

Knowing God

Intro: In the past several weeks we have taken a brief look into God's inscrutable nature. Following years of worship and devotion to his Creator, David wrote psalm 139, in which he introduced us to several of God's Divine attributes; His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, and His omni-righteousness. David marveled over the fact that God knew him intimately, was always with him, had formed him in his mother's womb, and had ordained all of his days before he was even born. He conclude in verse 6, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me to comprehend; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.*" A study of God's attributes should likewise cause every born-again believer to bow in worship and reverence before Almighty God.

It was my intention to merely introduce you to the study of God's attributes. However, because many of you have responded so positively to my foray into this subject, I have decided to continue our study on the attributes of God. Someone shared with me this week that they have been reading and studying the Psalms all of their life, but they had never seen the attributes of God that we have been studying. So, join with me as we continue our study of the attributes of God.

As noted in our study of psalm 139, David had come to know God because he spent time with Him. As a result, God was pleased to reveal Himself to David. This leads to my first topic, **God wants to be known.**

God Wants To Be Known— **Stories of Bertrand Russell and Helen Keller**

God created man to know Him. The better we get to know God, the more we are going to love, trust, worship, and serve Him. The only way we as human beings can get to know God, is for Him to reveal Himself to us. God has taken the initiative to make Himself known to us. The question is "How does God reveal Himself?" God has revealed Himself to mankind through *general* or *natural revelation*, and *special revelation*.

I. General or Natural Revelation

A definition of revelation: *Revelation is that unique process whereby God makes Himself known to mankind!*

A. God reveals Himself through nature (Ps. 19:1; 104:24, 31)

God has revealed Himself through the “heavens and the earth” which He created. Theologians refer to this as **General or Natural Revelation**.

The Psalms are filled with declarations that all creation, including man, is God’s work (Psalm 104:24, 31). David composed many psalms ascribing praise to God for His glorious creation of heaven and earth. As he tended his sheep by night, and witnessed the nightly parade of God’s starry host, he ascribed glory to God for His creation. David writes in Psalm 19:1

Psalm 19:1—The heavens declare the glory of God;
And their expanse proclaim the work of His hands.

Creation ascribes perpetual praise to God for His creative genius. As we observe the sun and moon, and the star-studded sky at night, it should cause us to be filled with praise and wonder. Our God is a great and powerful God. The Hubbel space telescope continues to peer into the vast recesses of the Cosmos only to discover more and more breathtaking galaxies (slides 1-7).

B. God makes Himself known through conscience (Rom. 1:19-20; 2:14-15)

Man’s own personal, rational, and moral nature, though marred by the Fall of Adam, nonetheless retains the intuitive knowledge that God exists.

Romans 1:19-20—“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.” [The knowledge of God is intuitive or innate to men’s conscience]. 20 “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

Romans 2:14-15—“For when Gentiles, who do not possess the Law, do instinctively the things of the Law . . . they show [that they have the Law written in their hearts] their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them. What Paul is saying in these verses is that God who created man has placed His stamp of ownership in our hearts so we are without excuse.”

II. Special Revelation

While God has revealed Himself through nature and conscience, in order for man to truly know Him, He has to speak to us. God has spoken to mankind through direct revelation and through His Word. Theologians refer to this as *Special Revelation*.

A. God has spoken to men through direct revelation

God has made Himself known to men of all generations through direct revelation. According to the account of creation in Genesis 1:27—“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them.” God created man with intellect, volition, and emotions. He created man to know, love, and serve Him. Adam and Eve enjoyed intimate fellowship with God, until the day they chose to sin against Him (Gen. 3). Sin brought about separation from God, along with spiritual and physical death. God graciously provided garments of skin so that Adam and Eve could be restored to fellowship with Him (Gen. 3:21). The slaying of an innocent lamb to provide redemption and restoration, pictured the ultimate salvation God would provide for man’s sin through His Son, Jesus Christ.

In spite of God’s gracious provision for Adam and Eve’s redemption and restoration, the majority of their posterity rejected God and His gracious means of redemption. However a few righteous men, such as Seth, Enoch, and Noah “walked with” and served God (Gen. 4:25-26; 5:22; 6:9). God revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He communed with Moses face-to-face, and demonstrated His mighty power to the nations through the plagues He sent against Pharaoh. He supported Joshua in His conquest and settlement of the Promised Land of Canaan. He spoke to His people Israel through numerous prophets. In spite of His gracious dealings with His people Israel, they rejected Him and embraced the Canaanite idol Baal.

B. God speaks to man through His Word (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16)

God speaks to man through His Word. Peter informs us in **2 Peter 1:21** that “No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Paul says in **2 Timothy 3:16** “That all Scripture is inspired by God. In other words, the words in this book, all of them, are given by the very breath of His mouth. God reveals Himself. He

tells us about Himself in the scriptures. We learn about God's nature and character in His Word. The scriptures provide a complete guide to what men must believe to be saved, as well as everything we need to dedicate ourselves to a life of service and holy living.

It should be noted in passing, that there is a mysterious power in the scriptures. When the Word of God is read or preached it has the power to bring conviction and repentance, leading men to salvation (Rom. 10:9-17; Heb. 4:12).

So then, God has revealed Himself through nature, conscience, direct revelation, and the Bible, but this is not enough for us to truly come to know Him. You see God is infinite and we human beings are finite. How can humans ever get to truly know the Divine? How can we as finite human beings ever get to know the infinite God? Once again, God took the initiative. He revealed Himself uniquely in His Son, Jesus Christ.

C. God speaks to man through His Son, Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-4)

Turn with me in your Bible to the Book of Hebrews chapter 1. Hebrews 1, beginning in verse 1

Heb. 1:1—"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways—God spoke in past ages through His prophets— 2 but in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, Jesus Christ. He appointed Him heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His Person or nature, and he upholds all things by the word of His power" (also see Col. 1:16-17 and 2:9).

Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of God's nature and being. What the writer of Hebrews is saying is, "To know Jesus Christ, is to know God the Father." In Christ and by Christ, God provides complete self-disclosure. John wrote: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father . . . no man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:14, 18). Jesus said the same thing to His disciples. It is recorded in the Gospel of **John 14:7-14**—"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

v. 9—“He who has seen Me has seen the Father” v. 11—“Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me.”

Jesus came to reveal the Father unto man. And even though He ascended bodily and returned back to heaven, He promised to give us the spiritual faculties to know Him. Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit who would abide in every believer forever (John 14:15-26). Apart from the Spirit’s illumination, the human mind is helpless before the Mystery which is God.

Conclusion:

In order to know God we have to first accept His Son, Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin and death. Acceptance of Jesus Christ is the starting point of getting to know God. Since we are sinners by nature, we must be born-again of the Spirit of God. Jesus stated this truth in John 17:3—“And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”

So then, knowledge of God begins with reception of His Son, Jesus Christ. We receive Jesus by placing our faith, our belief in Him as our Savior from sin and death. Any investigation into the nature and Person of God begins with receiving Him into your life. The remainder of this study on the attributes of God will remain a closed book to you if you don’t know Jesus as your Savior.

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ into your heart as Savior and Lord, would you do so this morning as I close in prayer? Christian, are you spending time in God’s presence every day? Do you spend time in His Word and in prayer? This is so very important because according to **2 Corinthians 3:18**—God’s Word transforms us into the very image of Christ.

Join me in prayer

Closing song: Horizon Praise Team

Next week, Lord willing, we will begin our investigation into the attributes of God. We will commence our study with a definition of what constitutes an attribute, and seek to classify the different attributes of God. And then we will dive into an examination of what God’s Word reveals concerning the spiritual nature of God. **John 4:24 say, God is Spirit. This will be our starting point.**