

## ARE WE ABLE TO KNOW GOD?

### C. Objectives (Value, a.k.a. Blessings) of this Study

#### C4. Blessing: Assurance

The knowledge we gain from God's word gives us assurance that He is in control of the past, the present, and always. For, God is eternal<sup>i</sup>. He is the beginning and the end<sup>ii</sup>. All things were created by him<sup>iii</sup>, and all things are sustained in him<sup>iv</sup>. Therefore, we can rely on the Lord, assured by his timeless character: his faithfulness, his integrity, his steadfastness, and his word. Even in Israel's hymnal we read, Psalms 119:89-90,

“Forever, O Lord, *Your word is settled in heaven.* <sup>90</sup>Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.”

For the establishment of our assurance, we have no need of a greater witness than the faithful One we are given when we first believed. The apostle John presents this argument in his letter, 1 John 5:9-10,

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. <sup>10</sup>*He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself*; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.”

Yet, can we believe the testimony and still have doubt? Is our faith so little that we do not have assurance, even in what we believe?

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<sup>i</sup> ROM 1:20, since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even *His eternal power and Godhead*, so that they are without excuse.

<sup>ii</sup> REV 1:7-8, Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. <sup>8</sup>"I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

<sup>iii</sup> ISA 44:24, Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, And He who formed you from the womb: "I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.

<sup>iv</sup> COL 1:15-17, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup>And He is before all things, and *in Him all things consist*.

If we of little faith seek evidence of God, we often fail in seeing the evidence placed before us, or even fail to acknowledge the evidence we hold! Why is this? We know that God delights in making and keeping His promises<sup>v</sup>. We have these promises before us as proof of God's commitments. Do we take to heart the things that we claim to know of God? For, we know that He is eternal<sup>vi</sup>. We even read in Hebrews 13:8-9,

*“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. <sup>9</sup>Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.”*

The problem, then, is our heart. For, *“the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked”*<sup>vii</sup>. As God plants the seed of faith within our hearts, so too, the adversary plants his seeds of doubt. As in the Garden of Eden, he tempted Eve first with doubt, *“Yea, hath God said?”*<sup>viii</sup> Indeed, our condition of weakening faith seems incurable, which would result in there being none who can be saved. Yet, Jesus assures us that even in this condition God is able and willing to save all who come to him<sup>ix</sup>. Realizing the hopelessness of our condition, the disciples' reaction is recorded in Mark 10:26-27,

*“they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?” <sup>27</sup>But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”*

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<sup>v</sup> 1KING 8:22-25, Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; <sup>23</sup>and he said: "Lord God of Israel, *there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts.* <sup>24</sup>"You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day. <sup>25</sup>"Therefore, Lord God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.'

<sup>vi</sup> PSM 9:7, *the Lord shall endure forever*; He has prepared His throne for judgment.

<sup>vii</sup> JER 17:9-10, *The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?* <sup>10</sup>, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

<sup>viii</sup> GEN 3:1 [KJV], Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, *Yea, hath God said*, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

<sup>ix</sup> ZEPH 3:17-18, The Lord your God in your midst, *The Mighty One, will save*; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. <sup>18</sup><sup>n1</sup> will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, Who are among you, To whom its reproach is a burden.

For, God has provided the way as He said that He would<sup>x</sup>. The lamb He provided was sacrificed, once and for all time<sup>xi</sup>, to cleanse all sinners of their unrighteousness. God has reconciled us to Himself<sup>xii</sup> by giving His only Son, Jesus, to die in our place, that we may live<sup>xiii</sup>; and, God raised him from the grave that we may live<sup>xiv</sup> forever! For, whosoever believes in him will not die<sup>xv</sup> the second death, which is described in Revelation chapter 20.

By the time that Jesus lived on earth, the Jewish leadership had received much evidence of God's plan of reconciliation: the entire Tanakh. So, the Jewish leadership should have known for sure that when the scepter was removed from Judah that Shiloh had come<sup>xvi</sup>. They should have known for sure where he was born<sup>xvii</sup>. They should have recognized for certain the herald who cried in the wilderness<sup>xviii</sup>, who paved the way for the one to come. They should have known for sure how he would present himself as Messiah the King, riding on the foal of a donkey<sup>xix</sup>. They should have known for sure the very day<sup>xx</sup> he would arrive! They should have known for sure the significance of the song that the people sang<sup>xxi</sup> at

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<sup>x</sup> GEN 22:7-8, Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup>And Abraham said, "My son, *God will provide for Himself the lamb* for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

<sup>xi</sup> HEB 9:28, *Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many*. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

<sup>xii</sup> COL 1:19-22, it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup>and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. <sup>21</sup>And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup>in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

<sup>xiii</sup> 2TIM 2:11, This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, *We shall also live with Him*.

<sup>xiv</sup> 1JON 5:12-13, He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup>These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, *that you may know that you have eternal life*, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

<sup>xv</sup> JOHN 3:16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*.

<sup>xvi</sup> GEN 49:10, *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people*.

<sup>xvii</sup> MIC 5:2, "But you, *Bethlehem Ephrathah*, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

<sup>xviii</sup> ISA 40:3, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God*.

<sup>xix</sup> ZECH 9:9, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, *Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey*.

<sup>xx</sup> DAN 9:25, Know therefore and understand, That *from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times*.

<sup>xxi</sup> PSM 118:24-26, This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. <sup>25</sup>Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. <sup>26</sup>*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.

his coming. They should have realized for certain that he would be cut off<sup>xxii</sup>, that is to be executed, but not for himself. They should have known for sure that he would give no defense, but remain silent and be slaughtered<sup>xxiii</sup>. They should have known for sure that he would be raised from the dead<sup>xxiv</sup>, even after three days and three nights in the belly of the earth<sup>xxv</sup>. They should have known for sure that he would sit at the right hand of the Father until all of his enemies were made his footstool<sup>xxvi</sup>. They should have known all of this for sure. We should be sure of all of this, and more. For, we, the church, have more evidence. More has been revealed to us. We have a greater revelation, thus a greater responsibility. For, we should know for sure all of that which the Jewish leadership failed to accept, and we should know much more! We should know Jesus.

The church should know her betrothed<sup>xxvii</sup>. For, we are to be married<sup>xxviii</sup> to the Son! Thus, we are to be made one<sup>xxix</sup>, together with him<sup>xxx</sup>. Of this, we can be sure! For, we can place our trust in him to fulfill Scripture and to keep his word! Even the disciples recognized this quality when Jesus visited them after his resurrection. For, the disciples confirmed to him in John 16:30,

*“Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.”*

Thus, our assurance does not derive from our reasoning minds, instead from the one who knows and sustains all things: Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

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<sup>xxii</sup> DAN 9:26, And after the sixty-two weeks *Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself*; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

<sup>xxiii</sup> ISA 53:7, He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet *He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter*, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

<sup>xxiv</sup> GEN 22:15-18, the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, <sup>16</sup>and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son <sup>17</sup> blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup>*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*, because you have obeyed My voice."

<sup>xxv</sup> JONA 1:17, the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish *three days and three nights*.

<sup>xxvi</sup> PSM 110:1, The Lord said to my Lord, "*Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.*"

<sup>xxvii</sup> HOS 2:19-20, "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy; <sup>20</sup>*I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know the Lord.*

<sup>xxviii</sup> REV 21:9, Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "*Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.*"

<sup>xxix</sup> MATH 19:4-6, He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup>and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and *the two shall become one flesh*'? <sup>6</sup>*So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.*"

<sup>xxx</sup> EPH 5:31-32, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning *Christ and the church*.

To clarify, however, our assurance does not come from knowing *about* Jesus. In fact, to know *of* him is not adequate enough to give us eternal security. For as the brother of Jesus points out in his letter, James 2:19,

“You believe that there is one God. You do well. *Even the demons believe – and tremble!*”

Our security is placed in our possession of a greater revelation, which affords us a greater devotion to the One who redeemed us to God<sup>xxxix</sup>. We should be eternally grateful of his sacrifice for us. For, Jesus gave his all that we may have all<sup>xxxix</sup>. For, we are offered a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our correct response to his grace and loving mercy should be a surrendered heart to his will and his lordship. Paul eloquently speaks of this in Romans 12:1,

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you *present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*”

As when a horse is broken and allows a rider upon its back, so our pride must be broken that Jesus may guide us in all righteousness, sanctifying us through various trials, and cleansing us by his word. The more of our lives are placed under the Lord’s control, the more assurance we are given that he is able to sanctify us, and present us to himself as “*a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*”<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Though we do not have infinite knowledge, we may have the faith to place our lives under the control of Him, whose understanding is infinite<sup>xxxiv</sup>. For,

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<sup>xxxix</sup> 1PET 1:17-19, if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; <sup>18</sup>knowing that *you were not redeemed with corruptible things*, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

<sup>xxxii</sup> ROM 8:32, He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also *freely give us all things?*

<sup>xxxiii</sup> EPH 5:27, *He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

<sup>xxxiv</sup> PSM 147:4-5, He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. <sup>5</sup>Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; *His understanding is infinite.*

knowing Him is eternal life<sup>xxxv</sup>; and in Him, our assurance exists. Through our reading, hearing, and keeping the prophecy of Revelation, our knowledge of Him will increase. Likewise, our blessing of assurance will increase as we study God's word together. We should be encouraged by Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:14,

*“you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.”*

Indeed, there is one teacher: the Christ<sup>xxxvi</sup>. So, as we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Him, we should be assured of who we are in Christ. As we read in Hebrews 10:22-23,

*“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful”*

In this passage, we see the progression: in which we draw near to God through a surrendered heart, thus, bringing us into assurance of Him and His word. He then increases our assurance, through sanctification and cleansing, and by producing the hope that we have in the Lord. Always remembering that He is able to fulfill all of His promises, and thus increase our assurance, for He is faithful.

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<sup>xxxv</sup> JOHN 17:3, *this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

<sup>xxxvi</sup> MATH 23:10, *do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.*