

The Infinite Knowledge of God

Imagine the following situation. You're stranded on a desert island. No, not with the cast of Survivor. You're all alone. At least you think you are. Until you go exploring, and what do you find lying in the sand on the beach? A wristwatch! So what do you conclude? "I'm not the first human being to set foot on this island. Someone has been here before me, and maybe they're still here now!" Isn't that a logical conclusion to make? When you see the evidence of design, the only logical conclusion is that there's been an intelligent designer at work. Right?

And yet, when it comes to the order and design of the universe around us, what do many unbelievers say? "There is no Creator. All this came about as the result of chance plus time - billions and billions of years of time!" Sir Frederick Hoyle, the British astronomer, answered that claim like this. He said, "The odds of the universe happening by chance are equivalent to a Boeing 747 being assembled by a tornado blowing through a junkyard." Or to say it another way, it probably didn't happen like that. When you find the evidence of design and the presence of everything you need for life and happiness, the only logical deduction is that Someone incredibly great not only exists, but also loves you very, very much.

Take one example - the human hand. The adult human has 206 bones in his or her body. But 54 of them are in our hands - 16 in the wrists and 38 in our fingers. The problem is: How do you make a hand that's both flexible and strong? After all, if you make the muscles large enough to be strong, how do you keep the fingers from being too fat to close? The answer was a large number of small muscles to operate the hand. In fact, we rarely realize what a masterpiece of engineering the thumb is. But smash it with a hammer, so you can't use it for a while, and it becomes strikingly apparent (pardon the pun) how necessary it is! If you doubt it, try this experiment. Tape your thumb to your hand with a piece of adhesive, then try picking up a dime. (Nobody picks up pennies anymore.) It won't take but a moment for you to miss your thumb. Resting in a special saddle joint, the thumb gives the hand great flexibility and freedom to do what no other creature can do - thread a needle, write a book, paint a picture.

So how did all this come about? Chance plus time? Of course not! No rational person would come to that conclusion. Wherever we look, we see the evidence of brilliant and loving design, pointing to the existence of a Designer who is not only infinite in wisdom, but also very, very good and kind.

That is my topic as I continue our study of God. Our goal is to understand who He is, what He's like, and what He thinks about you and me. Until now, we've shined the light of His Word on His holiness, His faithfulness, and His goodness. But in the next few posts I am shifting the spotlight to His knowledge, which is one of the most powerful and practical topics we can study. As we do, I will be emphasizing four main points: His knowledge is proclaimed in Scripture, proven in prophecy, pictured in creation, and precious in experience. I hope you'll take the time to ponder these thoughts with me and

share them with your family and friends. Who knows? They could prove to be life-changing!

God's Knowledge Is Proclaimed in Scripture.

Isaiah the prophet proclaimed it like this: "Who has understood the mind of the LORD or instructed Him as a counselor? Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten Him, and who taught Him the right way?" (Isaiah 40:13-14) Isaiah is asking a rhetorical question which is a question whose answer is so obvious that it doesn't even have to be stated. In this case, the answer is: No one. No one has ever taught God anything because His knowledge is so great that He needs no advice from anyone. 5 words from the Bible help us understand just how amazing His knowledge is. The first word is:

1. Independent. We humans have learned some amazing things. We have cracked the genetic code, expanded the horizons of technology, and come up with all sorts of creative solutions to age-old problems. But everything we know is built on what others have taught us. God's knowledge isn't like that. Whatever there is to know, He knew before the worlds were made. What a comfort that is when we pray! Because so often what's our worry when we pray? "Am I saying this right and being clear about what I need?" For Romans 8:26 says, "We do not know how to pray as we should." But then, given the greatness of God's knowledge, that isn't a setback. He already knows all about it and needs no one to interpret what we're saying to Him. All we have to do is pray and He promises to work out the details because His knowledge is not dependent on ours.

2. Intuitive. This means that God not only doesn't need to learn; He can't learn. Why? Because He's all-knowing, and how could an all-knowing God ever take anything into His mind that wasn't already there? That would mean at some point in the past He was less than God. Romans 11:33 declares, "O, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?" You see, when we say something is intuitive, we mean it's something we know without having to think about it. Up is up, and down is down, and it doesn't take any effort to figure that out. That's how God's mind works. Everything there is to know, He already knows without having to research it, reason it out, or even think about it.

3. Instantaneous. Sometimes you and I walk into rooms, stop, and have to ask ourselves, "What was I looking for when I came in here?" In fact, there are times when I have to go all the way back to where I started just to remember what I was after. Do you ever do that? God never does. God has never hesitated in His thinking. He knows Himself. He knows His creatures. And He knows all that there is to know immediately without having to stop and think about it.

4. Perfect. God's knowledge includes everything - things present, things past, things future. In fact, His knowledge even includes things that never happened, but could have happened. An example is Matthew 11:21 where Jesus warned the people of His day, "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth

and ashes." In other words, the Lord Jesus not only knows what will happen in the future, He also knows what would have happened in each and every case if we'd made different choices. The devil, of also has great knowledge and takes great pride in it. But his knowledge is all conjectural, based on past experience and observation. For example, do you recall what he said about Job? "Touch his body, God, and take away all that is precious to him, and he will curse you to your face!" But did that happen? No. Why not? Because only God knows us perfectly. Only God knows our hearts.

5. Personal. God knows us. From the highest to the lowest and from the least to the greatest of us, God knows all there is to know about us - not just our actions and our habits, but even the thoughts and motives of our hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" The answer is given in the next verse: "I, the LORD, search the heart; I test the mind, even to give man according to his ways." Adam and Eve hid from God when they sinned, and so do we at times hoping to escape the shame of what we've done. But Hebrews 4:13 reminds us: "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." He sees us when we're sleeping. He knows when we're awake. He knows when we've been good or bad. Who? Santa? No, Jesus! Think about that for a moment. Jesus knows everything there is to know about you - the good as well as the bad. And yet, He loves you anyway and invites you to come to Him just as you are! What an amazing God we serve! He is perfect in knowledge and yet also overflowing with grace and mercy for those of us who love Him.

God's Knowledge Is Proven by Prophecy.

If God is truly omniscient (all-knowing), we'd expect Him to know the future. And if God knows the future, we'd expect Him to share at least some of those secrets with His friends, wouldn't we? And He has! Those secrets are called Bible prophecies. For example, did you know that God gave and fulfilled over 300 prophecies at the first coming of Jesus His Son? They include His birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), His cleansing of the Temple (Malachi 3:1), His betrayal by a friend (Psalm 41:9), His crucifixion with two thieves (Isaiah 53:12), the piercing of His hands and feet (Psalm 22:16), His burial in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9), and His resurrection from the dead (Psalm 16:10).

In his book, Science Speaks, Peter Stoner calculates the odds of just 8 of these prophecies coming true in one person's life as 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. To illustrate the impossibility of this happening as a result of coincidence, he likens it to covering the state of Texas with silver dollars two feet deep, marking just one of them with an X, stirring the whole mass thoroughly, and then blindfolding a man and giving him one chance to pick out the right coin. What is the likelihood of him choosing the correct silver dollar? The same chance of the prophecies of Christ's first coming being fulfilled in the life of One Person. But they were perfectly fulfilled because God is perfect in knowledge and wisdom, and He loves to share that knowledge and wisdom with those He loves.

Of course, there are still hundreds of prophecies to be fulfilled at Christ's second coming. One of the most remarkable is a prophecy revealed to Queen Victoria by her Jewish prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli. In one of her more thoughtful moments, she asked him, "Can you give me one verse from the Bible to prove it's true?" He replied, "Your majesty, I can give you one word—the Jew!" He was right. What other people on earth has ever been invaded, conquered, and led captive into all nations not only to survive, but also to retain their own unique identity and after 1900 years of wandering, to return to their own homeland and become a great nation again? That has never happened to any other people, but it has happened to the Jews. And the amazing thing is that it was all predicted long ago by the Bible prophets through the inspiration of God's Spirit.

Jesus warned, for example, that due to their unbelief, the nation of Israel would be destroyed and the people scattered throughout the nations (Luke 21:20-24). This was fulfilled starting with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. and extending all the way through the Holocaust of World War II. And yet, God also promised that He would never forget His people, but would bring them back to their Promised Land. Ezekiel 37 describes their initial regathering as that of "dry bones." In other words, they would initially be regathered in unbelief without the Spirit of God living in their hearts. This is what we see in Israel today—5 million Jews living in the most modern, the militarily strongest, and only democratic nation in the Middle East. Yet 80% of the Jewish people describe themselves as agnostic, not even sure if the God of the Bible exists.

Israel's rebirth as a nation took place May 14, 1948, when David Ben Gurion, Israel's newly elected president, stood before the microphone in Tel Aviv and announced that for the first time in 1878 years, Israel was again an independent nation living in the land of their forefathers. His announcement was immediately followed by an attack from five Arab nations much larger and stronger than Israel. Yet Israel survived! One of the greatest stories from their war of independence is how one single kibbutz in southern Israel held off the entire Egyptian army for days until reinforcements arrived from Tel Aviv.

Then in 1967, they were attacked again, this time by Egypt and Jordan. Providentially, Mossad (Israeli intelligence) found out about the attack before it could happen. They sent their fighter jets to Egypt, wiped out the entire air force while it was still on the ground, and then turned to attack Jordan, driving its forces out of Jerusalem. And for the first time in 1897 years, the Jewish people had control of their ancient capital once again, the soldiers weeping with joy at the Wailing Wall. All of this was predicted by the Bible, revealing once again the supernatural knowledge, wisdom, and planning of Almighty God.

Luke 21:24 is one more verse worth mentioning because here Jesus warned, speaking of the Jews, "They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are

fulfilled.” Why is this prophecy important? Because it means the time is short! Jerusalem is no longer being trampled on by the Gentiles. It’s in Jewish hands, which means the times of the Gentiles are coming to an end and that the Lord Jesus is preparing to return from heaven even as I write.

What a brilliant God we serve! His infinite knowledge is on display for all to see. So trust Him! Trust Him to apply His perfect wisdom to your needs and thank Him that no problem is too big for Him to solve. Proverbs 3:5-6 urges us, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

God’s Knowledge Is Pictured in Creation.

A moment ago, I mentioned the complexity of the human hand. Now I ask you to consider a few more amazing works of God such as the symmetry of a spider’s web, the mystery of animal migration, the intricacy of the human eye, and the storage capacity of the human brain. Together with prophecy, creation provides indisputable proof of the perfect knowledge and wisdom of God.

Job is one of the best witnesses to this fact, for what was the main issue Job faced in his book? Suffering! Job suffered excruciating pain and loss—the death of his children, the destruction of his wealth, and the ruin of his health—leading him to question God’s judgment, wondering: “Why is this happening to me? I haven’t committed any heinous sin to deserve these trials!” And for 37 chapters, God patiently waits in silence letting Job vent his grievances. But in chapter 38, it’s God’s turn to speak and Job’s turn to be quiet. God corrects Job’s attitude by asking him a series of questions about creation, each one illustrating the infinite wisdom of God and the very limited understanding of Job.

Verse 1: "Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: 'Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring a line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy?’” In the verses that follow, God proceeds to ask Job 62 additional questions, each one designed to expose Job’s ignorance and exalt the infinite knowledge and wisdom of God.

One of the questions on God’s pop quiz is a topic we talk about every day: the weather! He asks Job, “Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, to water a land where no man lives, a desert with no one in it, to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?” (38:25-27) God adds in verse 34: “Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water?” Of course, the answer is: No one can control the weather. In fact, not only can’t we control it, we don’t even predict it very well. Did you hear about the young meteorologist fresh

out of college who landed a job as a weatherman for a television station back east? Try as he might, he couldn't get the forecast right. So he was promptly fired and flew home in embarrassment. The friend who picked him up at the airport asked him why he was back so soon. His reply: "The climate didn't agree with me."

Another fascinating question follows in verse 35: "Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, 'Here we are!'" You and I hear the see the lightning and hear the thunder, and we wonder why God would create something so frightening and destructive. After all, just think of the damage it can do—sparking forest fires, causing power outages, and sending children (not to mention a few adults) scrambling for a place to hide. One thunderstorm I'll never forget took place while we were serving in Romania. Without warning, hailstones the size of golf balls started raining down from the sky, one of them shattering our dining room window before we got the shutters closed. And yet, lightning also plays a crucial role in feeding the plant life of our planet. For even though 80% of our atmosphere is nitrogen, which is essential to plant life, the question is how to get it out of the sky and into the soil. One answer is lightning. When lightning flashes across the sky, its intense heat dissolves the nitrogen with the rain and carries it to the earth below. That's why we smell acid in the air after a thunderstorm. It's the smell of God's natural fertilizer fallen to earth.

The point is: Our God is not a haphazard god who acts without purpose. He's an infinitely wise God with a good reason for everything He does—whether it's sending lightning crashing across the sky or allowing suffering to enter our lives. We may not understand it at the time. Job certainly didn't. But God has a good purpose for everything He does. So let's trust Him with whatever enters our lives today. After all, if God can rule all of creation with such wisdom and majesty, shouldn't we be able to trust Him to manage to our lives too?

God's Knowledge Is Priceless In Experience.

So far we've seen how God's wisdom is proclaimed in Scripture, proven by prophecy, and pictured in creation. Finally, I want to emphasize why His knowledge is precious in experience. The first reason is because it means there is Someone who accepts us unconditionally. Reflect for a moment on Psalm 139. This is the Psalm from which we get the hymn, "Search Me, O God." In it, David describes God's knowledge of us—

"O, Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, You know it completely, O Lord. You hem me in—behind and before; You have laid Your hand on me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain...How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand."

What an encouraging psalm! As you read it, one thing becomes clear: God knows us! Not only what we say and do, but even the unspoken thoughts and motives of our hearts. For the person with something to hide, that's unnerving because it means there

is no place to escape from His all-seeing eyes. But for those of us who have trusted Christ for forgiveness, the fact that He knows everything is a blessing. Because it means that no tattletale can ever snitch on us. Nor will any forgotten skeletons come tumbling out of the closet to embarrass us. For God already knows it all, and He accepts us anyway, just as we are!

You see, when others accept us, they do so because they don't know us, at least not completely. I wonder, for example, if you had to ask your wife to marry you all over again in light of everything she's learned about you in the last 5 or 10 or 50 years, would she say "yes" or "no?" The good news is that when we ask God to make us part of His family through our faith in Christ, He has no delusions about us. The things we're ashamed of and hope no one else learns, He already knows. And yet, He accepts us anyway, just as we are. As the Bill Gaither song puts it, "He who knows me best, loves me most!" God's knowledge is precious because it means there is Someone who accepts us perfectly, just as we are.

There is also a second reason it is priceless. It means there is Someone who can protect us perfectly from harm. When I was a little boy, I was afraid to go to bed at night because of where my parents' bedroom was located. Their bedroom was located on the main floor in the middle of the house whereas mine was at the top of the stairs which began just inside the front door. I worried, "What happens if someone sneaks into the house to kidnap me? Will my parents even know what happened?" That may sound silly until you realize that many believers have the same fear about their Heavenly Father. "Does He know the evil attacking my soul and is He capable of protecting me from it? Or is it possible for something to slip by Him and put my soul in eternal danger?" Then the truth comes back to us: No, it isn't possible, for God knows everything that can happen to me, and He's promised that nothing can ever touch me without His divine permission.

This is David's point in Psalm 139:5, "You hem me in—behind and before; You have laid Your hand on me." The sober fact is that the enemy of our souls would destroy us if he could. But he doesn't have that right. Before he can do anything to harm us, he must receive God's divine permission. And the truth is: God will never let him do anything to us that isn't for our eternal good. As Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Satan wants to worry us and frighten us and destroy our faith, but Jesus is praying for us this very moment, ensuring us that nothing of eternal harm will ever touch us.

Finally, God's knowledge is precious because it means there is Someone who can direct us perfectly. You and I are like commuters stuck in rush hour traffic, not sure which road is the best way to get home. So what does the smart driver do? He listens to the latest sky traffic report, because he knows that flying above the congestion, the reporter has a clear view of how to proceed. The same is true of God. When things get confusing down here, what's the best thing to do? Not to panic or give in to "road rage," but to look

beyond our problems to the One who can “guide us with His eye.” Because He is above it all, He sees everything perfectly and can safely guide us all the way home.

Are there any areas of life where you’re not sure what to do next? Maybe a moral issue that is bothering you or a practical decision that could affect your health or the welfare of your family for years to come? No matter how confused you feel or mixed your motives are, whisper the last few words of Psalm 139. For if you say them and mean them with all your heart, God will faithfully direct you in the very best way to go, both for your good and His glory. David prayed, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

I finish with an interview with a professional lifeguard who was asked, “With all the bathers on the beach and all the hub-bub in the water, how can you tell when somebody genuinely needs help?” His reply? “No matter how great the noise or confusion, there has never been a single time in my experience when I could not distinguish the cry of distress above everything else. I can always tell.” Need I say it? The One who watches over our lives is far more attentive than any lifeguard at the beach. He is aware of everything that has or ever will happen to us. His thoughts about us cannot be numbered. So let’s trust Him. Let’s take that thing that is bothering us and put it up against His knowledge of us, knowing that the One who knows us best, loves us most. His knowledge is perfect, and His love for us will never end. May His name be praised forever!