

become strangers to them.

Applying these distinctions to the knowledge of God, we can say that it is possible to have a great deal of factual knowledge about God without knowing Him personally. In James 2:19 we are told that the demons believe that there is one true and living God, and that they shudder! Presumably they know something about God's majesty or His holiness, or His coming judgment that makes them tremble. In Mark 5:7 we read that the demons possessing the madman of Gadara knew that Jesus was the Son of God. But they did not know Him in a relational sense. In John 7:27-29 some of the Jews of Jerusalem, when they heard Jesus, said, "We know where this man is from." Jesus cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him." These Jews had a degree of factual knowledge concerning Jesus, and they certainly had some factual knowledge concerning God as He was revealed in the Old Testament, but they did not have a personal knowledge of God. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that it is possible to have personal knowledge of God. And the reason why this is so is that God has revealed Himself!

In Hebrews 1:1-3 we read "In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." Among the various ways in which God spoke in the Old Testament period were: revelation by theophanies, including the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, the shekinah glory, the glorious aftermath, and appearances of the Angel of the Lord; revelation in altered states of consciousness, including visions, trances, and dreams; revelation by means of Urim and Thummim and the lot; revelation by means of miracles; revelation by audible speech from God; revelation by prophetic declaration through human instruments; and revelation through the sacred writings of Scripture. All of these modes of special revelation can be subsumed under one title: that of Word. Of course, the preeminent revelation which God has given of Himself is His incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. In John 1:18 we read, "No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."