



A Sure Foundation

The beliefs that we build our lives on

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

MONTH 1

WEEK 4

READ:

John 15-21

Job 36-42

Isaiah 55

We always want to **KNOW**. For some the questions are: What is our favorite celebrity arguing with their spouse about? Where does our neighbor spend his evenings? Others ask: Why does salt thaw the ice? Where does the universe end? Job had questions too: Why do bad things happen to good people? Where is God when I need Him?

I think we want to know because it makes us feel safer, more in control. We want to know because it makes us feel powerful. It makes us feel like we have a handle on the world and people around us. God can be a bit disconcerting to us because we are not yet capable of fully knowing Him. He doesn't change, but my idea of Him does as I am forced to stretch my previous conceptions in my evolving relationship with Him. No longer does He fit, even in my own imagination, within the image that I have for Him. I cannot pin Him down, or define Him, or make Him behave the way that I would if I was God. His ways are not my ways. For now, there is a separation between our understanding and the full reality of God. We know enough, but He is still full of surprises. He is still a mystery that defies our full understanding. He is so MUCH that He has to hide Himself from us because we could not bear all of Him (Ex.3:6). Even Jesus said in Jn. 16:12 that He could not tell the disciples everything because they would not be able to bear it at that time. Not only are we unable to control God, we cannot even fully understand Him. Yet, John 17:3 says "knowing" God and the One that He sent is eternal life. What kind of "knowing" does Jesus mean?

- Knowing that He is real, like I know, or believe, that George Washington was real based on the available evidence?
- Knowing what the Bible tells me about God in the same way that I know about George Washington from the history books I read as a school child?
- Knowing Him in the intimate friendship way that John 15 describes and I will never hope to have with George Washington?
- Knowing God so well that no mystery remains, even better than Martha Washington knew her own husband?

What are we responsible to know, and what are we not really expected to understand? 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 describes the limits of our knowledge of God. It also says that a day will come when we will be able to see God face to face. The mystery will be over and we will fully understand, and fully know.

What are you most looking forward to understanding or knowing about God?

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

John 1:1



WHO CAN KNOW?

There are some things that God leaves no question about.
What do these verses indicate that He wants us to know?
Deut. 4:35

Deut. 7:9

1 Kings 8:60

Josh. 4:24

What does God promise in Jeremiah 33:3? _____

What do you think He means by that? _____

What do each of these passages have to say about what remains unknown to us?

Eccl. 11:5

Isaiah 55:8,9

Romans 11:33-36

MYSTERY REVEALED

The word mystery is used many times in the New Testament. It generally refers to something that has been hidden in the past, but is now revealed.

What are some of the things that were hidden in the past, but can now be known?

Romans 16:25-27

Eph. 1:7-10

Eph. 3:3-9

Col. 1:26-27

Where is all knowledge hidden (Col. 2:2,3)? _____

Who will be able to understand according to Matthew 13:10-17 _____



THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY

Even though the word “trinity” does not occur in the Bible, the concept is certainly there. How would you explain the trinity to someone who did not know what it was? _____

JOB AND THE MYSTERY OF GOD Job 36-42

Who was speaking in chapters 36 and 37, and what mysteries did he point out about God? _____

When God spoke in chapters 38-41, what are some of the things that he indicated Job was ignorant about? _____

What do you think are some things that are too wonderful for us to know? _____

Job understood at least a little about a Redeemer (Job 19:25), but imagine the mysterious condition of waiting for God knows what to reestablish our relationship with God! Even when Christ was present among us, His truth and identity remained a mystery for many.



A MYSTERIOUS FRIENDSHIP John 15-17

What kind of relationship does Christ expect us to have with Him? _____

Looking back in your journey of faith and abiding, what are some ways that you have been pruned? _____

How should we view these “prunings”? _____

What commands are we to keep in order to remain in Christ’s love? _____

What was the benefit of Christ’s return to His Father? _____

What more do you think Jesus would have told the disciples if they could have born it? _____

When the disciples claimed to finally understand, what was Jesus’ response? _____

What was Jesus’ prayer for His disciples? _____

What was Jesus’ prayer for us? _____

DENIAL John 18-21

Can you think of a time that you denied Jesus? Maybe you weren’t asked a direct question like Peter was. Maybe it was just a failure to speak up when you should have, or act as you should have, or forgive as you should have. The only difference was that when the cock crowed Peter was faced with the reality of what he had done, and too often we move through our lives oblivious of our denials.

What affect do you think that Peter’s denial, and recognition of it, had on his future ministry?

How did Jesus single Peter out when He appeared to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias?

What question did Jesus ask Peter? _____

How many times did He ask it? _____

What did Jesus commission Peter to do? _____

RECOGNIZING JESUS

Who was the first to see Christ after He had risen? _____

Why? _____

At what point did Mary Magdalene recognize Him?

What made the disciples recognize Him when He appeared to them? _____

Why was it difficult for Thomas to accept the testimony of the others? _____

When did the disciples realize it was Jesus who had told them to cast out their net? _____

When do you recognize the presence of Jesus in your life?

Which things were chosen to be included in the book of John? _____

What about all the things that are not included in Scripture? _____