

THAT'S MY KING

[Video: [That's My King](#)]

That video clip, which is now world famous, is the end of an hour-long sermon given by the extraordinary Missionary Baptist preacher, Dr. Shadrach Meshach Lockridge who passed away in 2000. Dr. Lockridge was pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in San Diego, but spoke around the world. Those words were spoken in Detroit in 1976.

Although the sermon is entitled "That's My King", it is known by the repeated question, "**DO YOU KNOW HIM?**" The inspired genius of the message is that Lockridge is presenting a deep knowledge of who Jesus is, even as he asks, "Do you know?"

"DO YOU KNOW HIM?" sounds like a simple question, but we're about to find out that it is anything but! And yet, your experience with God, your eternity hinges on how you understand (and honestly answer) this loaded question.

THE WORD FOR CHAPTER 2

Quick question: Last week, 1 John, chapter one, stated very clearly why John was writing these truths. Anyone remember why? "**So our joy may be complete**" (v. 4)

In chapter 2, in the middle of the chapter, John puts in endearing terms, WHO he is addressing and WHY. He speaks to all ages, and in summary, he says he is writing to you *dear children*:

1. Because your **sins are forgiven**
2. Because you have **overcome the wicked one**
3. Because you have **known Him**
4. Because you **know the Father**
5. Because you **have known Him**
6. Because you are strong; **God abides in you**
7. You have **overcome the wicked one**

There are a few themes here, but the Hebrew people used a **particular tool to really emphasize something**; it is repetition. The more they repeat, the more the emphasis.

Question: **What reason for the letter is emphasized most?** -You KNOW God. Scripture was written against the backdrop of its day. John is being very intentional about KNOWING; but why?

Let's step back to the big picture for a moment. Most of the **Apostle Paul's letters pushed back against legalistic Judaism**; Pharisee thinking, and to a point, the Greek influence.

John is pushing back against the onslaught of the Greco-Roman culture. By the time he's writing this, Jerusalem has fallen and he's living in the heart of the pagan culture in Ephesus. He has a daunting challenge on his hands! When **Dr. Lockridge used the word "know", he knew he had to qualify** the word; but his challenge was *nothing* near what John faced! The Greeks took the concept of "knowledge" very seriously, and in different ways. When John used the word, he had to be very clear.

So, **what was the cultural stream John was swimming against?**

When Rome conquered Greece, they didn't destroy their culture, but rather, assimilated it. They put their own twist on Greek philosophy and religion, but for the most part, they adopted it as their own. *Greek thought* became *Roman thought*, and of course, Roman thought became the basis of how the western world thinks, even to this day! So, what did "KNOW" mean in John's world? *Let's start some 5 centuries before John...*

The Classical Age of Greek Thought~

We're back in the days of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates. To "KNOW" was a process of **sheer intellect**. For example; there was a conversation between Socrates and a young student. Socrates asked, "*Do you know, or are you guessing?*" The young man responded, "*I'm guessing.*"

"Very well", said Socrates, "*when you are done with guessing and know, shall we talk then?*"

Guessing wasn't good enough; ***the element of FAITH wouldn't even enter the equation!*** Everything must be deduced by human intellect and reasoning; even ***religion***.

Now- There is certainly an important place for reason, but when religion becomes only intellectual; just a series of problems and solutions like mathematics; a strange thing happens. As the scholar Barclay puts it, "***It becomes intellectual satisfaction and not moral action.***"

What happens is, that type of religion might produce **smart** men and women, but not particularly **good** men or women. For example, *Socrates referred to a singular God and being guided by an inner divine voice; yet he had no problem with sexual promiscuity, even in the same gender.*

If "intellect=knowledge" was an issue in ancient Greece, consider our day! We live in the "Information Age." Imagine what Plato or Socrates would achieve with Google!

Perhaps it's not so surprising that we find *this* in prophecy; both in Daniel and echoed some 6 centuries later in John's Revelation:

“But you, Daniel, close up these words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will dash about, and knowledge will increase.” (Dan. 12:4 NET) *(Except in John's time, he was now to unseal the book! Rev. 22:10)*

It seems every generation has to learn this for themselves; ***knowledge makes one more informed; but "informed" doesn't necessary translate to goodness.*** You can become more knowledgeable about *good*, or know more about *evil*.

For the sake of balance, please note that ***ignorance*** is just as deadly. Mike Anderson shared a great insight at the Wednesday study; he ***linked the words "ignorance" and "pride."*** It is amazing how proud people can be when they *know so little* that they don't even realize *how little they know*. Churches have way too many people who are spiritually clueless! But they take great pride in their **tradition** of church.

There's a reason that Jesus warned:

Matthew 7

(NIV) ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The Greeks needed to realize, just as we do: To know OF God is not the same as; to KNOW God. Let's move forward in time...

To "KNOW" in 95 A.D.~

By the time of Christ, the Greek culture had moved on to the *social phenomenon of "secret knowledge" and "mystery religions."* More like sorcery, it seems, if you knew the right things (secret things) you could enter into the experience of the heavenly realm. In pagan Greece, it played out like this: They would have different forms of "*passion plays*." The idea was for the individual to work themselves up to an intense pitch of expectation and emotional sensitivity before the passion play; perhaps through some ascetic discipline like denying one's self sleep or food or beating their bodies.

Then came the night of the performance. As Barclay describes it, "**Everything was designed to heighten the emotional atmosphere. There was cunning lighting; sensuous music; perfumed incense; a marvelous liturgy. In this atmosphere the story was played out.**"

Then the play would be about some god or another who lived, suffered terribly, and died a cruel death, and possibly rose again. The worshipper in the audience would so deeply identify with the experiences of the god that he or she would cry out to the god, "*I am YOU, and YOU are me!*" They'd share in the suffering, victory, and thus, the immortality of the particular god.

It was all carefully crafted emotion. It gave a tremendous personal experience, but it was all carefully fabricated emotion. *The problem with something that is fueled by emotion is; emotions are temporary.* Emotions often don't stand up to the light of reality; even the deepest and most sincere ones.

It's little wonder that the Greek churches in Paul's day had such an imbalanced desire for the gift of tongues. It played right into the whole concept of "mystery religions." But to stay in balance; Paul didn't refute the gift, he claimed it himself. But to pursue it like a pagan after a passion play was wrong. *Cold intellectualism is wrong, but so is hot emotionalism.* Once again, let me borrow from the scholar, Barclay. "*This was not so much knowing God as feeling God.*" It was to escape everyday life in an abnormal experience.

Paul reasoned with Greek believers:

1 Corinthians 14

(NIV) ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in [an unknown] tongue.

²⁰ Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children.

Then there is...

The Jewish way of knowing God~

You cannot *reason* your way to God; you cannot *excite* your way into God's presence. *God must reveal God.* But here's the thing; God is holy, and to have God revealed brought the obligation to be holy as well. Therefore, it is impossible to "know" God without the ethical obligation to be Godly. Despite

the fact that ancient Judaism became mired in legalism, they were absolutely right on this account! This is a basic foundation on which a living relationship on Christ is built.

Intellectualism will say “I KNOW God”, but it has *no accountability*, and no transformation.

Emotionalism will say “I KNOW God”, but isn't based in reality and there's no permanence.

Although we have no affinity with this particular church, it is amazing how well it fits the church community here and now. This is from an article, "[Can Congregationalists Join Hands: A Thought For 1920](#)", published in *The New England Magazine*.

The Trinitarian Congregationalist is a *worshipper* of Christ; the Unitarian Congregationalist is a *disciple* of Jesus, who seeks to *follow*, but does not *worship* his master. The Trinitarian Congregationalist finds the worship of the Unitarian Church coldly intellectual. There is to him, something missing in it. At times his deepest religious sensibilities are shocked. He does not always know the source of his discontent, but he is none the less discontented. He leaves feeling that he has been given "stones for bread." The Unitarian Congregationalist finds the worship of the Trinitarian Church deeply tinged with superstition. It seems to him to be unreasoning and emotional. He is shocked by absence of the keen, incisive ethical note so dominant in his own church. He departs unhelped and uninspired. Until we see clearly that which is sacred, that which is lovely, that which is Christian, in both of these types of worship, there is little hope of an ultimate reconciliation...

Right in our own church, I had someone a number of years ago, ***talking about "anointed preaching."*** I was curious, I asked "How do you know it was anointed." -Basically, it came down to how emotional the preacher became, and very little else. And there are also a number of well-trained churches that just like 1920, serve "stones for bread."

CONTINUING STRUGGLE

Absolutely amazing, isn't it?! ***Two thousand years later, and we still struggle much like the Greeks. We still struggle with the question, "Do you KNOW Him?"***

If we put together what John has told us so far; ***we may not KNOW GOD as much as we think we do;*** and even sadder, as much as God is inviting us to know. And how we truly know God is directly linked to our JOY!

The take-away is this: **IF YOU KNOW, IT WILL SHOW.** There is certainly an intellectual aspect to knowing God. *How can you know someone smart enough to create the universe and not have some smarts rub off!* There is an emotional element to knowing God. *If we can be exposed to ultimate and perfect love and not be moved, there is something really wrong!* But John says to truly know God is not in facts or emotion, but being IN Him, and Him in you. If we are saturated with God, it can't help but show. You act, react, desire, see, and think like God. Not perfectly, but even so; it has to show. ...It's a simple question that's not so simple, but the answer will prove or disprove itself in ***what shows... DO YOU KNOW HIM? ...IS THAT WHAT'S SHOWING?***