would know Him from least to the greatest.
 6. So the lack of the knowledge of God leads to sin of every kind and the knowledge of God takes us into the greatest of glories!! God wants to be know. John Piper says it best, “My life goal is to know Him and be known by Him!”

II. The Mystery of God

- A. How are we to know God?
 1. We start here: God cannot be know by man like we know other things in our finite world. God is infinite. Therefore He is veiled from human perception.

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2. He is as we see in scripture *“veiled or dwelling in thick darkness.”* This creates for man a ‘mystery’.
 - a) Eph 1:9 Paul speaks of the mystery of His will.
 - b) Eph 3:4 Paul speaks of the mystery of Christ
 - c) Eph 6:19 Paul speaks of the mystery of Gospel.
 - d) There is mystery in God himself and in all of his ways.
- B. There are two problems in knowing God.
 1. I have already mentioned this, God is infinite and we are finite. He lives beyond our finite world. Therefore cannot be seen or measured of studies by finiteness.
 - a) Job was faced by this dilemma. *““Can you solve the mysteries of God? Can you discover everything about the Almighty?”* (Job 11:7, NLT) No, is the answer. The finite is not capable of infinite. Man’s highest achievements will always fall short of knowing God.
 - b) *““My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”* (Isaiah 55:8–9, NLT) There is a vast difference between knowing the things of this world and the things of God.
 - c) *“Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe.”* (1 Corinthians 1:21, NLT)
 2. Second problem in knowing God is sin. This is a huge problem in knowing God because God is holy and man is sinful.
 - a) Man’ sin has created a barrier between him and God. A barrier that keeps us from the knowledge of God.
 - b) Our sin keeps us far from God, which makes it impossible to know Him.
 - c) *“And I will wait on the Lord, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him.”* (Isaiah 8:17, NKJV) This estrangement from God makes it hard to know Him. God is all the more mysterious to sinful and estranged man.
 - d) Granted these two problems of estrangement finiteness and sinfulness; what possible way is there to the knowledge of God? How do we find Him?

III. The Revelation of God

- A. All knowledge of God comes by way of revelation. The knowledge of God is revealed knowledge. God is the One who gives it! By God alone can God be known. The knowledge of God is truly a mystery made known by revelation.
 1. The word revelation means ‘a removing of the veil.’ The Gk. apocalypso - an uncovering. Ie. Mt 16:17 Peter says, *“You are the Christ the Son of the Living God.”* The knowledge of Jesus’ sonship was not attained by Peter but revealed by God.
 2. It is not man breaking into God’s world it is God manifesting Himself to us. Revelation in its ultimate meaning is that which comes from God. Earlier we looked at Paul’s language of the mystery of His Will, Christ, and Gospel. Now we see that the close biblical connection between mystery and revelation. *“As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me.”* (Ephesians 3:3, NLT) *“the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.”* (Colossians 1:26, NKJV)
- B. God Reveals Himself
 1. Through nature. Ps 19:1-2 Through the heavens. Through His handiwork. Roman 1:20 His invisible nature revealed in things seen. *“but he never left them without evidence of himself and*

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his goodness. For instance, he sends you rain and good crops and gives you food and joyful hearts.” (Acts 14:17, NLT)

2. Through man. Gen 1:26, we are made in His image. Man is a reflection of God. Our sense of right and wrong is written on our hearts. (Ro 2:15)
- C. Man’s response to revelation.
1. We Receive and walk in blessing!
 2. We can suppress the truth. “*But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*” (Romans 1:18, NLT) Wickedness is so great that the truth is held down/back.
 3. We can dishonor God and become thankless towards Him. “*Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like.*” (Romans 1:21, NLT) This is a willful turning away from God.
 4. The end of that choice is the end of vs 21 *As a result, their minds became dark and confused.* People in this state are no longer able to think about God. They can only speculate. Their hearts are so hard that they cannot sense the presence of God. That is how the men of Sodom could ask to have sex with the angels at lots house. They lost their ability to perceive God. Humans who suppress the truth become idolatrous and lustful. THIS ALL HAPPENS because people exchange the truth of God for a lie. vs 25.

Conclusion:

- God desires to be known and He takes the initiative to make himself known.
- But if man refuses to accept that knowledge he is now without excuse.
- This is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith. 1 John 5:4. As for me and my house, we choose to believe!