

Tishrei Bible Studies

Knowing God

How to use this Study Guide

This study is all about knowing God. There is a difference between knowing about Him and knowing Him. Knowing *about* Him is a theoretical thing and can be done at a distance. We can know facts about God and still not know Him personally. Knowing Him, as He intends us to know Him, involves building a personal relationship. Through Jesus we are invited to a relationship more intimate than between a human father and his child. It is more pure and intimate even than the relationship between a husband and wife. Getting to know Him is like an immersion process.

As you use this study guide, pray that you will be drawn closer into God's presence, abiding in His Spirit, more and more. Pray and expect this to happen for you. Each of the themes for study should be taken in this way, as we build an understanding step by step. The study guide introduces points for meditation and should be studied prayerfully. Ask God to draw near and bring inspiration as you study these themes,

and see if you are led by the Holy Spirit in unique and special ways.

This study can be done alone or in a group. If you study alone, expect God to lead you personally through the studies. If you study in a group you should be sensitive to the leading of God both individually and for the whole group. Be sensitive to one another and join together in a prayerful approach.

As you progress through the studies you should expect to understand how to know God better and also grow in your experience of knowing Him. Ultimately this is a total immersion in the Spirit of God. See how far God takes you in this as we study together.

The study may take a short time or a long time. Proceed at the pace most suited to you. You are studying the most important thing that can be studied. For us to know God personally as Father and Friend, in deep reverence yet in profound intimacy, is the chief goal of every person on the face of the earth. The central reason that Jesus went to the Cross was to make this possible for us.



What does it mean “to know”?

The Hebrew word “to know” is *yada*. It is a word that occurs more than a thousand times in the Bible. The first use of the word is in Genesis 3:5:

For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

These are the words of Satan to Adam and Eve. He was tempting them to do what God had commanded them not to do. He spoke of God’s knowledge of them and how they might have knowledge like God. Until this point their relationship with God was on a simple level of trust and obedience which led to an experience of God’s blessing and friendship. After this point they would have experience of other things that God intended should be hidden from them. From this early Bible reference we see that the word *know* involves an experience of something – in the case of Adam and Eve, an experience of good and evil. We will see that the word is also applied to knowing God, as God knows us, and that this is the experience that was intended for us from the beginning.

Before considering how the words *know* and *knowledge* apply to our relationship with God we need to consider the meaning of the word a little more. In our modern world we deal with a lot of knowledge. In our education systems we must remember facts and information. This is the simplest idea of knowledge, but the Bible deals with knowledge at a deeper level. For example, it is a word that is used to describe the intimate relationship between a man and his wife. We find this first in Genesis 4:1:

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain...

Adam and Eve may have considered that the knowledge of good and evil offered by Satan was just “head knowledge”. However, we know by experience that, since the fall, men and women have *done and experienced* good things and *done and experienced* evil things, not just thought about them.

- **Knowledge implies involvement, relationship and experience.**

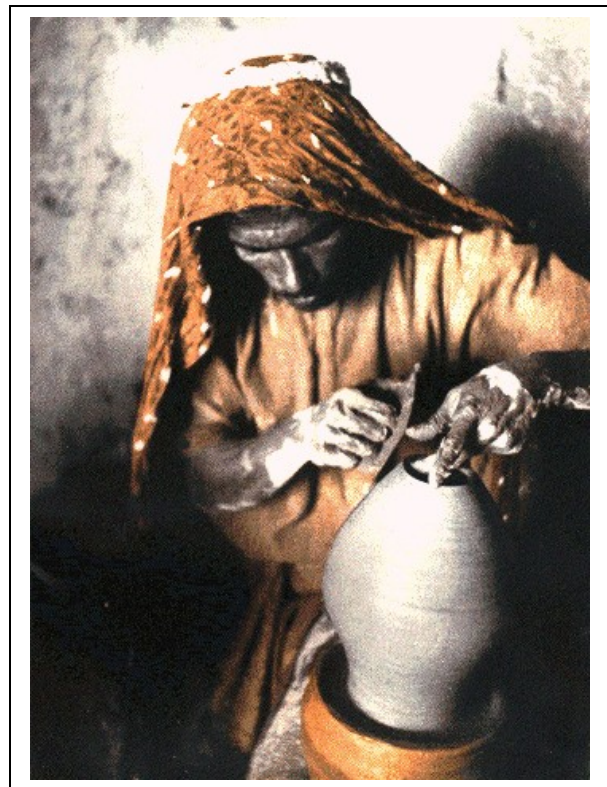
In the same way that marriage relationships given by God to men and women involve intimate experience, knowledge of both good and evil entered the experiences of mankind. It is sad that the

knowledge that entered the world through Satan's temptation involves evil as well as good.

- God intends us to be totally involved with Him – to know Him. In the fallen world we also find ourselves involved with sin and evil. We cannot avoid the fact that knowledge is experience of either good or evil, but God intends that we turn away from the evil so that we might know Him more fully. His purpose for us is *knowledge of Him*. This is what He wants for His people today and every day.



Knowing involves experience and Involvement.



For Study and Prayer

1. **Consider something that you know well. This can be linked to your job or a hobby or interest, for example. What part does practical involvement with this activity or interest play in your knowledge? For example, knowledge of driving a car involves experience – practice as well as theory.**
2. **Now think of a person you know well, a close friend or member of your family. Consider what knowing this person involves.**
3. **Look up some references from the Bible where the idea of *knowing* is involved. For example:**

Genesis 15:8-12, where a practical experience was part of *knowing* the Covenant promise.

Genesis 22:12, where God *knew* Abraham's heart through the *exercise* of laying Isaac on the altar.

Exodus 7:17, where through an *involvement and experience* of the deeds of God one comes to *know* Him (in this case through the awesome plagues of Egypt).

Exodus 16:15, where it was through the *eating* of Manna that the Israelites began to *know* the provision of God. When we see that *Manna was a foretaste of knowing Jesus intimately* we understand how the practical exercises God gives us are steps to knowing Him (John 6:31-35, 50-51).

Exodus 33:17. God *knows* Moses.

Exodus 36:1. Skilled craftsmen *know* their trade.

Leviticus 23:42-43. The *practical exercises of Torah* are part of the means of *knowing* God and what He has done.

Numbers 14:34. Israel *knew* God's displeasure *by the experience* of not entering the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 4:39. *Experience of God* and interacting with Him is a means of *knowing Him*.

Deuteronomy 7:9. *God wants to be known* and reveals Himself through our experiences step by step so that we come into relationship with Him.

Proverbs 1:4,7,32 etc. *What is this knowledge* that is featured in the Book of Proverbs?

4. **Consider the difference between knowing facts *about* someone and knowing them through shared experiences and friendship.**

5. **Read John 17:3 –**

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

This was the beginning of Jesus' High Priestly prayer before going to the Cross.

- **He revealed that His purpose was to bring us to know God. This was the knowledge of God that was forfeited through the sin of Adam and Eve.**

Make an honest assessment of your own knowledge of God in terms of relationship with Him.

The God of Creation

Next we will consider knowing God through His Creation.

In Genesis 3:23-24, we read:

...the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden of Eden to experience the toil of earthly life as we know it today. We can only imagine what was lost. The blissful experience of intimacy with God was lost and the way back was barred both to Adam and to us. Instead we experience life in the order of Creation as we know it. Even though this is a fallen condition, we still have what God created all around us.

In this scientific age we tend to study Creation in a theoretical way. We look on it, as it were, from afar, not realizing that we are totally involved and intimate with the universe in which we exist. This is the realm of our experience. We eat, we drink, we work, we walk, we swim, we make things of wood and metal, we weave clothes and wear

them and so on. Life is not based on observation but on experience, and the place where we live and move is in God's created order. As we move about in this existence where we are placed, trapped if you like, everything we touch, smell, taste, eat and breathe was made by God and speaks of Him. As we experience these things we are, in a sense, experiencing something of Him, and this is a part of getting to know Him.

- Indeed, God wants us to know Him first as Creator. Every aspect of the Universe speaks of His character and mind.

In Genesis 14:19, when Melchizedek blessed Abram, He referred to God as Creator and Sustainer of the Universe before all else:

...he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth"

When Job was perplexed through his sufferings, God reminded Him of who He is through reference to His Creation. In Job 38:4, God questions Job:

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.

God then went on to refer to the wonderful combination of animals that He had created each with unique and sometimes strange characteristics, in human thinking at least. This helped Job to know God better and understand his own situation better.

In Romans 1:18-32, we read of the consequences of not knowing God as Creator. From neglecting this experience of God, mankind, step by step, will turn from God into terrible sin.

- God's Creation is to be experienced, not just studied theoretically. In experiencing the things all around us in the world that we live, we will also find ourselves knowing God better.

We do not say that God is, in some mysterious way, fully found in His Creation or that a tree or blade of grass, for example, is itself God. Our universe was created by God and so Creation came from Him rather than being an embodiment of Him. Yet, since it came from Him, it speaks to us of His character. We have no choice but to be immersed in His Creation, and as such we are immersed in things that teach us of Him and help us to know Him better.

For Study and Prayer

1. Read Genesis Chapter 1 and consider that the whole of Creation came entirely from the wisdom of God.
2. Consider your own attitude to Creation. Do you look at your surroundings believing in and glorifying God? Do you look at the universe only in scientific ways? Do you look around and realize that God made all that you see? Do you realize that everything you do on this earth is an experience with something God has made?
3. Take some time to meditate upon God through His Creation. Take a country walk. Look in a new and prayerful way, at something God has made. Look at the night sky for example, and see the moon and stars just “hanging there”. Don’t worship the things that God made, but see if you can worship and know God more deeply through the experience of His Creation.
4. Read Psalm 19 and see if your heart is touched. You can read it in the following way:

Verses 1 to 6 come from the awesome revelation that God created this great universe and the wonderful constancy, power and order that you see and trust. Through such revelation we find ourselves knowing and trusting God.

Verses 7 to 11 refer to God's instructions to us. If we can trust Him as Creator, out of our walk with Him through this world experience, then we can trust Him in all things. We know Him as the One who keeps our lives in order and protects us.

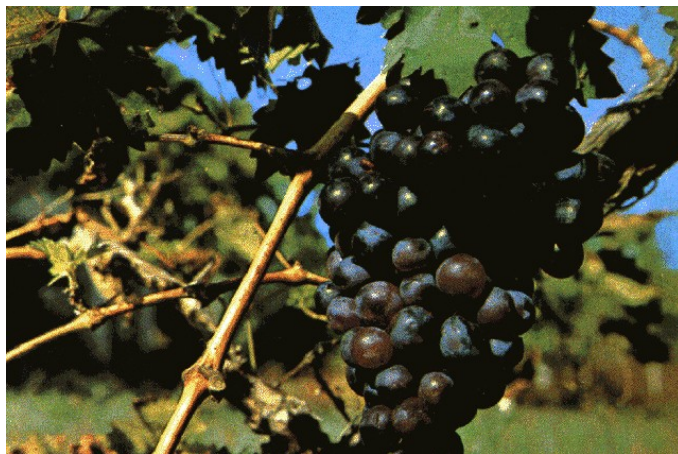
Verses 12 to 14 take us from a point of trusting God through the knowledge of Him in the greater things to a look at our innermost need and bring a desire to be totally clean and at peace with God. From the communion we had with God through our meditations on Him as Creator we move to repentance and a greater desire to come closer to Him as Saviour and friend.

Could you write a psalm like this from your own experience of God?

The universe is ordered by the laws of God but He is still working through His Creation. For example, He brought signs to Egypt through His Creation:

So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. (Exodus 9:29)

God is close to us through His Creation and sometimes brings miracles or healings to our bodies as well as other dramatic physical signs. Indeed, He causes the rain to nourish our crops and brings our food to our table. We know Him by living in His Creation and through His provision through His Creation. This is part of knowing God.



*Blessed art Thou O Lord our God who brings forth fruit
from the earth*

The God of History

Time is a part of God's created order. Time is a measure of change. Time brings changes in our seasons, it brings night and day, it measures rate of growth and of decay. Within time we find regular cycles and also a progress forward through all the events of mankind from Creation onwards, towards the coming of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Time involves a history of the world. We are meant to draw near to God and know Him better through history. It is possible to think that the universe is like a big machine where generations come and go according to the laws of birth and death, or it is possible to perceive the hand of God through history and draw near to Him, so that in learning about Him we desire to walk with Him and know Him through His deeds. Our lives may seem independent of God or we may realize that they are ordered by God and our passage through time – our history – can be ordered by Him as we walk with Him, knowing Him better day by day.

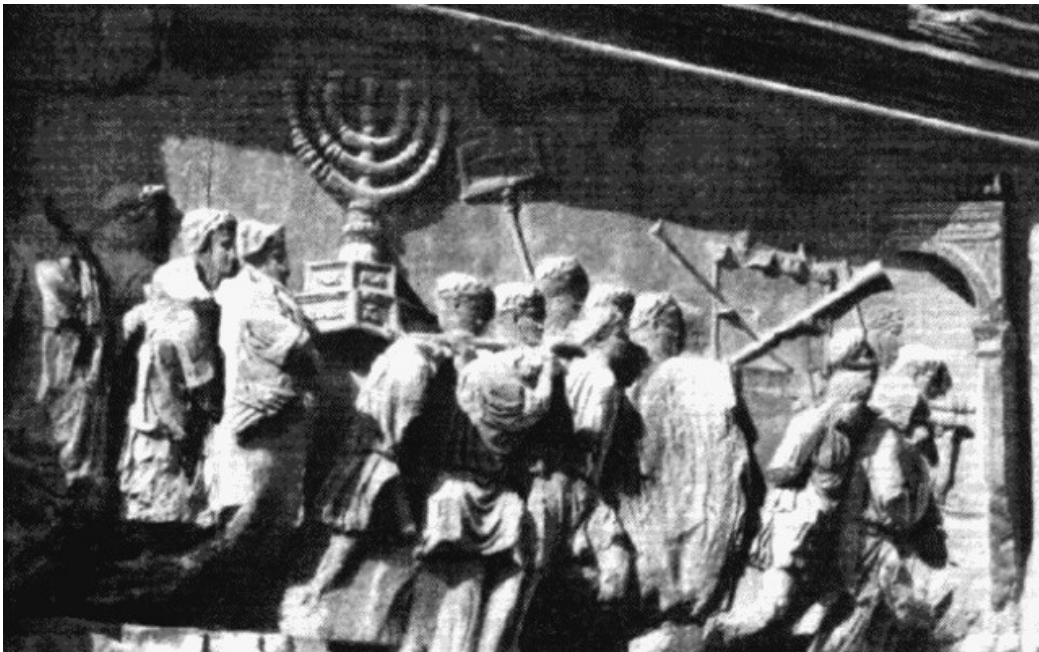
As well as other things, the Bible is a history book. It tells the story of God's Covenant plan for the history of His people.

In Leviticus 23 we read about the Feasts of the Lord. On these occasions, each year, God's people are to gather to celebrate in the way God chose that they should do. These Feasts are both remembrances of the history that is past and the plan that is still unfolding. The Passover remembers the way God brought Israel out of Egypt and made them a nation with their own Land. It also points to Jesus the Messiah and redemption from the world of sin. The Feast of Shavuot is a reminder of the giving of the Commandments of God at Sinai and points to the coming of the Holy Spirit to bring inner transformation according to the character of God. The Feast of Sukkot reminds us that God's people are a pilgrim people waiting for the coming of Messiah, through the memory of the wilderness walk from Egypt and also the parallel truth of the continuing wilderness experience waiting for the coming Kingdom.

The history of God's people is set out through the pages of the Torah, through the Books of Chronicles and Kings, through the lives of the Prophets, through the exile and through the return from exile. God is the God of history and history is made through the intervention of God in the lives of people moving through time. God has one specific purpose throughout history. This is expressed in His covenant purposes and promises through Noah, Abraham, especially Abraham, Moses, David and Jeremiah, fulfilled and enabled through Jesus the Messiah (Yeshua HaMashiach). This purpose is to gather a covenant

people called and chosen from all nations, who know Him as Father and Friend.

Our everyday lives and the wider history of God's people speak of God's overseeing of history and the working out His covenant purposes. He is the God of history and we come to know Him through that history. Though God's existence is beyond the bounds of time, He also walks with His people through time.



From the Arch of Titus in Rome recalling the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD

For Study and Prayer

1. Review the history of Israel as it is shown in the Bible. What do we learn about God from this? This is a record of God fulfilling His covenant plan. This is not necessarily the way we would expect Him to do it, particularly through the difficult times.
2. Read Psalm 78 and consider how the Psalmist praises God through knowing Him through history.
3. Find some other Psalms that review the history of Israel and lead to praise.
4. Read Psalm 23 and consider God as our shepherd through the various incidents of our lives, whether in the shadow or in the full light of understanding.
5. Consider how God is overseeing the history of His people both in a general and a personal way.
6. Read the Book of Ruth. Review the story in this way. Ruth and the other characters in this story are living an ordinary life within the framework of God's purposes for His people, yet

they are now written into Bible history. Not only that, but we see hidden truths being established as these people lived their lives. We see a picture of exile and return in the story of Ruth and Naomi, and a picture of the coming Redeemer in Boaz, for example. Does this give us an insight into the intimate way God is involved with His people through their history both at a general and at a personal level?

- The history of God is written through the lives of His people.
7. Consider how well you know God through the history of your own life.
- We are involved in our own unfolding history. This is an immersion in what God is allowing and doing in our lives. This is part of knowing God.

Study of the Written Word

How do we get to know God better through study of the Bible?

- We must realize that the written Word is a manifestation of God Himself. Just as He spoke and Creation came into existence, so the written Word of God is a manifestation of the spoken Word of God.

This does not mean that everyone reads the Bible in this way. Many philosophers have read the Bible and not come to know God in a personal way.

We can compare Genesis 1 with John 1 to begin to perceive the link between God's spoken Word, His Spirit and the full revelation in Jesus.

- The Holy Spirit was the means by which the whole of the universe came into being and all things were done for and through Jesus, the Son of God, here known also as the Word of God.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

(Genesis 1:1-3)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)

Having created the universe, and put mankind into place, God began to speak words of instruction. Through this instruction God became involved in the history of His chosen people. We have records of God's spoken word and a record of His actions through the lives of His people. He came down to dwell among the Israelites in the Tabernacle. He then came to dwell amongst His people in the human form of His Son. All of this is written into the Bible, which records both what God spoke and how He walked with His people. The Bible is founded on God's teaching known by the Hebrew word *Torah*, and fulfilled through Jesus who, when He ascended to be with the Father,

sent the Holy Spirit to write God's teaching on the hearts of His people.

When we study the written Words of the Bible, we can be confident that the Spirit of God can take us to the depths of their meaning. The written Word becomes spiritual as it is imparted to our hearts.

Through this we are able to draw near to the Father through His Son.

- Thus reading the Bible is a spiritual exercise.

We should approach our Bible study prayerfully expecting to have our hearts and minds stimulated by the Holy Spirit, resulting in closer knowledge of and fellowship with God. We should seek God for ourselves and organize our Bible studies as both a disciplined thing and also as a walk with God, immersing ourselves in the Spirit of God as we open ourselves to the truths of the written Word.



Scroll of Isaiah

For Study and Prayer

1. There are two interesting parallel verses, one in Paul's letter to the Colossians and the other in his letter to the Ephesians. They illustrate how being filled with the Spirit of God is one and the same as being filled with the Word of God within us.

Read Colossians 3:16:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

All things came through Jesus so the *word of Christ* includes all that has been spoken to us for our teaching and is written into our Bibles, and Paul tells the Colossians to let these things live in us. The result will be an overflow of spiritual manifestations from our innermost being. How is this linked to our disciplines of Bible reading and prayer?

Read Ephesians 5:18-21:

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

The result of being filled with the Spirit of God is one and the same as letting the word of Christ live in us. This is a result of the New Covenant in the Blood of Jesus, foretold by Jeremiah:

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

Do you find that prayerful and disciplined Bible study is used by the Holy Spirit to bring you close to God?

- Now read Romans 8 and consider whether your own walk with and knowledge of God matures through your study of the Bible. Does the Spirit of God bring you into fellowship with Him as you read?



Title page to Tyndale's translation of the New Testament 1536

Jesus the Perfect Image of the Father

After Jesus had been with His disciples for some time, an interesting and important discussion took place. It is recorded in John 14:7-11:

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

- To know Jesus is to know the Father.

Even though the disciples had been with Jesus for some time they had not yet understood that to know Jesus was to know the Father. This is

the Father's will and like Thomas and Philip we can continue to grow close to our Heavenly Father through relationship with His Son. They are One and this truth is in accordance with the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-5):

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

God's Spirit draws us into fellowship of the One God, the Father and Son in complete unity. Through the Bible we can study how all the Torah points to Jesus. Our study of the teaching of God, known as *Torah*, lays the foundation. *Torah* itself is founded on the first five books of the Bible, confirmed through the Prophets, understood through the Writings of the Tanakh (Old Testament) and also studied through the lives and history of God's Covenant People. The depths of all God's teaching point to and are fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah, His life and ministry and His very being.

- We look at Jesus through the telescope of the Bible and we see the Father fully revealed in His incarnate Son.

- To know the Son is to know the Father. We study Him through the pages of the whole Bible and we draw near to Him through the Holy Spirit.



Golgotha

For Study and Prayer

1. Consider prayerfully the following verses of Scripture:

Colossians 1:15: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

Hebrews 1:1-5: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"?*

John 10:15: *As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

John 14:15-18: *If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may*

abide with you forever -- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:20: At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 15:5-7: I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

John 17:21: that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

John 17:25-26: O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

John 8:19: *Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.*

2. Carefully and prayerfully consider how the Father is known through the Son and that the command and invitation is to abide (live) in the Son by the Spirit of God. How intimate is knowing God is intended to be?



Passover

Repentance

The first sin was when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Their privileged walk with God was spoiled through that sin and separation came between mankind and God in every generation since then. This is what disobedience to God brings. When we disobey His conditions for close fellowship with Him we turn away from Him and He allows a separation between Him and us. This can be seen through the history of the Children of Israel too. Close times of intimacy were spoiled through disobedience of God's commandments and so a turning away from God resulted in a gulf between God and His Covenant people. The same is true for all mankind and we all have our own testimony of feeling separate from God.

Repentance comes from the realization that we have turned from God through doing what He has commanded mankind that they must not do. The act of repentance is a confession of sin through faith in His forgiveness and a turning back to Him.

We must study God's provision through the sacrificial blood of Jesus in regard to our need to return to God through repentance. The main point that we are making here, however, is that, wonderful as the offer of fellowship with God is, it is not a cheap thing nor is it without

condition. The wonderful thing is that God offers to be our Father in the most pure and intimate way – the possibility is there for us.

- Yet, from our part we spoil and limit the reality of our experience with God, and so we should recognize that the limitations of our relationship with God can be due to our own need of repentance.

This may not be due to sin that is obvious. It may be that lack of faith in God is the sin, which may come out of a wrong expectation of Him or a poor understanding of Him. Often this is based on poor human relationships that lead us to misjudge the character of God.

Nevertheless, we still need to deal with this “understandable” sin and turn more fully to God through repentance if we are to know Him as He really is. Through repentance we begin to draw near to God and then our knowledge of Him (fellowship with Him) can deepen progressively.

- On the one hand the amazing truth of knowing God is offered to us. On the other hand, most of us, in this fallen and sinful world, do not achieve the depth of what is offered.

The path to knowing God is precious and can be discovered. It is free, but it was the costly sacrifice of Jesus that bought it for us. It is a most

Holy thing we are seeking and so should not be taken lightly. We all need to take repentance seriously as we think about our relationship with God.



Yom Kippur in Jerusalem

For Study and Prayer

1. Study Genesis 1 to 3. Consider what may have been lost to Adam and Eve through sin, and consider how this applies to all of mankind. Now consider the possibility of fellowship with God that is offered through repentance and faith.
2. Study 2 Samuel 11 and 12. Even David the King sinned. In fact there is no-one who does not sin (Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:10). Now consider the repentance of David in Psalm 51. Here is an example of David's faith in God despite His sin, showing how David was restored to relationship with the Father. Consider your own relationship with God.
3. Now study the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These recount the return of Israel from exile in Babylon. Nehemiah 9:3 contains an important message:

And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for one-fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God.

These people had made many mistakes and then, by reading the Torah together they realized how far they had turned from God. This then led to a great repentance and to a restoration of fellowship with God. This is one of the places we find this principle. There are many others in the Scriptures.

4. Consider carefully this principle of repentance (turning from sin and towards God) in relation to our call to know Him.



Reading the Torah on Mount Gerazim

The Tabernacle

If we study the Tabernacle in the wilderness we can learn a lot about the principles of God coming down to meet with Israel. The Book of Exodus, Chapters 25 to 40, gives an account of how it was built.

Adam and Eve lived in the presence of God, but they lost their privileged position. Yet God still had a plan to rebuild fellowship with those chosen from fallen mankind. After the time of Adam and Eve God chose certain people with whom He built close relationships. Enoch walked with God. Noah was accounted righteous and obeyed God in the building of the Ark. Abraham became the friend of God. Moses was chosen by God and learned to walk with Him and obey Him. However, God did not come down to dwell among His people so fully until the Tabernacle was built.

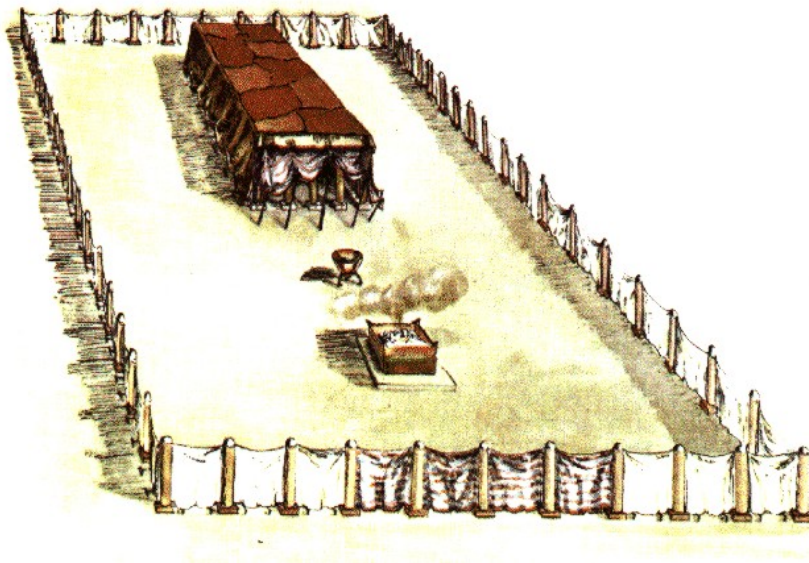
Moses alone was able to go into God's presence on Mount Sinai and there He was given precise instructions for the building of the Tabernacle. Moses obeyed these instructions and at the appointed time God came down and filled the Tabernacle with His presence. God came to dwell with men. The instructions for meeting with Him were precise, ordered and had to be obeyed. We remember that even

Aaron's sons lost their lives for bringing incense of their own making and offering it in a way that God had not instructed, such was the importance of obeying God's design for meeting with Him.

This step in rebuilding fellowship between God and His chosen people must be studied carefully. Of itself it brought great privilege to Israel, chosen from among the nations, but it is also just a step towards the relationship we can have with God through Jesus the Messiah.

- Study of the Tabernacle also gives an indication too of the principles that God still uses in drawing us close to Him.

We should all study this for ourselves.



For Study and Prayer

Make a careful study of Exodus 25 to 40. Here are some guidelines.

1. First consider the separation of mankind from God brought about by Adam and Eve. This is hard to imagine until we remember the times when God seemed distant from us. This is the position of all mankind after the Fall.
2. Consider briefly the way God began to come near to some individuals after the Fall. Consider Enoch, Noah and Abraham, for example.
3. Consider God's call of Moses. Consider how Moses learned to respond to God and obey Him, because God spoke to him face to face (Numbers 12:7-8). He set up his own tent for meeting with God on behalf of the Children of Israel. This was a special call. In Exodus 19 we read how only Moses could go on the mountain to meet with God. All the rest of the people had to stay at the base of the mountain or else they die. This was a step forward for mankind as it showed the possibility of meeting with God and how it was only God would enable those He

called. Coming close to God to know Him was shown to be a matter of life and death.

4. The construction of the Tabernacle enabled the whole nation of Israel to take another step forward.
5. Read the whole account of the Tabernacle. Make notes of what you discover. Among your notes consider:
 - Everything was made to God's instructions.
 - Consider how the Priests were set apart for service on behalf of the people and that only they could draw near to God, and even then that the Holiest place was reserved for once per year for the High Priest.
 - Consider each step that the Priests would take from the outside world to the Holiest place. Consider the construction and the contents of the Tabernacle. Consider the colours (it has been suggested that red represents the earth, blue heaven and purple a blending of blue and red, heaven coming to earth through God meeting man – note that this points to Jesus, intercessor and King, Son of God and Son of Man). Note the metals used for construction, how they progressed

from brass to gold as one progressed from the entrance from the world to the Holiest place. Note what was important to God and closest to the place of His presence (the Ark of the Covenant with the Tablets of the Law, the Manna and Aaron's Rod of authority).

- In particular consider the progress from the world to the presence of God and see if these symbols are meaningful: The Brazen Altar (Sacrifice – Jesus Sacrifice for our sins), the Laver (Washing – Purification by the Spirit), the Candlestick (the light of God's Word through the illumination of His Spirit), the Shewbread (the Twelve Tribes), The Altar of Incense (Intercessory prayers), The Ark of the Covenant and Mercy Seat (The heart of God for His people with Justice and Mercy in agreement). Consider also the Garments of the Priest and the ministry of going in to God on behalf of the people and out to the people on behalf of God.

- Consider the Feasts of the Lord as additional celebrations and reminders of God's fellowship with mankind according to His ordained method.

6. Now take some more time to think about issues of your own fellowship with God and the way He has called you to know Him and come close to Him. Abiding in the Tabernacle as a Priest or Levite is a prototype of abiding in the Spirit of Jesus in fellowship with the Father. One is a picture of the other and helps us to understand the principles of living in relationship with God.



Abiding in Jesus

We studied the Tabernacle before focusing on the ministry of Jesus the Messiah. An in-depth study of fellowship with God through the meeting place of the Tabernacle in the wilderness is itself an awe-inspiring experience when the Holy Spirit quickens our hearts to the possibilities and parallels for us. The model is a perfect picture of fellowship with our Father in Heaven, yet God has brought an even better invitation than came through the Tabernacle. The invitation is through the New Covenant in Jesus' Blood. The writer to the Hebrews expresses this clearly:

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. (Hebrews 8:6)

The Tabernacle in the wilderness was an amazing step of God coming to dwell among His people, yet outside of the Tribe of Levi there was no close access to the presence of God for the people. Even from the Tribe of Levi there was limited access to the Holiest place. Just once a year the High Priest could go into the presence of God as close as this.

- In Jesus all who are called into covenant relationship are invited to draw near.

This was shown when He died as our perfect Sacrifice:

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised... (Matthew 27:51-52)

The Temple was modeled on the Tabernacle and when Jesus died on the Cross, the torn curtain indicated that the way was open for all who came by faith in Him to come into the Holiest place, namely into close fellowship with the Father. The dramatic change results in this invitation to fellowship, expressed by the writer to the Hebrews in the following way:

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, 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. Let us hold fast the confession of our

hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:19-23)

By contrasting the Tabernacle with the ministry of Jesus we come to an understanding of the principles of fellowship with God. First, we can study the symbols, the altars, the laver, the lampstand and so on so that the symbolism is clear and then we apply this not to a physical meeting place but to a meeting place in the Spirit through faith in Jesus. There are some important principles on which we must be clear.

- We must understand the New Covenant in relationship to what the writer to the Hebrews calls the Old Covenant. In these terms, the Old Covenant refers to the means of fellowship with God through the Tabernacle and its method of sacrifice for sin. The over-arching covenant God made with Abraham, that there would be people drawn from every nation to be the people of God, stands for all time. The Covenant with Abraham is still in force and was enabled through a better sacrifice, so it is the means of fellowship that has changed, not the call to fellowship. The *principle* of sacrifice did not change, but when Jesus became our sacrifice for sin, all other sacrifice was worthless. The Tabernacle sacrificial system was temporary. Jesus's sacrifice is eternal. The Levitical priesthood was

temporary. Jesus patterned His Priesthood on Melchizedek and so opened the way for us all to become Priests, as we find in 1 Peter 2:9-10:

...you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

- Priests can draw close to God and that is what Jesus has enabled through His sacrifice for us, providing we approach through faith in Him. Finally, the New Covenant was sealed in us by the giving of the Holy Spirit, with the Torah becoming a spiritual impartation to our hearts rather than a system of external regulations. The New Covenant enables the Covenant God made with Abraham by replacing the ministry of the Tabernacle by the ministry of Jesus in order that we might deepen our fellowship with – our knowledge of – God the Father. Jeremiah put it this way (Jeremiah 31:31-33):

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in

the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

We can consider again the wording of John 15:4, in which Jesus commanded us:

Abide in Me, and I in you.

- Both the Tabernacle and the Temple were the places where the Priest lived (abided) in the presence of God. The Tabernacle and the Temple become pictures for us of our spiritual abiding in Jesus. That is the intimacy to which He has called us to dwell in Him and in fellowship with the Father. This is the depth of knowing God to which we are invited.



For Study and Prayer

1. Consider what Paul said in Romans 6:23:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sin has to be accounted for and this is an everlasting principle. If sin is not accounted for then the result is eternal death. The principle of a substitution to atone for sin is found at the Brazen Altar of the Tabernacle. Though the Tabernacle was replaced along with the atoning blood of sacrificial animals, the principle of atonement through a substitutionary sacrifice was not removed. The wages of sin is still death and Jesus Christ's death in our place remains a necessary condition for our fellowship with God the Father. Meditate upon this.

2. Study the Book of Hebrews completely. Make sure you understand the pattern of the Tabernacle, the pattern of sacrifice on the Brazen Altar, the way the Torah contains as its central theme God making a way for His people to know Him and have fellowship with Him. Then, with these patterns and principles

in mind consider carefully how Jesus the Messiah took those central patterns and principles and fulfilled them for us.

3. Read John 15. Contrast abiding in the earthly Tabernacle with abiding in Jesus. Consider how in a certain measure we may experience this fellowship with the Father through the Son whilst still in our earthly bodies.

4. Now read 2 Corinthians 5:1-5. This stands in contrast to John 15, showing that the measure of knowledge of God and fellowship with God that we achieve on this earth is just a taste of what will come when we abide with Him forever. Pray about these things, so that we will grow in our fellowship with God through Jesus as far as possible whilst also waiting for the full measure of fellowship in the coming Kingdom. Seek to live in both an expectation for the present and an expectation for the future.



A Kingdom of Priests

Let us remember the central purpose of God in all history. He covenanted with Abraham to bring to Himself one family out of all the nations of the world. His intention has been to be a Father to us all and to restore us to deep and intimate knowledge of Himself. Thus the central issue for God in terms of fulfilling this Covenant with Abraham is our fellowship with Him. Within the Covenant principles there is an old and a new covenant (an Old and a New covenant principle within the overall Covenant made with Abraham). In terms of God drawing near to His people, the old covenant centred on the ministry of the Tabernacle. Here those who drew closest were the Priests. The Priests of the old covenant show us that those who are chosen to minister before God can draw near according to the principles that God has revealed.

- We must study the pattern of the Priesthood of the Old Covenant to give us foundational understanding of the New Covenant.

The duties of the Priests included approaching God as intercessors for the nation of Israel, coming to the altar of incense in prayer as they also burned the incense. The duties also included listening to God and

teaching the people to distinguish right from wrong. In addition, they were God's agents for receiving the tithes and offerings brought to God by the people.

- To a large degree the Priests represented God to man and man to God.

They were intermediaries between God and His people. Israelites other than the Priesthood knew God through the Priests.

- The Priesthood of the New Covenant involves all of God's people whether Jew or Gentile, whether from the tribe of Levi or from any other tribe. Responsibilities for approaching God are similar, namely intercession and seeking God's instructions for how to minister to His people. Yet, the difference is that *now we all can now know him*, as Jeremiah says (Jeremiah 31:34) - *from the least of them to the greatest of them*. There are still ministries that we have one to another but we all have access to God for ourselves and we must consider how to live together in the balance of this.

For Study and Prayer

1. Consider the ministry of the Priests of the Tabernacle. In Ezekiel 44:15-23 there is a useful summary, at a time when the Prophet was reminding the Priests of the ministry in which they were failing:

..... they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord God. They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge. (Verses 15 and 16)

.....And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. (Verse 23)

- Here are the two responsibilities of Priests to approach God on behalf of the people and to teach the people on behalf of God.

When they ministered to the Lord they burned incense on the altar in front of the Holiest Place. We learn that this incense symbolizes prayer:

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (Revelation 5:8)

From Peter's First Epistle we learn that when Jesus became High Priest the Priestly order was changed to include all His disciples. We can also find the same two principles of the new Priesthood to which we belong: in 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 we read parallel passages to the ones quoted from Ezekiel:

...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

- The veil of the Temple was torn in two and we all have access directly to the Father. No longer is there only one tribe who can minister directly to God. Our responsibility is the same, however, to go into the presence of God in prayer and to go out and minister in God's Name in the world.
2. Let us consider the balance of this. First, we must all check that we have not allowed any human being to be a substitute for God. Has anyone come in between us and God so that we are deprived of our own personal relationship with our Father in Heaven? Some people allow the Catholic Pope to be their representative. Some call on the Saints of old instead of having a personal relationship with God. Some allow the local minister, whether a vicar or pastor, to be their representative to God. They focus on these men and do not develop their own Priestly calling. Second, we must all check if we are coming between any other people and God. We can do this out of misunderstanding of the Royal Priesthood of Jesus compared with the Priesthood of the Tabernacle and Temple. We must serve in the new Royal Priesthood and not the old Levitical Priesthood, even though there are many parallels.

3. Having checked our own personal relationship with God we must then go on to consider our ministries, because this must be in balance with *personal* relationships with God. We are all given some works of service as an overflow of our spiritual life in Jesus. Paul lists a wide range of spiritual gifts and ministries. For example we read about some of them in 1 Corinthians 12. Specific attention is given to five key ministries in Ephesians 4, which should also be read fully. In particular we read in verses 11-14:

He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

Each ministry is given in order to build up the body of believers. If we recall that the most important thing that God has done for us is to give us direct access to know Him as Father, then building up the body is mainly ministering in this way,. It helps us individually

and together to know God better developing our personal relationship with Him. Of course, our relationships with one another will grow as this happens too, but no-one should be in the way of another regarding friendship with God. There will be times when we do minister directly to one another as in God's Name, and this is an element of priestly duty. We gather tithes and offerings in His Name, we heal in His Name, we Prophecy in His Name, we have parental responsibility in His Name, we have responsibilities as husbands and wives and elders and deacons, but the general ministry to one another is to lead one another to grow in personal relationship with God. Evangelists lead a person to God through repentance, Pastors shepherd the flock to walk with God, Teachers help others to understand issues of the faith that they might know God better and so on. The ministries we have to one another in God's Name are part of God's ministry to us but not a substitute for our personal relationships with Him.

Reflect on these things and assess whether the life of your own community is well ordered to help members of the Body of believers grow in maturity to know God better: or do ministries come too much between man and God? Bear this in mind, and you will see the seriousness of what we are studying here. The nations of the world had their own orders of priesthood. This included the prominent empires of Greece and Rome with cultic rituals whereby

offerings were made to the gods by Priests on behalf of the people and the priests were very strongly representative of the people to their gods. Household idols were common but there was no expectation of personal relationships with the gods, only a sense that the gods were in control of the world and must be treated with respect. When the world was Christianized by the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire, Roman traditions merged with Christian belief and this influenced the concept of the Priesthood. The idea of clergy and laity and of parishes and vicars comes from Rome. The idea of honouring saints is linked to the idea of intermediaries between man and God. Even Roman Emperors were exalted to the status of gods. All this has influenced the way many Christian communities and denominations have developed their ideas of the Priesthood and of ministry, even of sainthood, so that there are many ways in which men come between God and His people, not based on biblical models but based on the practices of the Gentile nations. Of course we do have the Tabernacle Priesthood which does on first sight seem to be linked to many Christian interpretations of practices for the church today, but even there God has used this as a temporary measure to bring His people into a closer walk with Himself. We must be fully released to be members of the Royal Priesthood of all believers.

To emphasise the importance of this, consider first Jeremiah 17:5-11:

Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, 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. As a partridge that broods but does not hatch, So is he who gets riches, but not by right; It will leave him in the midst of his days, And at his end he will be a fool.

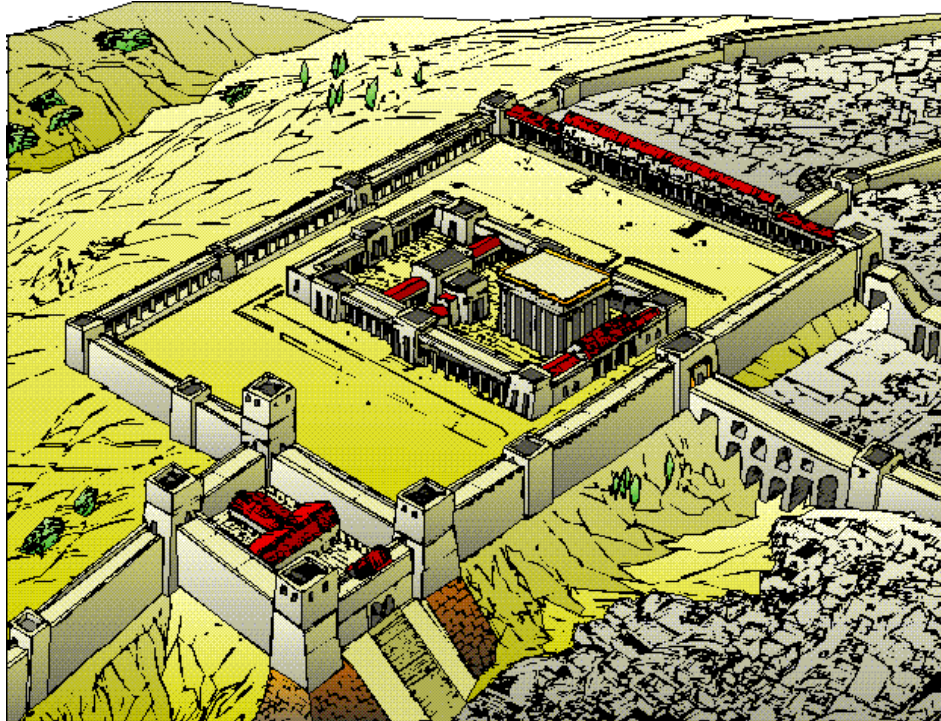
Now consider this. Knowing God is a privilege He offers us, but this is not a light thing. It is an invitation to deep fellowship with Him at a personal level. It is a fulfillment of the model of the Tabernacle through Jesus and not the counterfeit of the pagan

nations with their idolatry and false priesthods, however much the parallels are to be found at a superficial level with the temporary principles of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. There is a blessed invitation in this and there is a deep warning. Those who allow men to be their focus instead of God will find themselves vulnerable to the antichrist in the coming days. Remember that the antichrist is the one who puts himself in the place of Christ. There is a priesthood coming that will focus on man and not God though it will seem, for many, to be in line with biblical truth. Now is the time for a fresh consideration of our ministries and our relationship with God. It is possible to miss the depth of blessings and then even at a personal level find the truth of Jesus' words of Matthew 7:21-23 coming back to us:

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

- We must press on to know God the Father through Jesus for ourselves and break down the structures of false ministry that do not build this. We need to reassess the way we minister to

one another ensuring that we build up the body in its relationship to God.



Offerings to God

We cannot be sure when mankind began to bring offerings to God. The first account is at the time of Cain and Abel but they themselves may have followed an already existing tradition from their parents. Sometimes the covering of animal skins that God put onto Adam and Eve is considered to be from a slain animal, pointing to sacrifice, but the Bible does not say that, so we must be careful in our assumptions. Perhaps God put it into the heart of man to bring offerings to Him and that is as far as we can go in our assumptions as we trace the pattern of offerings through the history of God's people. It does seem to be strongly implied in the account of Cain and Abel that offerings to God were tested at the heart level. Later, in the Book of Leviticus, we find that both offerings of animals and of grain were acceptable to God, so it was not the nature of the offerings so much as the *heart of the giver* that God tested when Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's was accepted. Indeed, we see hinted what was later taught by Jesus, that it is out of the heart that come all manner of good or of evil. Cain made his offering and, after it was rejected, anger rose up that led to murder. Jesus spoke of the link between anger and murder in the Sermon on the Mount. Thus we can see in the account of Cain and Abel a beginning of a study on the heart principles that are linked to acceptable offerings from His people.

Later, the principle of tithing developed. Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek, the Priest of the Most High God. At Bethel Jacob had a revelation of God that brought forth the response that out of God's provision for him he would bring back a tenth – a tithe – to God.

- This was a heart response to the personal revelation of God to Jacob. Jacob had inherited the covenant blessing but this was his personal encounter with God where the future walk with God was sealed and this was confirmed in the principle of the tithe.

We can see how Jacob's heart was stirred to give back to God out of what God would give to Jacob. As we meditate upon this we see that tithes and offerings to God are out of heart principles and are means by which God and man seal their fellowship in a practical expression of the heart. God gives to man and man gives back to God. This is out of their relationship with one another, both enabling the relationship and strengthening it, the practical and the spiritual working together to the common end of fellowship. Both tithes and offerings are expressions of the same thing, the tithe being a disciplined means of bringing a portion of what God has given back to Him and offerings being part of the same relation-building exercise.

It is with this understanding of offerings to God that we should study the Bible as the principles develop. At the time of Moses, God confirmed the principles of tithes and offerings within the framework of the Tabernacle and Temple.

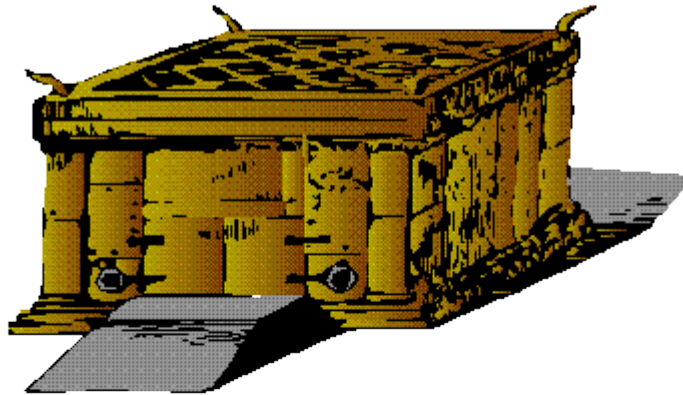
- This became so much a part of the daily ritual that it is easy to miss the prime reason for tithes and offerings, namely fellowship with God.

The Book of Malachi speaks, not so much about the poor tithes and offerings that the people started to give, but a decay in community life on account of fellowship between man and God breaking down, because of the heart of the people going cold. It was the cold hearts and the broken fellowship with God that brought the evidence of the poor offerings that God was really concerned about.

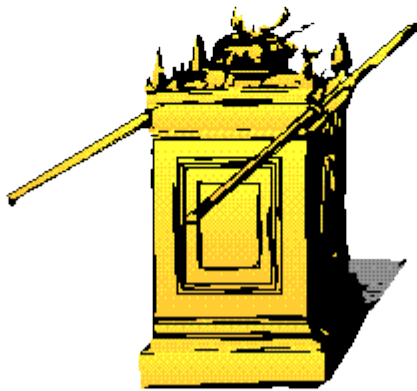
Offerings to God come from heart principles and is a practical exercise of the relationship between a person and God. Ultimately that heart principle was to be raised to its purest level in the offering of Jesus for our sins so that we might have perfect fellowship with God.

- The heart principle of giving back to God still remains for us a practical help whilst living in the fulfillment of fellowship that

Jesus enabled and as we move on to that perfect relationship in the eternal and coming Kingdom.



ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERINGS



ALTAR OF INCENSE

For Study and Prayer

Read the following Scriptures with one central thing in mind:

Offerings to God, whether freewill or ordered through tithes and other regular giving, whether Old Testament or New Testament, are practical aids to and expressions of a desire for fellowship with God. In the giving and receiving of the Kingdom of Heaven fellowship with God is intended. Note the response of the Fathers of faith – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of the Children of Israel. Then consider carefully your own attitude to giving to God as reflecting your desire to know Him and fellowship with Him.

1. Consider the offering of Cain and Abel: Genesis 4.
2. Consider Abraham's tithes: Genesis 14.
3. Consider Jacob's response to God at Bethel: Genesis 28.
4. Study the offerings in Leviticus: Leviticus 1 to 3.
5. Study Numbers 18 as being a pattern for the use of the tithes and offerings brought to God. Is there a way in which this pattern can be used in the ministries of the Church today?

6. Read the Book of Malachi completely. Be careful to recognize that the reason for the poor offerings was that the hearts of God's people had turned away from Him and this led to suffering in the families and communities. God called the people to begin again in their fellowship with Him through the practice of tithes and offerings being purified,. This would have been an outward demonstration of an inner truth. Note that the prophet concentrates on this message for most of the Book, but that the end of the Book is also relevant in this context. This is a picture of the end-times' restoration of the hearts of people to God through the family principle and through a heart response to the teaching (Torah) of God.
7. Consider the perfect sacrifice and Jesus' offering Himself for us, making it possible for us to know God. Read Matthew 26 and 27.
8. Consider the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 and consider how right heart attitude is still required as we bring our offerings to God.
9. Read Romans 12:1-2. Ultimately it is *us* that God wants. He wants us to know Him, to love Him as Father, to trust Him and

to share with Him. We must balance our lives of faith waiting for the fullness of the Kingdom when Jesus comes back to rule and reign. Fellowship with God is still within the framework of giving and receiving and the gifts to God are still useful for the ministry of the Covenant people, sharing in God, in His provision and His fruitfulness. We give of what He gives us, we share with Him and with one another. Our giving is to be from the heart and this is a part of our learning to give ourselves.

- Realise this: Matthew 28:19-20, called the Great Commission is the call of all of Jesus' disciples to inherit responsibility for the Covenant made with Abraham:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Recall that when Jacob had a personal revelation of His Covenant blessing and responsibility he sealed his fellowship with God in the principle of tithes and offerings.

The Covenant People of God

In this study we are not trying to answer all the questions that arise from our seeking to know God for ourselves. That would defeat the object. The object is to remind our readers of the invitation of God to know Him, to introduce the topic and to encourage everyone to go further with the studies themselves. Let us review some of the essential things before signing off and encouraging you to study, pray and draw nearer to God through Jesus.

1. The covenant people of God have direct access to fellowship with God the Father as individuals.
2. All ministry is to help build up the body to maturity. The central element of the life of a mature believer is to know God.
3. Access to the Father is through the Son and this is by faith alone in the sacrificial blood shed on the Cross, the atonement for our sins, making possible our union with God by the power of the Spirit of God.
4. Knowledge of God is a Spiritual experience which is a spiritual immersion or abiding in Him. In this sense both Bible study and

prayer are spiritual exercises leading us deep into this experience of God. Tithes and offering are means of fellowship with God.

5. We should seek to study, pray and grow together in our knowledge of God the Father; that is our experience of Him and fellowship with Him.
6. The result will be peace with God and rest in God.
7. We will not achieve the ultimate goal of fellowship with God whilst still in these bodies of flesh, but we will achieve it when the King returns to establish His Kingdom. Meanwhile, the goal is set before us and we can go as deeply into God as He will allow, which is considerably more than most of us have experienced.
8. Knowledge of God involves walking with Him day by day, experiencing Him through the continuing history of His people, past, present and into the future. It is a walk of experience within the confines of His Creation, yet joined to Him spiritually in the unseen heavenly places.

9. The heart of God is to us as a Father is to His children. This is a great privilege and many of us fail to find the fullness of this relationship due to misunderstanding and by holding back from the relationship that He offers.

May the Lord bless you as you continue to grow in the knowledge of and fellowship with God the Father, filled and anointed with His Spirit and abiding in Jesus the Son of God.



An ancient olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives