

## Theology Proper

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- I. Why Study About God?
- a. Purpose: As an introduction to our series we need to consider why should we study about God, God's work and God's attributes?
  - b. Knowing God is something highly prized: (**Jeremiah 9:23-24**)
    - i. Passage: *"<sup>23</sup> This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches,<sup>24</sup> but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD."*
    - ii. Proof:
      1. Note **verse 23** compares different reasons that people boast:
        - a. "their wisdom"
        - b. "their strength"
        - c. their riches
      2. All the boasts is about them; note the use of "their"
      3. **Verse 24** notes that God wants us to boast in something else: *"but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me,"*
        - a. "but" is in contrast to all the other boasts
        - b. What is boast is the thing that is valued.
        - c. What is valued? *"that they have the understanding to know me,"*
      4. Note that the second half of **verse 24** lists God's attributes. **Can you list some of them?**
    - iii. Practice:
      1. Do you value knowing God?
      2. Are you willing to spend time and money to get resources to know God more?
  - c. Knowing God is eternal life (**John 17:3**)
    - i. Passage: *"Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*
    - ii. Proof:
      1. In context **John 17** is Jesus' priestly prayer for His followers.
      2. Here in **verse 3** Jesus tells us what eternal life means: *"know you, the only true God,"*
    - iii. Practice:
      1. Is salvation more than just going to heaven for you?
      2. Do you understand that eternal life begins now—with knowing Him?
  - d. We must know God truthfully in order to worship Him in a way that pleases Him: (**John 4:24**)
    - i. Passage: *"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."*
    - ii. Proof:
      1. Note a qualification of worshipping God require it be "truth."
      2. We know truths about God if we are going to worship Him rightly.
    - iii. Practice: Please Him!

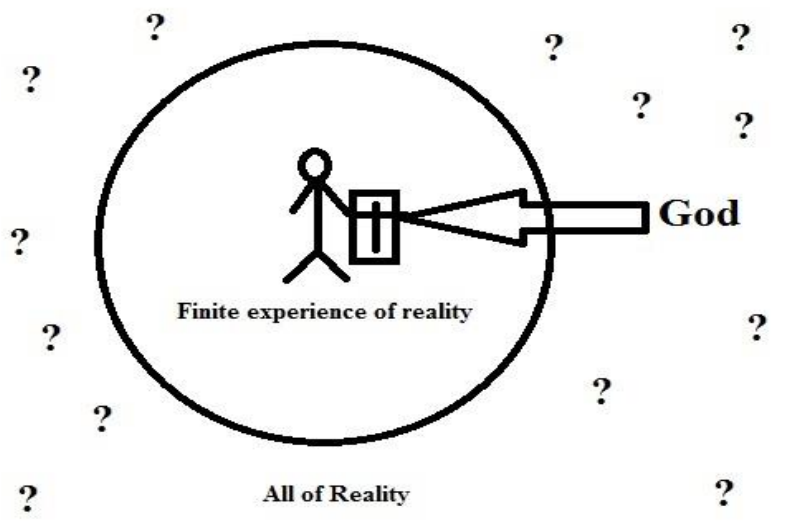
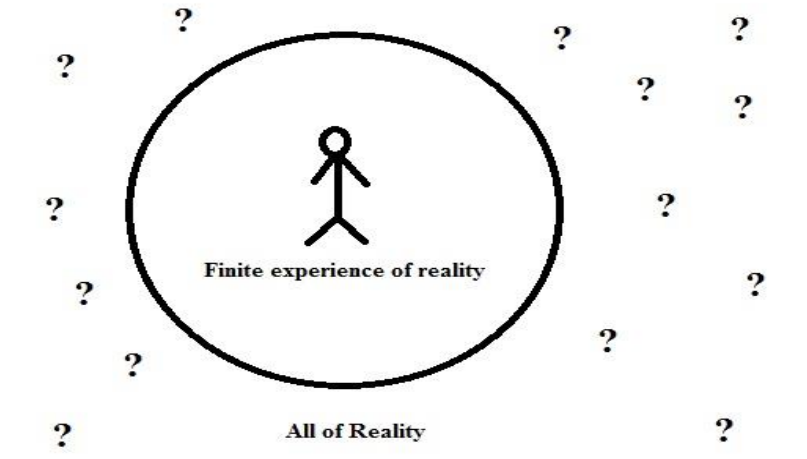
- e. We must study about God in order to be Holy
  - i. Passage: “*but [a]like the Holy One who called you, [b]be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*” (1 Peter 1:15-16)
  - ii. Proof:
    - 1. God wants us to be Holy to reflect Him.
    - 2. How do we know what holiness like Him means if we first don’t study His holiness
  - iii. Practice:
    - 1. A
- f. God wants the world to have knowledge of Him
  - i. Proof:
    - 1. “*They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.*” (Isaiah 11:9)
    - 2. “*For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.*” (Habakkuk 2:14)
  - ii. Practice: Do you see the importance of knowing and sharing your knowledge of God to others?

- II. Can we know God?
- a. Establishing the need: Can we know God?
  - b. Purpose: Before we can go over God's attributes we must answer the question of whether or not we can know Him and if so how.
  - c. God's attributes: Incomprehensibility
    - i. Definition: There is a sense in which we cannot fully understand God.<sup>1</sup>
    - ii. *"Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done, And Your thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to count"* (Psalm 40:5)
      1. We see here that no one can be compared to God.
      2. God is incomprehensible **quantitatively** because there are too many wonders of God that can be declared by God's people.
    - iii. *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it."* (Psalm 139:6)
      1. Psalm 139 praises God for His attributes. Question: **What attributes of God do you find in this Psalm?**
      2. Our verse puts it in perspective that the knowledge of Him cannot be fully attained in some sense.
    - iv. *"Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable."* (Psalm 145:3)
      1. Psalm 145 praises God. Question: **What attributes of God do you find in this Psalm?**
      2. Here we see also that God's greatness is something not fully searchable.
    - v. *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup> "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts."* (Isaiah 55:8-9)
      1. We see here that man cannot be compared to God.
      2. God is incomprehensible **qualitatively** because there are too many wonders of God that can be declared by God's people.
    - vi. *"Oh, the depth of the riches <sup>[1]</sup>both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! <sup>34</sup> For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?"* (Romans 11:33-34)
      1. This is a doxological praise that Paul broke into after some serious intense theology of God's predestination and the role of Israel and Gentiles in Romans 9-11.
      2. Note how in speaking about God, Paul said *"How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"* (Romans 11:33)
      3. This has to do with *"the depth"* of God (Romans 11:33)
      4. Romans 11:34 quotes from Isaiah 40:13 to further reinforce the point.

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 149.

- a. Here it is a rhetorical question about who have known the mind of the Lord.
- b. Thus, God’s mind is not totally comprehensible by man.
- d. How can we know God in light of God’s incomprehensibility?
  - i. Point: We can know God if He Has revealed Himself.



ii. Proof:

1. Passage: *“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”* (Deuteronomy 29:29)
  - a. This verse affirms there exists things that are mysterious concerning God: *“The secret things belong to the LORD our God,”*
  - b. Yet this verse affirms there exists things that are revealed concerning God: *“things revealed”*
  - c. Concerning God’s revelation they:
    - i. *“belong to us”*
    - ii. Are *“forever”*
    - iii. We are called to *“observe all the words of this law”*

2. **1 Corinthians 3:9** also talk about the Gospel as God's mystery as being something God revealed that rulers did not understand.
- iii. Precaution: We must never define the incomprehensibility of God in such a way that we cannot know Him at all.
- iv. How did God revealed Himself? That is the subject of the next lesson.
- e. Application:
  - i. From the Psalms we see the doctrine of God's incomprehensibility being taught but the Psalmists do not merely make an academic observation but they praise and are in awe of God because of it. Do you praise God for the vastness of His character?
  - ii. Knowing that He is infinite and we are finite, does knowing that we can't know it all humble us?
  - iii. Do we trust in God's knowledge much than our own experiential knowledge?
  - iv. Do you see God's revelation as a gift?
  - v. Do you obey what He has revealed to you?