

Know God

by Chuck Smith

The most important thing for any man is to discover the true and living God, who is a compound unity and can be known through the Bible.

Scripture: Mark 12:29

Topics: "Knowing God", "Grace and Faith"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of knowing the true and living God, highlighting that the first commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He explains the concept of God's oneness as a compound unity, which is foundational to understanding His nature. Smith contrasts Christianity with other religions, asserting that Christianity is God's attempt to reach man through grace, rather than man's efforts to reach God. He encourages believers to recognize the Bible as God's revelation, supported by its prophetic nature, which confirms its divine origin. Ultimately, knowing God is presented as the most crucial aspect of faith.

Transcript

29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:29-31

Today's Reading:

Deuteronomy 13-15; Mark 12:28-44

Devotional by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa:

Which is the first commandment of all? (Mar 12:28)

Really, what is the most important thing? "First," being in order; not, "What is the very first commandment God gave?" The first commandment was, "Don't eat the tree in the middle of the garden." But, first in the order, that is the most important commandment of God. What is it?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord (Mar 12:29):

He goes back to Deuteronomy in what is known as the shema, the hear. It is that portion that the Jews roll up in these little boxes that they tie on their wrists. The boxes that they put on their foreheads; they all have this shema in it. "Hear, O' Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." It used to be in their feast days, when they would gather in the temple mount, that they would start chanting this. And it would build and build and build, as they would chant together, "Hear, O' Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." It is interesting to me that even in this declaration, the shema, the great commandment, the first, the primary commandment, that the word one..."the Lord our God is one Lord"...the word one is the Hebrew word echad, which is a compound unity. There is another Hebrew word for one, yechyd, which is an absolute unity.

Now, I have four fingers, but I have one hand. Now, on the one hand, there are the four fingers and the thumb. So you have one hand, but in it is a compound unity. There are better examples of compound unity. You have one egg, but it's composed of a shell, a white and the yoke. Yet, it's one egg; compound unity. "The two shall be one," speaking of marriage. Echad, one, there's two but they become one, the compound unity. So the Lord our God is echad, a compound unity, "is one Lord."

It is also interesting to me, and it's a baffler to the Jehovah Witnesses, that here and elsewhere in the New Testament the name Yahweh is translated into the Greek, Kurias, the title that was commonly given to Jesus Christ. Now if there was so much on the Jehovah Witnesses, and there's so much to that name, Jehovah, evidently Jesus and the New Testament writers didn't know that. Because instead of translating the name Jehovah, or Yahweh into Greek, they used the Greek word Kurias, which is the Greek word for Lord, which is the title that was given to Jesus Christ. And we read that God has given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Kurias, which is the translation from the Old Testament of Yahweh, or Yahovah. So, interesting problem that they have to wrestle with.

Jesus is saying, "The primary thing, the most important, the basic thing is that you must know the true and the living God. That's first: knowing the true and the living God. But with so many religions, how can you know who is the true God? This was my next step as I was building my own faith and relationship with God. And so, I studied for a time Mohammedism. I studied Buddhism, and I began to make a serious study of the Bible. If God does exist, and God did create me for a purpose, then it would be necessary for God to reveal Himself to man early in the history of man. And God would of necessity have to perpetuate that revelation to the present day. So I immediately rejected all of the religious systems of the past that have fallen by the wayside. I didn't bother to look into Greek mythology or Roman mythology, or these other religions that already are parts of the history of man but are not current today. Because that would be an emission that God wasn't capable of keeping the revelation to the present time, and that God wasn't interested in man today; He was only interested in the early man, and He doesn't care what happens to us today. I also rejected all of these new religions that are coming out in recent years. These men who finally have received the "true revelation" of God. It's been hid from all men up until now, until we are blessed by this prophet, who has now the true understanding of God, and he brings us this new light and this new way. I rejected all that because that immediately then dismisses all of those people that have been born and died up to the present time, as if God doesn't care about them or wasn't interested in them, but suddenly God is now interested in man. I couldn't buy that. It had to be a revelation of God that began early in the history of man and was maintained to the present day. And that's why I chose the three that I did.

But as I studied, the more I studied, the more I became convinced the Bible was indeed the revelation of God. And today I have no questions, no qualms, no doubts. That it is indeed the revelation of God to man, and it stands separate, apart, distinct, and in many cases, in opposition to the religious systems of man. For the religious systems are man's attempt to reach out to God, where Christianity is God's attempt to reach man. In the religious system, man being good enough to be accepted by God, in Christianity, there's no way man can be good enough to be accepted by God. He has to just trust in the grace of God. There's no good work that you can do. It is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by His grace alone. So rather than a system of works that can bring you to God, it bypasses all that and says, "There's nothing you can do to be worthy of God, you can only receive His grace, His love, His mercy that He extends to you through His Son Jesus Christ." God is reaching you; you can't reach Him.

And of course, as I read the Bible, I became fascinated with that prophetic aspect of the Bible, which the Bible itself declares is the built-in proof of its origin, that the Bible originates with God. "That you might know that I am God and there is none other like Me. I'm going to tell you things before they happen, so that when they happen you will know that I am indeed the Lord." Jesus said, "I've told you these things before they come to pass, so that when they come to pass you might believe." And so that prophetic element that we can even up until the present time read and know that God has spoken of the very days in which we now exist and has prophesied in advance things that we see in the world around us. The fact of the nation of Israel, whether or not the Arabs want to recognize it, they are there. God's word said they would be there. The Ten Nation European Federation, the movement that you read about all the time towards electronic funds transfers. And you're seeing the systems inaugurated in the stores when you go to these stores that are now using these scanning cash registers. God said, "I've told you in advance so that you might believe." And so, that built-in proof system. The most important thing for any man is to discover the true and living God. "Hear, O' Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." It's important that you know who God is.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/know-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net