

The Omniscient God

Key Verse: *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers:"* 1 Peter 3.12.

By the omniscience of God we mean that God's knowledge is absolute, perfect and complete. The past, present and future are all alike to Him. If God is God, what else would we expect. A watchmaker knows when a clock will strike, but an electronics engineer does not know what programs a television set will play or how people will choose to respond to them. God does and He acts as appropriately.

Consider the scope of the knowledge of God. Consider this short list. He knows:

Infinite detail, See Psalm 147.4
The smallest detail, Matthew 10.30
Prehistoric events, Acts 15.18
All creatures created, Mat. 10.29
Things men do, Psalm 33.13-15
Our secret thoughts, Acts 15.8
Our needs, Matthew 6.8
All we have done, Malachi 3.16
Things future, Isaiah 46.9&10
What men will do, 1 Sam 23.12
The incomprehensible, Ps. 139.6
True wisdom, James 3.17

Remember that He knows all about us

He knows about our problems. *'Thou hast kept count of my tossings; put thou my tears in thy bottle! Are they not in thy book?'* Psalm 56.8. God is not untouched by our sorrows, our losses, our disappointments or our bereavements. David here tells God to preserve his tears in the custom of the East, just as he entered the events in a journal. See Isaiah 63.9 & 2 Kings 20.5. God knows our limitations and failings. *'Like as a father pities his*

children, so the LORD pities them that fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.' Psalm 103.14.

He knows about our potential as He did Peter Luke 22.32, and expects us to rise to the occasion and bring honour to His name.

God's knowledge does not depend upon learning, or on seeing, on being told or experience. Job 21.22, Isaiah 40.13 & 14, Romans 11.34. He is not a man. He does not need these things. However Jesus, the incarnate Son of God 'learned obedience' Hebrews 5.8, through the things He experienced, because He was also the Son of man (see John 3.14 for example), thus accomplishing for those who accept Him reconciliation with God. Philippians 2.5-11

God Knows the end from the beginning. He not only knows what men will do but He knows why they will do it. This is demonstrated in the actions of Judas Iscariot who betrayed

Jesus despite the fact that Jesus knew beforehand and told Judas that He knew. (John 13.21-30). We see that Judas was free to act as he had chosen. See also Isaiah 44.24-45.4 a prophecy 150 years before, telling how Cyrus of his own free will would perform the will of God for Israel. This characteristic of God's omniscience applies to all matters, not only the acts of men.

God's foreknowledge does not demand that He act.

Whilst God has a knowledge of all things, See John 2.24&25 also 18.4, God acts sovereignly by Divine wisdom. He is not the cause of each and every action, nor is He morally responsible for each and every action of others. Each individual is morally responsible for their own actions Revelation 20.11-15. He is not the author of evil. Men are free to act because He created them thus, yet God is working out His Divine plan unhindered.

Also we ought not to cease from prayer because God knows all. God answers prayer, therefore let us pray. James 4.2, Matthew 6.8 & 7.11.

People often say in a time of stress, 'Why did God allow this to happen?' They assume that

because God knows that He ought to have acted in a manner that pleased them. Such a statement reveals an ignorance of the nature and attributes of God. Divine omniscience does not demand Divine action. However He may act in anticipation of even our asking Isaiah 65.24.

The omniscience of God cannot be separated from the omnipresence of God.

We must remember that the distinctions that we have used by these terms are synthetic, a technique we use to help us understand the heart and nature of God, and how we may better please Him. Without the fact that God is loving, righteous, eternal and omnipresent, to say that God is omniscient would be illogical and inconsistent leaving us with a God who is arbitrary and self serving. Our study and indeed the whole Bible tells us differently, that we are free, free to receive and serve Him, because He through the death of Jesus Christ has redeemed and then has given to us all that we need in Christ. He by His Spirit has placed Jesus in all the fulness of the Godhead in us Ephesians 3.19 & Colossians 2.9&10. Jesus is enough.

Bibliography: Strong A H, Systematic Theology 1907 Twentieth Edition 1958

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