

Session 74: The Omniscience of God Part 2: New Testament

- a. Purpose: In this session we shall study what Scripture in the New Testament has to say about God's omniscience.
- b. What is the omniscience of God? Definitions:
 - i. John Frame: God's "knowledge of everything."¹
 - ii. Wayne Grudem: "God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act."²
 - iii. Another popular view: "Divine omniscience means God knows all true propositions."³
 - iv. John Feinberg has several pages in his book on God on the difficulty of defining God's omniscience and concludes with this definition: "Hence, we can say that divine omniscience means at least knowing everything a being with attributes such as God's can know."⁴
- c. What does the Bible in the New Testament teach about the omniscience of God?
 - i. God sees all creatures: "*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*" (**Hebrews 4:13**)
 1. In the context the previous verse just mentioned that God's Word is able to judge the heart and intentions of people.
 2. Here we see a denial that anyone can escape God's sight: "*And there is no creature hidden from His sight*" (**v.13a**)
 3. Follow by a positive statement that all is within God's sight: "*but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*" (**v.13b**)
 - a. Note the use of the phrase "*all things*," and not just "*all creatures*"
 - b. All things "*are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him*"
 - c. Using metaphorical language, God is described as having eyes.
 - d. His eyes sees all things in such a way that all things are open and laid bare.
 - ii. God knows the amount of hair on our heads: "*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*" (**Matthew 10:30**)
 1. In the context Jesus is telling His disciples not to fear men but to focus upon God.
 2. Notice here in verse 30 the reason for the disciples to trust in God is God's omniscience: He even knows that "*the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*"
 - iii. The members of the Trinity have supernatural knowledge which we shouldn't be surprised given that they are God
 1. Note: The New Testament is different than the Old in that the revelation about the Trinity is clearer in the New than in the Old.

¹ John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2002), 414.

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 190.

³ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 304.

⁴ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 304.

Thus we shouldn't be surprised to see discussion about the members of the Trinity also mention attributes of God found in the persons of the Trinity. For the purpose of this session we will look at the supernatural knowledge of the Spirit and the Son since we take it for granted that people agree God the Father is omniscient.

2. The Spirit

- a. *"For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:10)
 - i. Notice here the Spirit is a person in that He has a will and intellect when He *"searches all things"*
 - ii. The Spirit's search includes *"even the depths of God"*
 - iii. To search even the depths of God means that the Spirit must be God Himself and omniscient.
- b. *"For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:11)
 - i. Again there is the affirmation that God's thoughts no one knows except God and the Spirit of God.
 - ii. The analogy is drawn with even man's knowledge is only known with his spirit himself.

3. The Son

- a. *"Nathanael *said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' 49 Nathanael answered Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.'"* (John 1:48-49)
 - i. By way of context this is early in Jesus' ministry when Philip was trying to invite Nathaniel to see Jesus.
 - ii. Jesus was able to see Nathaniel supernaturally.
- b. *"All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."* (Matthew 11:27)
 - i. Apparently Jesus knows the Father but here when He gives the exception He is the only one who knows the Father we must take it that Jesus meant knowing the Father is a supernatural, deeper way.
 - ii. What's even more astounding is that Jesus plays "God," in being the one who reveals the Father to whomever He Himself as the Son wants.
- iv. God knows possibilities of things that did not happen

1. Note that up to this point all the verses we have seen involves God knowing what is actually the case of things in reality. We are going to see in the following two verses that God also know what is called “counter-factual truths.” Counter-factual truths means claims that are true involving possibilities of things that didn’t happen.
2. “*“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in [b]sackcloth and ashes.”*”
(Matthew 11:21)
 - a. Here is Jesus Christ speaking.
 - b. Jesus is pronouncing woe upon two cities: “Chorazin” and “Bethsaida.”
 - c. His condemnation involves stating something that didn’t happen: “*if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago*”
 - d. Yet Jesus knows this and knows this supernaturally.
3. “*And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.”*”
(Matthew 11:23)
 - a. Here is Jesus Christ speaking.
 - b. Jesus is pronouncing woe upon the city of “Capernaum.”
 - c. His condemnation involves stating something that didn’t happen: “*f the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.*”
 - d. Yet Jesus knows this and knows this supernaturally.
- v. God also knows individuals and the heart of individuals
 1. “*And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.”*” (Luke 16:15)
 - a. In the context this verse follows after Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector and here this verse is driving the point of Jesus’ lesson.
 - b. Note here that Jesus says plainly “*God knows your hearts*”
 - c. God knowing our hearts also mean that He knows things that escape the notice of other people who might even want to think of us highly.
 2. “*And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen”*” (Acts 1:24)
 - a. In the context of the chapter the Apostles was trying to pick the replacement of Judas.
 - b. Here they are praying to God and acknowledge the truth that God “*know the hearts of all men*”

- c. All men, and not just some men!
 - 3. *“And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;” (Acts 15:8)*
 - a. In the context of the chapter the early church was debating about Gentiles inclusion into the church without becoming Jews themselves.
 - b. According to this verse God *“knows the heart”*
 - c. The mention of God knowing the hearts of the Gentiles is to make the point that God knows the heart of those who are saved, including Gentiles.
 - d. Here we see an example of God’s omniscience in action of knowing the hearts of people.
- d. What does the Bible in the New Testament teach about the omniscience of God?
 - i. How is your reading of the Word? Sometimes we don’t read because we don’t understand. But do you realized that the Spirit is our teacher and He knows thoroughly about God? Do you trust and ask Him for help to understand and know God?
 - ii. How is your prayer life? In light of the examples of the Apostles in Acts 1, do we pray to God in making decisions, knowing that He knows more than we do?
 - iii. Are you fearful of man and prone to peer pressure? In light of Luke 16:15, we should care more about what God thinks about us rather than being esteemed by men.
 - iv. We should also learn that just because we are esteemed by others that does not mean we are not harboring secret sins in our hearts in which God knows about.