

Knowing G-d

A Study Guide

1) Introduction:

- a) Five basic truths about G-d:
 - i) G-d is triune; there are three persons within the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) G-d is the creator and absolute Lord and King over His world.
 - iii) G-d has spoken to man and the Bible is His recorded message (word).
 - iv) G-d is Savior; an act of sovereign grace and love through Yeshua.
 - v) Life must be viewed and lived in the light of G-d's word.

- b) Why is knowing G-d important?
 - i) ^{CJB} **John 17:3** And eternal life is this: to know you, the one true God, and him whom you sent, Yeshua the Messiah
 - ii) ^{CJB} **Jeremiah 9:22 ¶** Here is what *ADONAI* says: "The wise man should not boast of his wisdom, the powerful should not boast of his power, the wealthy should not boast of his wealth; ²³ instead, let the boaster boast about this: that he understands and knows me- that I am *ADONAI*,
 - iii) ^{CJB} **Hosea 6:6** For what I desire is mercy, not sacrifices, knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

- c) Knowing G-d provides:
 - i) The foundation and goal for our lives – John 17:3
 - ii) A principle of priorities – Jeremiah 9:22
 - iii) A scale of values – Hosea 6:6

- d) KNOWING G-d, not just knowing about G-d, as the object of our faith, is central and essential to living by a working faith.

- e) Knowing G-d vs. Knowing About G-d.
 - i) In the bleachers or on the road.
 - (1) Those in the bleachers know and are learning ABOUT G-d.
 - (2) Those on the road are KNOWING G-d.

 - ii) The book of Daniel is a good example of what “knowing G-d” does to a man.
 - (1) Those who know G-d have more energy for G-d.
 - (2) Those who know G-d have greater, higher thoughts of G-d.
 - (3) Those who know G-d are more bold for G-d.
 - (4) Those who know G-d are content with G-d.

f) How do we get to know G-d?

i) The same way we get to KNOW anyone else – by spending time with Him, observing what He has done and what He is doing, talking with Him, listening to what He has to say.

(1) G-d made Himself available to Adam & Eve so they could get to KNOW Him.

(2) G-d made Himself available to the nation Israel so they could get to KNOW Him.

(3) Yeshua made Himself available to the 12 so they could get to KNOW Him.

(4) G-d makes Himself available through Yeshua today so we can get to KNOW Him.

ii) The quality and extent of our knowledge of someone else depends largely on them, not us.

(1) Peer knowledge

(2) Non-peer knowledge

(3) Knowing G-d has more to do with the fact that He knows me than me knowing Him and Him allowing me to come to know Him.

iii) Beware of the Second Commandment.

^{NAS} **Exodus 20:1** ¶ Then God spoke all these words, saying, ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ ¶ "You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴ ¶ "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵ "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

(1) No other G-d's.

(2) No worship of the true G-d by images or symbols.

(a) Images dishonor G-d by obscuring His glory.

(b) Images mislead, conveying false ideas about G-d.

2) Unchanging G-d

a) How to relate the remote, ancient Near-Eastern world as it existed thousands of years ago – primitive, barbaric, agricultural and unmechanised – to our world today?

- i) The link is not with the circumstances.
- ii) The link is with G-d Himself, G-d's immutability – His unchangeableness.

(1) G-d's life does not change.

- (a) (Ps 93:2) He is "from everlasting"
- (b) (Jer 10:10) "an everlasting King"
- (c) Also, Rom 1:23; 1 Tim 6:16; Ps 90:2; Ps102:26f; Isa 48:12; Heb 7:16

(2) G-d's character does not change.

- (a) (Ex 3:14) "I Am that I Am"
- (b) (James 1:17) "with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."
- (c) (Ex 34:5ff)

(3) G-d's truth does not change.

- (a) (Isa 40:6ff) "All flesh is grass . . . the grass withereth . . . but the word of our G-d shall stand for ever."
- (b) (Ps 119:89, 152) "All thy commandments are truth (i.e. stable and unchanging) . . . thou hast founded them for ever."
- (c) (John 10:35) "The Scripture cannot be broken."

(4) G-d's ways do not change.

- (a) G-d continues to act toward man in the same way that He does in the Biblical accounts.

(5) G-d's purposes do not change.

- (a) His own Glory (Dispensational view)
- (b) Salvation of mankind (Covenant or Reformed view)
- (c) What He does in time He planned from eternity. What He planned in eternity He carries out in time.

(6) G-d's Son does not change. (Heb 13:8) Yeshua is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

- (7) The ethic and resulting moral requirements of Scripture do not change.
- (a) Ethic = G-d's "moral will" for man. Fully revealed in the pages of Scripture. Establishes G-d's requirements for how we are to live our lives.
 - (b) Morality = How well our lives, our actions, activities, words and thoughts align with G-d's ethical standard
 - (c) G-d has an ultimate goal for man (and all of creation). – His Glory (Dispensational view) / Salvation of mankind (Covenant or Reformed view)
 - (d) What G-d requires has not, and does not, change. G-d requires a certain behavior based on faith and associated trust in Him.
 - (e) G-d's response to faith has not, and does not, change. G-d will react in very predictable ways to displays of faith and trust.
 - (f) G-d's response to unbelief (lack of faith) has not, and does not, change. G-d will react in very predictable ways to displays of unbelief and lack of trust in Him.
- (8) The distance and difference between the "Biblical times" and today vanish when we realize that the basis of our fellowship with G-d is the same as it was thousands of years ago – in the "Bible times" – that is, G-d Himself.

3) Majestic G-d

- a) "Majesty" means "greatness." When applied to G-d it is always a declaration of His greatness and an invitation to worship.
 - i) G-d is personal but "personal" carries the idea that He is like us – limited. He is personal and He is like us but we are never like Him. We are limited. G-d is never limited
 - ii) Remove any and all thoughts of G-d that limits Him in any respect.
 - iii) Compare G-d with powers and forces that we regard as great.
 - (1) Look at what G-d has done - creation. Who else could have done this?
 - (2) Look at the size, variety and complexity of the world.
 - (3) Look at the great, powerful nations. They are as "as a drop of a bucket, and counted as small dust of the balance . . . All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity (emptiness)."
 - (4) Look at the world's great men. It is not they who rule the affairs of men.
 - (5) Look at the stars. The most universally awesome experience that mankind knows is to stand alone on a clear night and look at the stars.

- b) Reference: Isa 40:12ff

4) Wise G-d

- a) Wisdom in man, the spiritual gift of wisdom as well as a truly “wise” man, is not the ability to know all things. This is omnipotence and only G-d is omnipotent. Wisdom in man is like driving a car – the ability to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it in ever changing conditions and circumstances.
- b) The wisdom of man can be frustrated by circumstances outside of the wise man’s control.
- c) G-d’s wisdom cannot be frustrated because His wisdom is allied to His omniscience (knowing all things, actual and possible) and His omnipotence (all powerful).
- d) Only G-d is truly and always wise. Infinite power ruled by infinite wisdom.
- e) References: Job 9:4, 12:13; Is 40:26, 28; Rom 16:25,27

5) Truthful G-d

- a) “Truth” in the Bible is a quality of persons primarily, and of propositions only secondarily: it means stability, reliability, firmness, trustworthiness, the quality of a person who is entirely self-consistent, sincere, realistic, and undeceived. Only G-d fits this description completely. “Truth” is His nature, He simply cannot be anything else. That is why He cannot lie. Cf Titus 1:2, Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Heb 6:18)
- b) G-s’s word is, for us, the index of reality – they show us things as they really are, regardless of how we think or feel about them.
 - i) G-d’s commands are true. (Ps 119:151) “All thy commandments are truth”
 - (1) G-d’s commands have stability and permanence in stating what G-d wants to see in every person in every age.
 - (2) G-d’s commands tell and show us the unchanging truth about our own nature.
 - ii) G-d’s promises are true. (Heb 10:23) “He is faithful that promised.” Cf: Ps 36:5; Ps 119:90; Lam 3:23
 - (1) G-d’s faithfulness is confirmed by the fact the He always fulfills what He promises.

6) Loving G-d

- a) (1 John 4:8, 16) “G-d is love.”
 - i) Love – agape’ – has a wholly Christian usage, not found in secular koine’ Greek.
- b) “G-d is love” is not the complete truth about G-d so far as the Bible is concerned. It is not an abstract definition of G-d, but a summary, from man’s viewpoint, of what the Scriptures say about G-d.
- c) “G-d is love” must be understood in the same way we understand two similar statements:
 - i) G-d is spirit (John 4:24) i.e. G-d is not localized nor limited by physical limitations as man is.
 - ii) G-d is light (1 John 1:5 i.e. light means holiness and purity as measured by G-d’s commands as opposed to darkness which means moral perversity and unrighteousness as measured by the same commands.
- d) G-d’s love is:
 - i) G-d’s love is an exercise of His goodness.
 - ii) G-d’s love is an exercise of His goodness towards sinners and takes the nature of grace and mercy.
 - iii) G-d’s love is an exercise of His goodness towards individual sinners.
 - iv) G-d’s love for sinners involves His identifying Himself with their welfare.
 - v) G-d’s love for sinners is expressed by the gift of His Son to be their Savior.
 - vi) G-d’s love for sinners reaches its objective as it brings them to know and enjoy Him in a covenant relation.
- e) (Rom 5:5) “the love of G-d is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us”
 - i) “The love of G-d” = not love for G-d, but rather G-d’s love for us.
 - ii) “Shed abroad” = literally “poured out, tipped out, flooding” the same word used of the “outpouring” of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:17f, 33; 10:45; Titus 3:6.
 - iii) The tense of the verb (shed abroad, poured out, etc.) is the perfect tense which implies a settled state and completed action. G-d’s love floods our hearts now just as a valley once flooded remains full.
 - iv) The knowledge of G-d’s love is a ministry of the Holy Spirit.

7) Grace of G-d

- a) Grace – charis – like agape’ has a wholly Christian usage, unknown in secular koine’ Greek. It expresses a spontaneous self determined kindness that was unknown to the Graeco-Roman ethics and theology.
- b) G-d’s grace can only be appreciated when we really understand and come to terms with the following:
 - i) We often act as if G-d’s grace and mercy and love are somehow entitlements, due us from G-d. “G-d will forgive. That’s His job.” (Quote from a French freethinker on his deathbed) We fail to accept that we deserve nothing from G-d but condemnation, treating small virtues as compensating for great vices and refusing to admit that, morally speaking, there is anything wrong with us. We must realize that G-d is not a magnified image of us, sharing our complacency. We are fallen creatures, guilty and unclean in G-d’s sight, fit only for condemnation.
 - ii) We deserve only the justice due our fallen condition. G-d is the judge of all the earth and as such He will do right, vindicating the innocent but punishing the guilty. We are all guilty in His sight and should expect nothing from G-d except judgment.
 - iii) Our spiritual helplessness makes it impossible for us to mend the broken relationship with G-d. Having lost G-d’s favor, it is impossible for us to restore it.
 - iv) G-d is sovereign over all of creation and as such is not bound to us in any way. He was perfectly happy without us and would be perfectly happy without us again. We can only demand and expect justice and resulting condemnation.
 - v) G-d’s grace is dependent only on G-d and G-d alone. It is His sovereign right to bestow or withhold grace as he sees fit. If we receive grace from G-d it is entirely a gift from G-d to we who deserve only severity and destruction.
- c) Only then can we begin to understand and appreciate G-d’s grace.
 - i) Grace as the source for the pardon of sin.
 - ii) Grace as the motive of the plan of salvation.
 - iii) Grace as the guarantee of the preservation of believers.

8) G-d the Judge

- a) Scripture confirms over and over that G-d, and Yeshua, have the right and authority to judge mankind for their actions on earth
- b) What does it mean that G-d is Judge:
 - i) A judge is a person with authority
 - ii) The Judge is a person identified with what is good and right.
 - iii) The judge is a person of wisdom, to discern truth.
 - iv) The judge is a person of power, to execute sentence.
- c) References: Gen 18:25; Judges 11:27; Ps 75:7, 82:8; Heb 12:23

9) Wrathful G-d

- a) "Wrath" = a deep, intense anger and indignation.
- b) "Anger" = a stirring of resentful displeasure and strong antagonism, by a sense of injury or insult.
- c) "Indignation" = righteous anger aroused by injustice and corruptness.
- d) Understanding G-d's wrath.
 - i) "Wrath" is an attribute of G-d.
 - ii) Recognize the anthropomorphic language of Scripture – describing G-d in terms ordinarily used to describe man – but without implying any of the limitations imposed on man.
 - iii) G-d's wrath is not a loss of self-control, an outburst of temper, not irrational
 - iv) G-d's wrath is always judicial – a judge administering justice. Cruelty is always immoral but G-d's wrath is never cruel, it's the administration of justice. It's the sinner getting exactly what they deserve, no more and no less.
 - v) G-d's wrath is what men choose for themselves by retreating from G-d's open invitation to come to Him.
- e) References: 2 Thess 1:8ff; Rom 1:18, 2:5, 5:9, 12:19; 1 Thess 1:10, 2:16, 5:9; Rev 6:16f, 16:19; Luke 21:22-24

10) G-d's Goodness and Severity

- a) (Rom 11:22) "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of G-d,"
 - i) Both are attributes of G-d.
 - ii) Both appear alongside each other in the doctrine of grace.
 - iii) We are not to dwell on G-d's goodness alone, nor on His severity alone, but to always consider the two together. Both must be considered together if we are to truly know G-d.
- b) "Goodness" is admirable, attractive and praiseworthy. When we call G-d "good" we are thinking, in general terms, of all those moral qualities that move us to call him "merciful," "gracious," "generous," "perfect," and to speak of His "love."
- c) When the Scriptures speak of G-d's "severity" it literally means "cutting off." It refers to G-d's decisive withdrawal of His goodness from those who have refused or ignored it.
- d) Behind every display of divine goodness is the threat of severity in judgment if that goodness is refused or ignored.
- e) If we do not respond to G-d's goodness, we have only ourselves to blame when G-d turns against us in a judicial withdrawal of further enjoyment of His goodness and blessing to us.
- f) As is the height, width and breadth of G-d's goodness, mercy, grace, and love toward us, so is the magnitude of the severity of His anger, judgment, and wrath. (Take this seriously!)

11) Jealous G-d

- a) Jealousy in man is a vice, one of the most destructive there is.
- b) How can a vice in man be a positive attribute of G-d?
 - i) When the Bible speaks of G-d's jealousy it is an anthropomorphism – describing G-d in language drawn from the life of man, but without the limitations imposed on man.
 - (1) The vicious jealousy of man is an expression of an attitude that says, “I want what you've got, and I hate you because I haven't got it and you have.”
 - (2) G-d's jealousy is not a mixture of frustration, envy, and spite as man's often is.
 - (3) G-d's jealousy is a positive zeal to preserve something supremely precious. i.e. protect a love-relationship or avenge it when it's broken.
 - (4) G-d's sovereign purpose includes a covenant love-relationship with man and anything that threatens or breaks this covenant love-relationship is sure to trigger G-d's jealousy, followed by His anger and wrath.
 - (a) G-d's jealousy requires us to be jealous for G-d, and zealous in protecting our covenant love-relationship with Him.
 - (b) G-d's jealousy threatens those who are not jealous for Him, and our covenant love-relationship with Him.

**Now, let's get down off the bleachers and start walking down the road, to
Knowing G-d!**

1. **The Bible is a really good place to start.**
2. **Spend time with Him.**
3. **Take a look at what He has done.**
4. **Observe what He is doing.**
5. **Talk to Him.**
6. **Listen to Him.**