

BAHRAIN REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

The Doctrine of God (Lecture #1)

Knowing God

August 23, 2024

Preliminary

Note: Theology Proper is the study of the knowledge of God and His relation to mankind.

Theology: Gk. Θεός (*Theos*) = God; λόγος (*logos*) = word, discourse.

Question: How do we know that God exists?

- (a) All people have an inner sense of God... Rom 1:18, 20, 21, 25; Ps 14:1; 53:1; Rom 2:14-16
- (b) Christians believe the evidence that is found in Scripture and in nature... Rom 1:20; Col 1:16-17; Isa 45:18
[James Anderson, *The Existence of God*] – “The existence and attributes of God are evident from the creation itself, even though sinful human beings suppress and distort their natural knowledge of God.”

1. The Knowledge of God

Jeremiah 9:23, 24 = *Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”*

Note: Christianity’s foremost duty is to know the person and work of God

- To know the will of God refers to His purposes, plans, and desires.

Point: It should be obvious that knowledge of God is the most important knowledge that we can possess.

- We are called to seek God’s will and live according to it.

John 17:3 = *this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*
Ephesians 5:17 = *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is*

Exegetical Note: In the Scriptures, the word ‘fool’ is a moral term. It does not refer to a person who is unintelligent, but to someone who does not recognize the importance of knowing God and living according to His will.

Challenge: As Christians, we should devote our lives to knowing God and making Him known.

- The great purpose of life is to *know God* in an intimate relationship.

2. Benefits of Knowing God

(a) Understanding

Note: A correct view of God is necessary in order to have a correct view of everything else

Point: Only in the light of a true knowledge of God can we have a true understanding of reality; especially regarding who we are, our need, and the purpose of our existence

Proverbs 9:10 = *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight*

(b) Trust or Faith

[Paul Washer, *Knowing the Living God*] – “In the Scriptures, the *name* of God is a reference to God Himself. The more we know about Him (His perfect character and unlimited power), the more we will be able to believe Him and trust Him with every aspect of our lives.”

Psalms 9:10 = *And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.*

(c) Spiritual Strength

Note: To live the Christian life takes a strength that is beyond our own.

Point: The more we know about God, the stronger we will be spiritually, and the more willing and able we will be to actively live for Him regardless of the obstacles... 1 Sam 30:6

Daniel 11:32 = *... the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.*

(d) Perseverance

2 Timothy 1:12 = *which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me*

Exegetical Notes: The Apostle Paul wrote this right before he was to die as a martyr for Christ under the corrupt rule of the Roman Empire.

- He remained faithful to Christ and did not deny the faith.
- He stood bold, unashamed, and confident because he *knew* the character and power of the One in whom he had come to believe!

3. Dangers of NOT Knowing God

Note: When we are ignorant of God's truth, then we are certainly more susceptible to false teaching.

- Without truly coming to know the Lord, we fall into the danger of being people who have knowledge but not the truth of it... 2 Tim 3:7

- To have the appearance of righteousness without genuinely having its power... 2 Tim. 3:5

(a) Remaking God in Our Own Image

Psalms 50:21 = *These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.*

Note: In the absence of a true knowledge of God, man will form his own opinions and remake God in his own image.

- It will always result in a deformed and degraded view of God. It will always result in God's judgment!

(b) False Worship

John 4:22 = *You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*

Note: Idolatry occurs whenever we worship anything or anyone other than the living God.

(c) Unbelief or Lack of Trust

2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9 = *in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might*

[A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*] – "Unbelief is actually perverted faith, for it puts its trust, not in the living God but in dying men. The unbeliever denies the self-sufficiency of God and usurps attributes that are not his. This dual sin dishonors God and ultimately destroys the soul of man."

(d) An Indifferent or Apathetic View of Sin

1 Corinthians 15:34 = *Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.*

Note: In sinning regarding the nature of God (He is righteous), they also sinning regarding how they should live before Him (righteously)

(e) Lawlessness

Hosea 4:1-2 = *Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land ² there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.*

Definition: the state of living apart from the law or will of God.

Point: It is living as though God had no law or had never given His law to men.

- It is one of the most grievous consequences of an ignorance of God... Pro 29:18
[Washer] – "The more we reject the knowledge of God, the more unrestrained and immoral we become!"

(f) Divine Judgment and Destruction...

Hosea 4:6 = *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

Note: This is the most frightening consequence of an ignorance of God.

- Our ignorance of God will even have a devastating effect upon the generations that follow us ... cf. Ex 34:6-7
- The wrath of God refers to His righteous anger or indignation against sinful men... Rom 1:18; 32

Implications: How to get to know God better?

- (a) Trust and believe in Christ as your God and Savior... Jn 3:16
- (b) Devote yourself to reading and listening to God's Word... 1 Tim 4:13; Heb 4:12
- (c) Seek the Lord through prayer... Jer 29:11-14; Mt 7:7-8
- (d) Fellowship and live out your life with the saints... Heb 10:25

Knowing God is a matter of heaven and hell... what is more important to you?