

Do you know God?

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[0 : 00] So, Deuteronomy 7 and 8. Do we know our God? You know, there's many repetitions of this phrase.

! Chapter 7, verse 1. 24 times.

So, what Moses was trying to say to the people before they entered the promised land, do we know our God?

I'm sure, I mean, for us all, we've been in church from ever since we were little. Of course I know my God, you know. But somehow, we need to ask ourselves again, do we really know our God? Right? It's a website called student.com. It was this lady called Marilyn Adamson. He was an atheist.

[1 : 11] But he, the Lord found her, and she, you know, with all her might, all the wisdom and experiences that she had, she tried to reach out to students to know God.

So, in one of the pages in her website, she posted some of these things. It says, different religions have different gods. Okay? The Hindus, they, everything's God.

Pantheistic, you know, many gods, right? But then, you, they believe in karma, reincarnation. There's things that you cannot control, right?

There's, everything is God, but they have no, you don't have confidence in them. Right? And for New Age, I'm not sure if people got in, you know, with these New Age movements, and they say, you can ultimately become God if you, you know, do your best.

Right? And Islam, they believe in one God, monotheistic, just like Christianity, Judaism, you know, one God. But, but their religion that God is somehow up there, you have to please him, you have to, you have to have five religious practices, and you do this, and you know, one of them, you know, have to pray towards the East five times a day, right?

[2 : 35] And you have to do this, do that, in order to please him. And Buddhism, they actually don't have no gods. They don't, they don't believe God existed. Buddha was trying to, to, to seek a path to the perfection, you know.

But Christianity, if you even, even just look at the symbols, it, it really, it, it, it kind of manifests something. Like, it's God reaching down, right?

And we, we can respond to God. And this is, this is exactly what both Moses have said, what, what a God is like, okay?

In the two chapters, it's, it's, it's repeated, you know, as Moses has always been. But because he has so, so, yeah, just have these young generation in his heart, he really, really want the best for them.

So he, he repeated himself, reminded the new, the young Israelites of Yahweh, his, what the God was like, and what, what was his request upon the new generation.

[3 : 45] And for us today, I believe this, this text would remind us again. If we want to have godly behavior and that acceptable, our deeds in life to God, we need to have proper and accurate belief in him.

I always say, you must, if you have, if you, you need to have the right conduct, you must have the right concept. Right?

When we have the right concept, we don't necessarily produce right conduct. But if we do not have the right concept, we will go anywhere. So we need to know our God.

May this passage here today help us to know our God. Okay? And we, okay with the PowerPoint? Can I, can you push the next PowerPoint? Yeah, there are four, there are four things about God today we need to know. Yep.

[5 : 01] Oops. It's not, it's not under my control. Okay. All right. There are four things. One, the holiness of God. Okay.

Second, the faithfulness of God. Third, the mightiness of God. And fourth, the graciousness of God. This, this is our God. Do we know our God?

Okay. So, firstly, God is holy. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the people of the face, on the face of the earth, to be his people, his treasured possession.

Now, this is the text of the month for us. All right. And, look at it. It's in the sixth verse in the chapter. But prior to the, to verse six, there were five verses.

All right. It was, it was drastic actions. Pretty, pretty, you know, drastic, you know.

[6 : 13] To smite the seven nations. When you enter into the promised land. Pull down their altars, their poles, their idols. Very drastic actions.

Do not mingle with them. Do not let your daughters marry their men. Do not get, have your sons marry their women.

Complete cut off. Now, this is hard to understand. Okay. Understand. Um, God is holy. Okay. We need to, we need to be, we need to be, beware we get contaminated by sins.

Okay. We, we, we, we know that. By the way, actually, do we know, do we actually perceive, or do we actually grasp the, the meaning of holiness of God?

You know, we sung the song, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. And Sunday morning, we sing it every Sunday. But I, I must admit, at times, I'm very guilty.

[7 : 16] Actually, I just sung with my lips. I never, in my heart, you know, to really comprehend, or to, to really put in my heart to, to, when I sung.

The original word, kadosh. It, it was, actually, what Isaiah, in his temple, when he was serving as a priest.

Surely, he served as a priest. He enters into the holy and the holies, right? And, and suddenly, the Lord appeared to him. And his reaction was?

Holy, holy, holy. Lord God Almighty. I've seen God. And, and suddenly realized he was a sinful person.

I'm a man of unclean lips. I live among the people of unclean lips. And now I see the Lord God Almighty. I'm done.

[8 : 18] I'm roasted. I, I die. I, I'm dead. You know? And this kind of, this kind of awe, when we come to the holy God.

I think in the 21st century, we're very hard to, I mean, we're so individualistic. And we say we, we need to respect one another, right? And, but we don't respect the holy God.

This is our problem. You know, we should respect other religions. We respect everybody doing their own things. You know? You don't have to do it, but you don't mind. Mind your own business. Why go tell them about their sins, right?

And here, why smite all these seven nations? Mind your own business. But do we actually mind God's business? God is holy.

And in him, there is no sin. There is no, nothing sinful, evil should be in his sight. Now, I think a couple of weeks ago, when Pastor Barry was sharing about this, yeah, arrival, when you arrive in New Zealand, all right?

[9 : 30] You have to declare, right? Nothing that brought into New Zealand that will, that will harm the clean, green New Zealand, right? Nothing, no raw meat, no fruits, nothing, you know, right?

And I think it was last week sometimes, when you read social media, they found one scorpion in Auckland, in one of the households.

Was that Manarillo or something? Yeah. And I would say, goodness gracious me, there's only one scorpion in the whole of New Zealand.

Why such a big fuss? I mean, our friends just even up in Fiji. I think they kind of somewhat hitchhiked into one of the luggages and came to New Zealand, right?

I mean, they live with scorpions. They sleep with insects. You know, they have their mouth open, the cockroaches just claw into the mouth.

[10 : 37] And you spit it out when you wake up, right? And this is absolutely normal for these people and our friends in Southeast Asia and the islands, right?

But if you allow one of these things enter into green, clean New Zealand, we're done.

That's why our immigration and our government is so tough on these, right?
And Ebola. Even there are countries climbing down on travel from people from Central Africa.
Why? Because we cannot allow these viruses to come to keep us safe. Now, this is something I think it could illustrate. I mean, no illustration is perfect, right?

[11 : 34] But it might just illustrate to us the holiness of God. And that's why God's people should not contaminate, play with sin.

Do every effort to cut off from sin and its traps. I know you're talking about, still, I haven't answered the question about why you need to smite all these seven nations.

Is it a universal rule? God's people always has the privilege and the green light to go and smite others? And please, do not use this as a present, a contemporary situation today.

The people of Israel can just go do anything and just cut down others. Now, I believe it's not just the people of Israel had the rights to do that.

It's actually God's standard. Even with Israel, they themselves commit sin. God has no mercy upon them.

[12 : 46] This is God's holiness. Nothing to do with sin. And for us today, I think, if we believe, if we truly hold to the holiness of God, we need to examine ourselves.

Are there any sins in us we play around with? And, you know, the little awareness that we have, it could one day destroy our faith.

You know, often these people stuck with alcohol, gambling problems. They only started with little bits, little things.

And before they knew, they were bound. They lost families. They lost all of their possessions.

Right? Problem, gambling.

Alcohol. Or anything. Holy. God is holy. Secondly, actually, I correct myself here.

[13 : 49] It's not covenant. It should be graciousness of God. Yeah. No, faithfulness of God, actually. I had the first PowerPoint, right? But I haven't corrected this.

It should be the faithfulness of God. Verses 7 to 16. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more than, more numerous than other people.

Now, chosenness. The chosen people of God. Israel has chosen people of God. God has deliberately chosen them.

Not because of how good the Israelites were, or how many they had, or how superior compared to other people around.

It was because, in verse 8, it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors.

[14 : 52] That was his faithfulness. It was out of his deliberate choice. So, people, we are not that good.

We are not, you know, when God looked at us, oh, look at how lovely the people are. I can't just help myself just fall in love with you.

No. It is out of his love that he would choose us. And, with the oath he swore to the ancestors.

And, later on, he said that covenant that he said he has set and made with the people of Israel.

Israel. And, during those times, there was a lot of these treaties in the ancient Near East.

It's called the Suzerain Vessel Treaty. It was a treaty between two countries. When they enter into battles, wars, one will win, the other will lose.

[15 : 56] So, the Suzerain, that is the one, the king who has won the battle. He would impose a treaty onto the one who lost.

Okay? And, it will, there will be stipulations and, and, things will be listed out in that treaty. It will be like a preamble why this treaty was made, this, have this now.

And, historical prologue, the battle between the two countries and how it ended. And then, general stipulations, specific stipulations, like, you should only be loyal to me.

You cannot, apart from me, you cannot serve any other countries, any other kings apart from me.

And then, the specific things, like, annually, how much you need to contribute, how much tax you need to pay, how your children, how they need to serve our country.

And then, blessings and curses. If you do this, you'll be, you'll be kept safe. You do not, we'll just run over your country. And, there are witnesses. Alright?

[17 : 10] These were the treaties at the time. Very common treaties. Now, the book of Deuteronomy was written in this format.

Israel was chosen by God. God, the suzerain king, has mercy, enter into this covenant with people of, people of Israel.

And God kept his oath. God kept his faithfulness. And, that's why Israel, Israel, they would know, understand well.

And, all they had to do is to, just to keep what the Lord has commanded. Right? And, God is faithful and we need to be faithful in our responses to him.

Alright? Now, you might say, people, why would God choose Israel? You know, why, what about those who do not believe?

[18 : 23] Has God not chosen them? Right? And, certainly, there, you know, some, some, some, some circles, some people in our, in, in, in, in, Christian, churches, they say, oh, if you, if they, they're not, they're not Christian, they do not believe because God has not chosen them.

You know, there are some people who stress very extreme views on that. But, that, running a little bit of problem with me, for me, does God really, really would not allow them to be saved?

Does, are they destined to be destruction, destroyed? No, I don't think so. Because, 2nd, 2nd Timothy said, God wants all people, every people to be saved.

The reason they do not, they are not saved, at the end, they do not want to believe. Maybe, it's not God destined them to, to be lost.

Maybe, somehow, they had a choice. Like, for this example, again, no perfect illustration, okay?

Say, if we go from Auckland to Rotorua, I think there, maybe, you choose, you know, today, you go through Highway 1, or you go, can go to Highway 2, and then 27, or another way, okay?

[19 : 54] But, at least, you know, you're heading down south. And, maybe, if you drive safe, slower, three and a half hours, you get to Rotorua, right?

Very safe. But, if you decide, look, it's only early in the morning, I mean, we don't, we don't need to get to Rotorua that early, the Airbnb will not be checked in by three o'clock.

So, I would just head west, okay? And then, I would just stay around, and drive around, and then, at the end, oh, look, I might just want to pay a visit to Coromandel, and have a coffee there, and somehow, and then you don't know what happened in your journey.

Sometimes, you know, things happen, and suddenly, you know, oh, the road is flooded, and it's closed, and you just cannot come back, from Coromandel, and you're stuck there, and with no, no gas, and you just cannot head down to Rotorua.

You see what I mean? God has destined us all to be saved, but, somehow, in our own desires, I might just want to play around a bit, and somehow, we found out too late, we lost.

[21 : 23] But if we're willing to follow, even though I don't, I'm horrible with my directions, but I'm still just pointing, heading down south, somehow, even three or four hours later, I can still get down there, right?

So, yeah, God is faithful, but how are we going to respond to God's faithfulness? Even though we have believed, I think we still need to follow, right?

God is faithful, but we need to be faithful to him as well. Thirdly, mighty, almighty God.

Verse 17, now, you may say to yourselves, these nations are stronger than we are, how can we drive them up? You know, look at these people, look at those big guys, and in chapter 4, they describe the beds was huge, it's king size, you know, it's more than our king size beds, larger than our king size beds, super, huge king size, look at these giants, how can we overcome them?

But Moses reminded them, hey, do not be afraid of them, remember, remember, I think the antidote for fear is to remember, remember something, remember what?

[22 : 49] Remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt. You saw with your own eyes the great trials, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm that God has brought you through.

That's why for Israelites in the Old Testament many, many times in the first five books, well, Exodus afterwards, and then Psalms, and then the prophets, many, many mentioning about Exodus because that is the beginning of the nation.

That is how God brought them out from Egypt with ten plagues to Pharaoh and ultimately he complied and let the Israelites come out.

But when he out of Egypt, there was many, many trials and God did many other signs and wonders crossing the Red Sea. It was pillars in the day and fire in the night.

It was manna. water. Many signs and wonders to brought the Israelites to where they were. Right? So for us, I think as we remember the mightiness of God, I'm sure we all have experienced in our past and maybe now at present many battles, many giants, these giants much more than I can handle.

[24 : 30] How can I defeat them? God, how can I defeat them? But somehow, somehow, if we remember, the Lord has helped us to just took down those giants in the past to bring us to where we are today.

Haven't we? Vincent, haven't you experienced Jennifer? I'm sure we have. Ringo, right? Pastor William? And maybe we're still battling with giants at the moment.

You know, it's interesting, the Lord has not just removed those giants. We still have to battle. Because if we don't battle, we will never experience the power of God.

If we just wake up in the morning, oh, the giant's all dead. God, I mean, there is no faith experiences, right? And we had to fight. You know, how can I do that, Lord?

But we thought, go ahead, go ahead. Oh, one down. Oh, oh, oh. And we can battle with God, and we can experience the power of God.

[25 : 40] And that's why Paul said, when he wrote to the Romans, and he mentioned every trial is all the problems in life.

At the end, he said, we are more than conquerors, right? And Romans 8, 37, different translations, overwhelming victories is ours through Christ who loves us.

And NIV translates, I like it better, we're more than conquerors. Nothing can conquer us, because we have the power of God in us. Don't mind how big, how many giants that confront me.

Even young people, I don't know what the giants for you at the moment, maybe a teacher with endless essays, or those ridiculous demands, right?

But we can't overcome. We can't overcome. Some battle with sicknesses, the families, financial issues.

[26 : 53] As a young guy, kept finding, trying to get a job, he's been battling with that recently. One interview, no, respond, rejected three times.

God, he's going to me. He said, I've been battling all these months, and I've been just praying to God, God, give me this, give me this, and I just realized that I haven't trusted God enough.

And he said, yesterday when he went out for exercise, he prayed to God, Lord, I'm just stuck in this interviews and job seeking, but I'm going to give totally to you today.

Speak to me. And he came up to me after the sermon last night, he said, that is what God said to me. Praise God, it's not me, it's his word.

Sometimes you just need to trust the power of God, even though the giants are still there. But eventually, when we look at the cross, we're more than conquerors.

[28 : 06] Right? Nothing in this world can separate us from the love of God. Need to trust that. Lastly, he is a gracious God.

He is a gracious God. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you. This is a very affectionate father-son relationship that was in a time when the Israelites were all understood.

Surely today as well, parent-children relationship, one of the closest. Of course, men, husband and wives should be the closest, but parents, children, is one relationship that really, really reflect the love of God to us.

Right? God allowed them 40 years of wilderness wandering, and you might think, who on earth want to live in the wilderness, in desert?

I mean, there is no security, right? Heat of the day, coldness of the night, and different seasons, dryness, and there's wild beasts, there's animals, there's no fences, no fortresses to protect you, you're in the open, right?

[29 : 49] But 40 years, 40 years of God's provision, 40 years of God's protection, sometimes, I believe, we do need to have these sort of wilderness experiences to help us to trust in God.

Now, imagine, in the wilderness, you really have to trust, you can't plant, you can't grow, there's no animals to take, yeah, there's nothing, all right?

So, every day you wake up and God gave manna. Imagine, 40 years, same stuff.

40 years, you go KFC. How would you like that? Right?

No matter whether you want chicken wings, chicken drums, breasts, still chicken, all right? 40 years. But, look, 40 years, same diet.

[31 : 12] what the Bible said? Your feet not swollen. I don't know, I'm not a dietician, you know? You must have lack of a lot of vitamins and other that, but you're okay.

If you have the same stuff all over again, all the time, I mean, your heart will have problems, your lung will have problems, your kidney will have problems, all right? But God kept them.

And 40 years, your clothes are not torn. So, ladies, don't need to shopping.

It's okay. It won't go out of train. You say to your husband, honey, can we have a new dress? No, it looks perfectly fine to me.

There's no, nothing, it's not torn, it's very good. Look at them. They owe everyone. Everybody wore the same. It won't go out of fashion, right?

[32 : 18] And 40 years. Now, the problem is, when they enter into the promised land, there, the temptation starts.

land. And when you go out to the land, into the land, be careful, lest you forget, and your heart will be proud, and you forget what the Lord, your God, has done for you when he brought you out of Egypt.

I remember during my wilderness days, I was in, you know, I had no income, right? And I was studying three years in lay law, and you just really have to rely upon the Lord.

And we used to, in those days, I'm not sure if you know what they call the pigeon holes. Anybody know what pigeon holes are? Right? For younger ones, what is that? It's not where they, not pigeon where they sleep or, you know, poo.

It's pigeon holes is where you get the mails, letters. And every day I'll get up there and try to see, oh, was anybody sending me a letter? But now and again, you see a chocolate there, and your heart just warmed.

[33 : 39] And then sometimes, there's a letter from overseas, but there are times, you open the envelopes, there were money in there. And that was just the time that I needed.

I did not have enough money to buy petrol to come back, because I was living in campus. I had to come back to, I went to Hill. It would just take that to get me home for the weekend.

How did God know it? Right? That's the wilderness experiences, and that's what we need at times, to remind ourselves that we are vulnerable, we do need God.

But the problem is when we have our income, when we have established our family, when we have bought a house, a car, and then everything become mine.

I have my freedom to do, look, God, I've already given you a Sunday, I've already given you the tenth of my offerings, now the rest is mine.

[34 : 42] That is the warning for Moses, for the people, lest we forget and we become proud. So, brothers and sisters, let us learn, and let us remind ourselves who the God that we believe.

Do we truly know him? If we truly know him and acknowledge him and honor him, I believe there are many things in our lives, in our conducts, in our behaviors, will be different.

Let's holy God, holy God, faithful God, mighty God, gracious God.

Let us pray. Father God, just thank you, Lord. Thank you for who you are. God, yeah, we will never fully comprehend of your wonderful, awesome attributes, but may the Holy Spirit lead us into old truth and guide our hearts to respond to you, to follow you.

thank you, Jesus. Thank you. In your mighty name, we pray. Amen. Amen.