

The Knowledge of God

Isaiah 46:9-10

INTRODUCTION

Good morning.

If you have your Bibles, and I pray that you do, would you please turn in them to several texts this morning.

The main text will be **Isaiah 46:9-10**.

Also, put a marker in **Hosea 1** and **Romans 10**.

While you are turning there...

Isn't it great being a Baptist?

Show & Tell

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a "show and tell" assignment of bringing something to represent their religious faith.

The first child got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Benjamin. I am Jewish and this is the Star of David."

The second child got up and said, "My name is Mary, I am Catholic, and this is a statue of the Madonna."

The third child got up and proudly proclaimed, "My name is Tommy and I am a Baptist and this is a casserole."

I pray you will be blessed from having been here this morning.

I heard about a preacher who, once he finished his sermon, was approached by a lady of the church.

This lady said, "Pastor, that was a very good sermon."

Humbled, but impressed, he said thank you and added, "But, I have to give all the credit to the Holy Spirit."

To which she quickly replied, "Well now, Pastor, it wasn't THAT good!"

Before I preach, let's pray and seek God's will.

I want to speak to you this morning on a theme that is dear to my heart, that is...

The Knowledge of God

If there is a theme which identifies my ministry more than any other it is the knowledge and the character and the sovereignty of God.

I am convinced that, if we are wrong in our understanding of the theology of God, then all of our other doctrines will have significant errors.

The knowledge of God is fundamental and foundational to all other beliefs.

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

Even though the church has had the Bible available in its present form for over 1600 years, there are still many people – unfortunately, many of them church members – who have little or no concept of what the Bible actually teaches about God.

They know what they believe about God, but when asked to explain why they believe it, they have great difficulty trying to justify their beliefs.

Some time back, I preached a sermon on the sovereignty of God.

After the service, a lady about my age who had been born and raised in a Baptist church, came up to me and said, “Pastor, I have been in church all my life. Before today, I have never heard anyone preach on the sovereignty of God.”

Look with me this morning at what God said about himself through his revelation to Isaiah, the prophet.

TEXT

Isaiah 46:9-10 *“...I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.’”*

I could go into a lengthy discussion and explanation about the meanings of the Hebrew words in this verse...

...but for our purposes here this morning, let me simply paraphrase what God is saying in this verse.

“I am God. There is no other God like me.

I not only know, but I determine how everything will end – including the events of this world and even those of your life.

I know the ending before the event – or your life – ever begins.

Before there ever was a sun to rise in the East, I am able to shine light upon everything – even on those things that had not yet been created or produced.

I am able to make visible all things even before they were capable of being seen.

There is purpose in everything that I do.

That purpose is so established and fixed through my perfect will that it will endure throughout all of eternity.

I will effectively accomplish everything in which I take pleasure and delight.

There is none who can prevent me.”

This is the God who created us, who saves us, and whom we serve.

Truths about God

If you listen to contemporary gospel music, you know that one of the more popular songs of the day describes God as “reckless.”

The word “reckless” means to be “utterly unconcerned about the consequences of some action; to be careless.”

All of Scripture contradicts such a thought about God.

Here is the danger...

False doctrine does not sound false. Its greatest danger is that it sounds like the truth and is appealing to our senses and reason.

Our text for today tells us that God determines the end before the beginning.

He does so with purpose and according to an eternal plan the He **will** accomplish and that cannot be thwarted.

As with everything else, God is perfect in caring and concern.

The problem is that too often we tend to think that God is like us...

...but God is nothing like us.

Let me share with you very quickly some of the characteristics of God.

God is **righteous**.

Psalms 145:17 *The Lord is righteous in all His ways... (HCSB)*

He does not choose to do what is right, because that would imply that He could choose to do what was wrong, which He cannot do.

Instead, what God does determines what is right, whether we agree with it or understand it or not.

Isaiah 45:19 *I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right."*

God is **eternal**.

Psalm 90:2 *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

1 Timothy 1:17 *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever.*

He has no beginning and no end.

There has never been a time when God did not exist just as He is today.

God is **immutable**.

He does not change – not even His mind.

Mal. 3:6 *I the LORD do not change...*

Num. 23:19 *God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.*

Circumstances do not affect His plans.

He never reacts to circumstances, because all that happens in the world is part of His unfolding eternal plan.

God is **spirit**.

John 4:24 *God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*

He has no body, no hands, no feet, no face, no mouth, no eyes or ears.

The Bible uses these anthropomorphic terms (meaning like man) to explain God, because we do not have the mental or spiritual ability to comprehend Him as He is.

God is **transcendent**.

That means that He exists apart from the creation.

Psalm 8:1 *LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.*

God is not limited by or controlled by time, space, or matter.

Therefore, I can hold all of God in my left hand and still have enough of God left over to hold all of Him in my right hand.

God is **immanent**.

He permeates and sustains all of creation.

Col. 1:17 *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

God could be – and in fact is – as close to you as the air that touches your skin...

...yet you will never know that He is there if He chooses not to reveal himself to you.

God is **omnipresent**.

He is capable of being everywhere in the Universe and in Heaven at the same moment.

Psalms 139:7 *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?*

God is **omnipotent**.

He is all-powerful.

You may have heard someone ask, “What would happen if an irresistible force met with an immovable object?”

The answer is...God!

God is **omniscient**.

He knows all things, and He has always known all things.

Psalms 147:5 *Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.*

God never learns anything because there is nothing for Him to learn.

God does not learn, because to learn means to change, and God is immutable.

God is **sovereign**.

He rules over all things and all people.

1 Chron. 29:11-12 *Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.*

Psalms 115:3 *Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.*

God **owns all things**.

Deut. 10:14 *Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.*

Psalm 24:1-2 *The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.*

God chooses the **leaders of nations**.

Dan. 4:17 *...the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.*

Jer. 27:5 *It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me.*

God is **personal**.

He has always known all that there is to know – and that includes you.

Psalm 139

1 *O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.*

13 *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

16 *You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

The reality is that we can never know God in all of His fullness. All that we know about God is limited to what He has revealed about Himself.

Yet even that is too much for most men to know or at least to care about knowing – even for Christians.

Illustration

I read a story about a Chinese man who traveled to England and discovered a beautiful microscope that he purchased and took back to China.

One of the first things he looked at through the microscope was a grain of rice.

As you know, rice is one of the most important elements of the Chinese diet.

When he looked at the grain of rice under the microscope, he was shocked to discover that there were tiny organisms living in the grain of rice.

Stressed over his discovery, he did the only thing he could think of to solve the issue – he destroyed the microscope.¹

Mankind, faced with the knowledge of a God who demands accountability from His creation and who holds out the prospect of certain judgment at the end of time, needed to do something to solve the problem of God.

Their choice was simply to reject God – to make Him irrelevant in their personal lives, their educational system, and their government.

We might expect that from a world deceived by Satan and living under the curse of sin.

But we should expect much greater things from the church – from those who claim to have a personal relationship with Almighty God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

In the church, we have perfect access to the full revelation of God in His written word – the Bible.

Yet, for the most part, we have chosen simply to ignore the truth about God.

We are satisfied with our traditions and with a shallow and limited knowledge of God that does not challenge our minds or cause us to have to give up our time and convenience to study and to learn.

CLOSING

Because a correct knowledge and appreciation of the power, the person, and the purpose of God are so important, as we close this morning, my prayer for this church is the same as the prayer that Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus in...

Eph. 1:17 *That God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. (NLT)*

For those of you here today who may not have an in-depth knowledge of God or who do not know how to go about gaining that knowledge, my prayer for you is based on what Paul declared to the people of Corinth (2 Cor. 4:6):

That God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would shine in your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

For it is only in knowing Christ that you can know the Father.

¹ My notes say this story came from Robert W. Lancaster, *The Fools of the Bible*, but I cannot find the reference again. A version of this story is included in a book by Skip Heitzig. *Godprint: Making Your Mark for Christ*. Bridge Logos Foundation, 2010, p. 55.