

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Bible study/Prayer Meeting

Date 7th December 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Ps/Hymn 7, 621 Read Jeremiah 24:7 Text Jeremiah 24:7

Series The Doctrine of God series (4) Title The Knowability Of God

As we commenced our study on the doctrine of God, we considered that scripture teaches in the beginning God.

God is the incomprehensible One.

That means no man can fully, or perfectly know everything there is to know about God.

But also, on the other hand God can be known and that knowledge of Him is absolutely necessary for salvation.

So, these two facts are interlinked, God is incomprehensible yet knowable.

The incomprehensibility of God, is taught by **Job 11:7**, "**Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?**" but also the truth that God is knowable, is taught by **Job 21:22** "**Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.**"

The Lord Jesus Christ said in **John 17:3** "...**that they might know Thee the only true God.**"

(The knowability of God teaches that God can be known but, but the incomprehensibility of God teaches that it is impossible for man to have a knowledge of Him that is exhaustive and perfect in every way.)

Man does not have a perfect and full knowledge of God in His Essence, Nature, and works.

No man can or will be able to claim I have figured out every little detail there is to know about who God is and how God works.

To have such a full or complete knowledge of God would be to fully comprehend Him or perfectly understand Him and that is just not possible for the finite or limited mind of man.

However, at the same time God has revealed Himself in scripture that man can know Him in redemption for the saving of their soul.

The knowability God is revealed in the passage before us in **Jeremiah 24:7** where the Lord says “...*I will give them a heart to know Me.*”

To know God in the sense in which Jeremiah writes is to know Him with regard to a personal saving knowledge of Him.

Because, God has revealed Himself, He is knowable, then it is only possible for God to become knowable on the basis of the self-revelation that He has made.

The word for ‘**know**’ means **to take in knowledge, to come to know, to recognise, to understand**. It highlights a relationship between the person knowing and the object that is known.

The heart that knows God personally has entered into a saving relationship with God.

Jeremiah brings this out, as the Lord’s ambassador, *And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God...*”

Also, in the NT we find the word **know** as used of God’s knowledge of His people and their knowledge of Him. **1 Cor 8: 3** – **“if any man love God, the same is known of Him.”**

Paul teaches that when a man loves God it is the proof that this man is known by God in terms of having a saving relationship with God.

Furthermore, the word **known** may be read, **has been caused to know**.

When a man loves God it confirms that this man has been brought to a true knowledge of God, and therefore, has been brought into this saving relationship with God.

We should notice the difference, that the reference is not knowing that there is a God, but rather to know God Himself.

This is the same truth expressed in the prayer of Christ in **John 17:3** where He states “...**And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God...**”.

The clear focus is upon the words “...**that they might know Thee the only True God.**” Christ teaches that knowing God is at the very foundation of obtaining and possessing eternal life.

It is not Knowing about God but to say as David, God is my Salvation, or as God says through Jeremiah “**a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God...**”

Knowing God as Saviour is a necessity for eternal life.

Also, the very last words of the **verse 7**, Jeremiah states to know God, is to know Him “**with their whole heart.**” The Lord is clear, it is not just a head knowledge that is in view but a heart knowledge of truly knowing God.

There are many who have information and knowledge about God. Their minds are well supplied with a stock of intellectual knowledge.

They read, they listen, they are well-taught; they are well-informed; and they know truth about God. They can quote Scripture and confessions, of the Church.

Yet they do not know God with their heart.

The knowledge in the head has never touched the heart.

We see this by the Words spoken in **Isaiah 29:13** and also quoted by our Lord in **Matthew 15:8** of the people in their days ***“This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”*** Clearly, Christ speaks of people who know about God but do not know Him.

This is the natural state of man, as Paul speaks in **1 Cor 1:12** as those who ***“knew not God...”*** That is they do not know God in a saving relationship with Him.

I may know that there is a King in England, and I may know information about the King of England, but I do not know him personally.

Therefore, one may know God is real, know about God, but not know Him personally.

Charles Spurgeon said ***“You may learn the doctrines of the Bible, but you do not know them truly till you know the God of the doctrines, you may understand the precepts in the letter of them, and the promises in their outward wording, but neither precept nor promise do you truly know until you know the God from whose lips they fell!”***

Therefore, those who truly know God, and trust in Him are saved.

The psalmist declares in **Psalm 9:10** ***“And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee.”***

To know the Lord's name is to know the Lord Himself, for His name stands for His person.

Then we can connect the thoughts to know God or knowing God truly is marked by trust in Him; and such trust leads to the enjoyment of His salvation.

Let us consider some thoughts about this great matter of the knowability of God in a saving sense.

I FIRST, THE SOURCE OF THE KNOWABILITY OF GOD

The source of knowing God is God Himself.

For None but the Creator can give a sinner a new heart. The Lord says “... ***I will give them an heart to know me, that I AM the LORD...***”

To know God in this personal, saving manner is by the Lord doing a work of grace in the sinner's heart. He is the source of eternal life.

When the Lord gives sinners a heart to know Him, it is known as regeneration, new life, a new nature.

A new principle of spiritual life is placed into the soul and as a result the sinner comes to know God.

It is the miracle of the new birth called regeneration that is in view.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 “***A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.***”

The miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration, new life, is the only way a sinner will ever come to know God.

The first and primary obstacle to man's knowledge of God lies in his affections! man's heart is set upon that which is evil.

The 'heart' in Scripture when used in a spiritual context refers to the affections, desires of man to love, to set his affections on a certain object.

But due to his fallen nature, the affections or the heart of man is set on wickedness, so the object of his affection is going to be evil also.

Sinful man has affections, desires for that which is the same as his own fallen nature.

This is why sinful men want a God who will not judge sin, but will turn a blind eye to sin and show favour based upon human works.

Jeremiah 17:9 ***"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"***

Man by the natural corruption of his own heart has no love for the God of purity and holiness.

Man's heart is filled with spiritual darkness. His heart is struck with spiritual blindness.

It lies in spiritual darkness, and therefore, is as a thick cloud covering the mind that he does not know his own Maker.

He loves that which suits his darkness in terms of evil deeds, thoughts, words, habits, pleasures.

Therefore, man dwelling in spiritual darkness of his own accord will never gravitate toward the light.

How essential then that the Lord gives sinners a heart to know Him, otherwise he will perish.

This was the point Christ made to Nicodemus in **John 3**. God's purpose is that sinners would be enlightened so that they will know Him as the One who saves in sin.

The heart of man is powerlessness of himself to know God until the Lord visits him and gives him a new heart spiritually, and new affections for that which is pleasing to God.

Paul stated Christ's purpose for coming into the world, **1 Timothy 1:15** ***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*** Sinners can only come to a saving knowledge of God through Christ.

Paul also reminded Timothy, **2 Tim 2:15** that there is ***one mediator...the man Christ Jesus***. Christ also underlines this truth of His mediatorial position when He said in **John 17:3** ***Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.***

He is the only one sent to be the Mediator, the Saviour of sinners. Fallen man without a mediator can only know God as Judge, as the One who dwells in light unapproachable.

Therefore, it is vital that sinful men know Him as Saviour, and receive Him personally.

I The Source.

II SECOND, THE SURENESS OF THE KNOWABILITY OF GOD

The sureness, the guarantee given to those who know Christ, is that they enter into covenant relationship with God and He enters into a relationship with them.

The Lord says, "***...I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God...***"

They become His people and He becomes, their God. He freely gives a new heart to whomever He wills, according to His own declaration, "***I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.***"

It is His promise and assurance that though man had sinned as he did, the Lord in grace and mercy stated in **Exodus 6:7**, "***I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God.***"

This sureness of knowing God personally is the language of the covenant of grace.

It is a covenant of grace, because it is a promise made to sinners that God has covenant, promised, in Christ that they shall be given hearts to know Him.

Without God's grace, no sinner could enjoy any covenant blessing!

Therefore, it is all of grace. **Jer 31:33** ***"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*** The same words are quoted in NT in **Heb 8:10**.

Isa 43:9 ***"I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away."*** The word **cast away** means **to reject to despise**, this is what He never do for all who trust and Know Him as Saviour.

The heart-knowledge promised in the covenant of grace enables the renewed heart to love God.

To know God is to love Him. The knowledge of God not only creates faith in the heart, but also creates good works. **1 John 2:3**, ***"Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments"***

wherever there is a knowledge of God, there must follow the keeping of His commandments out of love for Him.

It also causes renewed heart to praise Him, as Expressed by the Psalmist in **Ps 103:1** it ***"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."***

I The SOURCE, II The SURENESS.

III THIRD, THE SIGN OF THE KNOWABILITY OF GOD.

"for they shall return unto me with their whole heart."

The sign of knowing God, confirms restoration. The emphasis is on the heart once more.

Believing sinners have been given a heart that desires the Lord and fellowship with Him, so they return to Him from the ways of sin.

The sheep that had gone astray and tuned everyone to his own way, and lost in sin, have now been found by the good shepherd who came to seek and save, giving His sheep eternal life.

Once again noting the words of Christ in **John 17:3 *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*** Christ was sent to earth with a purpose to save sinners lost and ruined by fall, and restore them unto God to enjoy fellowship.

Therefore, God is only known through Jesus Christ, for no man comes unto the Father but by the Son.