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Section: Doctrine of God

**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q6. How can we know about God?**

We can never fully understand all of God exhaustively, yet we can know God truly. We can know about God through His creation and His revelation. The holy Bible is the true and final source for our understanding of God and His will for His creation.

* **We can never fully understand all of God exhaustively**

**Romans 11:33** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

**Job 11:7-9** 7“Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? 8It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? 9Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.”

**Isaiah 55:8-9** 8For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

* **Yet we can know God truly**

“But the incomprehensibility of the Divine nature is not a reason why we should desist from reverent inquiry and prayerful strivings to apprehend what He has so graciously revealed of Himself in His Word. Because we are unable to acquire perfect knowledge, it would be folly to say we will therefore make no efforts to attain to any degree of it. It has been well said that, ‘Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued, investigation of the great subject of the Deity. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the science of Christ and Him crucified and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity.’” –AW Pink quoting CH Spurgeon

**Mark 12:29-30** 29Jesus answered, “The most important [commandment] is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’”

“full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Scriptures comes from the internal work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts. … the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for a saving understanding of what is revealed in the Word” –LBC 1689

* **We can only know God truly through Jesus, by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit**

**1 John 5:20**And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

**Luke 1:34** (KJV) Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

* + **How do we grow in this kind of knowing?**

**Jeremiah 9:24** (NKJV) “But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.

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

**Psalm 34:8**Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! …

**Jeremiah 4:22**“For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are ‘wise’—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.”

**Jeremiah 9:5-6** 5Everyone deceives his neighbor, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves committing iniquity. 6Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit, *they refuse to know me,* declares the Lord.

**Jeremiah 22:15-16** 15… Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. 16He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. *Is not this to know me?* declares the Lord.

**Colossians 1:9-10**9And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

**Hosea 6:6**For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

**1 John 2:3-6** 3And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

* **We can know about God through His creation and His revelation**

**General Revelation** refers to God’s revelation of Himself through creation, nature, and conscience. It goes out to all people generally and reveals the existence of God, His character, and His moral law.

**Romans 1:19-20** 19For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

**Romans 2:14-15** 14For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

“The light of nature and the works of creation and providence so clearly demonstrate the goodness, wisdom, and power of God that people are left without excuse; however, these demonstrations are **not** sufficient to give the knowledge of God and his will that is necessary for salvation.” –LBC 1689

**Romans 1:18-25** 18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

**Psalm 19:1-4**1The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,

**Special Revelation** is redemptive revelation. It culminates in the person and work of Christ. Special revelation comes through ordinary and extraordinary means. God spoke to people through dreams, visions, theophanies (burning bush, pillar of fire, cloud of smoke), prophets, apostles, and the Scriptures. The Scriptures are our final, ultimate, and only source of Special Revelation today.

**Hebrews 1:1-2** 1Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**Revelation 19:13** He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

* **The holy Bible is the true and final source for our understanding of God and His will for His creation**

“The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience…the Lord was pleased at different times and in various ways to reveal himself and to declare his will to his church. To preserve and propagate the truth better and to establish and comfort the church with greater certainty against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world, the Lord put this revelation completely in writing. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary. … The whole counsel of God concerning everything essential for his own glory and man’s salvation, faith, and life is either explicitly stated or by necessary inference contained in the Holy Scriptures.” –LBC 1689

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** 16All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**2 Peter 3:16-17** 16as he [Paul] does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 17You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

“Some things in Scripture are clearer than others, and some people understand the teachings more clearly than others. However, the things that must be known, believed, and obeyed for salvation are so clearly set forth and explained in one part of Scripture or another that both the educated and uneducated may achieve a sufficient understanding of them by properly using ordinary measures.” –LBC 1689