

## THE MOST IMPORTANT #



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## THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

### Mark 12:28-34

*<sup>28</sup>And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? <sup>29</sup>And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: <sup>30</sup>And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

*<sup>31</sup>And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. <sup>32</sup>And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:*

*<sup>33</sup>And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*

*<sup>34</sup> And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.*

**Note:** Some translations will say “he answered wisely”.

This is a very good place to begin our third lesson in the theme of numbers. This scripture begins to point us towards the most important number, by asking the question: "which is the **first** commandment of all?" And Jesus responds by saying "Hear O' Israel; The Lord our God is one..." This answer actually comes from what is written in Deuteronomy 6:4, the context of which is the retelling of the law as the children of Israel were about to enter the promised land.

The actual ten commandments were retold earlier in Deuteronomy chapter 5, so when we see Jesus giving His response, He is not telling us the *first* commandment based on the order it was given, but rather the **first in importance**.

And even when we go to the ten commandments, the first one listed also has to do with the oneness of God, in that we are commanded to put no other "gods" before Him. There is **only One God** that we should worship, we should have no graven images, no false gods, etc. So, the understanding that there is One God is why the number one is the most important number. And having a proper relationship with the One True God is what is most important, followed by our relationships with each other. Jesus also tells us that all these relationships should be based on love.

Next, we will go to the book of John, in chapter 17 where we see the prayer of Jesus, which gives us a little more insight on this One God - and why *knowing* this One God is so important. This prayer was spoken as Jesus was preparing to go to the cross:

### **John 17:1-3**

*<sup>1</sup> These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

**Note:** This lets us know the God that Jesus was praying to.

*<sup>2</sup> As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. <sup>3</sup> And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

So here we see that knowing the only true God is important because according to Jesus, to know the One true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent - **is eternal life**. We also have to keep in mind that "knowing" in the Bible alludes to a deep intimacy and is another way of saying 'two becoming one'. Therefore, to just know things *about* God **is not** the same as to *know* God in the way that brings eternal life.

## ONE GOD

Continuing with the focus on the number one and how it relates to God, let's look at what the apostle Paul wrote in his first letter to the church in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 6, we read Paul's declaration about the One True God.

### 1 Corinthians 8:6

*<sup>6</sup>But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

So far in this lesson we've seen Jesus telling us that there is only one God. And here in 1 Corinthians, Paul is also letting us know that there is only one God, the Father. And as I mentioned in our previous lesson "[#s in the Bible](#)", it is always good to establish our understanding of scripture by 2 or 3 witnesses. So, our third witness in this study will be the apostle James.

Going to the book of James in chapter 2 and verse 19, we will see the same testimony.

### James 2:19

*<sup>19</sup>Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*

This verse lets us know that if you believe that there is one God, you are doing pretty good... But it also lets us know that there is more to it than just that, because the devils even believe the same. And I would even argue that they *actually know*. They are spiritual beings that are on that spiritual level. So as much as they believe that there is one God, they also *know* that there is one God.

Now that we have laid the foundation, hopefully we all understand and know that there is just **One God**.

## THERE IS NONE ELSE

Now that we have heard from our three witnesses, I want to go into the Old Testament and see what God has to say about Himself and for Himself.

In the book of Isaiah, we are going to look at some things in the 43rd, 44th, and 45th chapters, where God gives the testimony of Himself. We will begin in Isaiah 43:10, where God is speaking to Israel:

### Isaiah 43:10-13

*<sup>10</sup> Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*

*<sup>11</sup> I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. <sup>12</sup> I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. <sup>13</sup> Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?*

What we read here should sound somewhat familiar, because Jesus made reference to no one being able to remove from His hand in John 10:28-30. But it is very interesting that after seeing the testimonies of the apostles that there is One God, the Father - we now see this same God in the Old Testament saying "I, even I, am the Lord; and **beside me there is no saviour**". This may cause you to pause for a minute, because if someone were to ask you 'who is your savior?' or 'who is your Lord and savior?' would you say He is the one speaking here in Isaiah?

By leaving you with this question, hopefully it will encourage you to think and study the scriptures for yourself. Sometimes I might leave things open-ended for that purpose, so that you search and know for yourself the answers to these things.

Continuing to chapter 44, we read in verse 6:

### Isaiah 44:6

*<sup>6</sup> Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

Here we read the Lord saying 'I am the first, I am the last'. This may sound familiar if you have read the book of Revelation chapter 1, but staying here in Isaiah we see that there is only One who can rightfully claim to be the "first and last". We also see God saying, 'beside me there is no God'. It is important to note that the words "beside me" here do not mean "next to me", but they are meant as "other than" or "outside of". What God is saying here is 'other than me, there is no God.' **There is only one.**

The third scripture from the book of Isaiah is in chapter 45, beginning with verse 4.

#### **Isaiah 45:4-6**

*<sup>4</sup>For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. <sup>5</sup>I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: <sup>6</sup>That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.*

So, we can see how God is repeatedly making this point that there is only one God, and there is none else. And if we go down a bit further to verses 14 and 15, there is also something worth noting.

#### **Isaiah 45:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup>Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.*

**Note:** When it says 'there is no God' what He is saying is that there is no other God. And then verse 15 is a very interesting verse:

*<sup>15</sup>Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*

Here we see the Spirit of the Lord speaking through the prophet Isaiah, letting us know that God is a God who hides Himself. And we can compare this with what Paul said in Acts chapter 17, when he was on Mars Hill. This is when Paul gave a discourse about the "unknown God". Beginning with verse 24 of Acts chapter 17 it reads:

#### **Acts 17:24-28**

*<sup>24</sup>God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup>Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; <sup>26</sup>And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;*

<sup>27</sup> That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

<sup>28</sup> For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

We saw in Isaiah that God is a God who hides Himself, but here in Acts we find that He is a God who is not far from every one of us - all we have to do is seek Him. From these two passages, we learn that even though He is very near and as it says 'we live in Him and move, and have our being in Him', there is a certain aspect of God that is hidden from us.

Paul's full discourse here in Acts chapter 17 is one of my favorite passages. And I would suggest reading all of it, because there are other interesting things that let us know about this One God that made the Heavens and the earth. But for now we will continue in Isaiah 45.

## EVERY KNEE, EVERY TONGUE

### Isaiah 45:18-25

<sup>18</sup> For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

**Note:** So once again, we see the same thing that Paul said - the Lord that created the Heavens.

<sup>19</sup> I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. <sup>20</sup> Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.

<sup>21</sup> Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

<sup>22</sup> Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. <sup>23</sup> I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

<sup>24</sup> Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. <sup>25</sup> In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

The verse that I really want to highlight is verse 23, where we have God speaking in the Old Testament, saying "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, **That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.**"

We can compare this to what is written in the book of Philippians chapter 2, to help us know a little bit more about this One God.

### **Philippians 2:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

<sup>10</sup> *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

<sup>11</sup> *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

So, keeping in mind that there is just One God who every knee will bow to and every tongue confess... and comparing what we have here in Philippians with what we read in Isaiah 45:23, it sheds even more light on the fullness of who the One True God is.

## **ONE WAY**

Now that we have looked at how the most important number relates to God, let's look at how this most important number relates to us. As mentioned in the previous two lessons, there is only one way to be saved - only one way to beat the odds.

In John chapter 14 and verse 6, **Jesus tells us that He is the way.** And in the 7th chapter of Hebrews, when describing Jesus in His role as the High Priest and mediator of the New Covenant, it says that "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Hebrews 7:25).

So, we really have to think, what does it mean to *come to God by Jesus*? The answer to this was actually given when the first gospel message was preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost. When the people asked 'what shall we do?' Peter replied: 'Repent, each and every one of you, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost' (Acts 2:38).

Being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ is how we come to God. This must be done in faith, because the Bible tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. It also says "for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). This shows us that believing is not the same as "coming" to God, but that all who come to God must believe.

So, if you're someone who hasn't yet come to God, the scriptures tell us that the way that we come to Him is by being baptized in the name of the One who was crucified for you - in the name of Jesus Christ. If you are someone who hasn't done that today and would like to come to God according to scripture, I would say that as it is written: 'Today if you hear His voice, harden not your heart' (Hebrews 3:15).

### **Revelation 1:17-18**

*<sup>17</sup> And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*

*<sup>18</sup> I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

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