

- I. Session 75: The Omniscience of God Part 3: God Knows the Future
- a. **Review:** In the last two sessions we saw what Scripture in the Old and New Testament has to say about God's omniscience. We have established:
    - i. God's omniscience of things in the past.
    - ii. God's omniscience of things present.
    - iii. God's omniscience is without spatial limitations.
  - b. **Purpose:** In this session we shall study what Scripture has to say to prove God's omniscience in terms of God's knowledge of the future and also draw out implications of what that means in our lives.
  - c. Today there are certain theologians who deny that God can know the future
    - i. One such movement that tries to stress they are Evangelicals while denying God's knowledge of the future is called Open Theism.
    - ii. Clark Pinnock is a leading advocate of Open Theism states the following: "Decisions not yet made do not exist anywhere to be known even by God. They are potential—yet to be realized but not yet actual... The God of the Bible displays an openness to the future (i.e. ignorance of the future) that the traditional view of omniscience simply cannot accommodate."<sup>1</sup>
      1. Note the denial that God does not know the future because of the idea that the future hasn't happened yet.
      2. Note also Pinnock believing Scripture teaches the openness of the future.
      3. Note also the denial of "traditional" view of God's omniscience.
    - iii. Other proponents include Gregory Boyd and John Sanders.
    - iv. Christian theologians who have responded to this false view includes John Frame who was the first to respond in book form titled No Other God, a response to Open Theism and Bruce Ware's God's Lesser Glory: The diminished God of Open Theism.<sup>2</sup>
  - d. What does the Bible teaches about the omniscience of God particularly with God's knowledge of the future?
    - i. "Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all." (Psalm 139:4)
      1. We already have seen Psalm 139 in our previous session of how this Psalm teaches God's omniscience in other ways.
      2. Note how in verse 4 that before the Psalmist's words are spoken, there is a confession that God already "know it all."
      3. So God knows what people will say even before they say it and thus God knows this future activity.
      4. Contrary to Clark Pinnock's quote above, this verse is a denial that "Decisions not yet made do not exist anywhere to be known even by God."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Clark Pinnock, "Augustine to Arminius," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1989), 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> For a review of Ware's book see <https://veritasdomain.wordpress.com/2010/06/04/review-gods-lesser-glory-by-bruce-ware/>.

<sup>3</sup> Clark Pinnock, "Augustine to Arminius," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1989), 25-26.

- ii. *“Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.” (Psalm 139:16)*
  - 1. Here is another instance of **Psalm 139** affirming God’s omniscience includes the future.
  - 2. Notice the Psalmist’s “*days*” were written in God’s book.
  - 3. The scope of what is written is comprehensive: “*in Your book were ALL written*”
  - 4. This is effectual knowledge since what were written: “*were ORDAINED for me,*” that is, for the Psalmist.
  - 5. This was knowledge written before it happened: “*When as yet there was not one of them.*”
- iii. *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5)*
  - 1. Here it is God that is speaking.
  - 2. The individual that God is talking about here is Jeremiah the Prophet.
  - 3. The sequence of order of activities here is that everything begins with God then it would happen in Jeremiah’s life.
  - 4. Here we see that God said He knew Jeremiah “*before I formed you.*”
  - 5. So God’s knowledge of Jeremiah precedes before Jeremiah was formed.
  - 6. Thus God can even know someone when that person’s existence is still future.
- iv. *““Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;” (Isaiah 46:9-10)*
  - 1. Here it is God that is speaking.
  - 2. God’s knowledge also includes things of the past: “*Remember the former things long past*” (v.10a)
  - 3. God declares His ability to know the future in the first half of **verse 10** in two clauses:
    - a. “*Declaring the end from the beginning,*”
    - b. “*And from ancient times things which have not been done*”
  - 4. **Verse 10** also connects God’s sovereignty with His omniscience: “*My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure*”
    - a. Notice that God’s plan will be carried through because He is sovereign and omnipotent, etc.
    - b. We can connect that one of the basis for why God is omniscient of the future is because God is Sovereign.

5. In light of verse 9 where God says *“I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,”* we must understand that God’s sovereignty, knowledge of the past and knowledge of the future is what makes Him the only true God and sets Him apart from everyone else.
  6. To deny that God knows the future or God’s general omniscience is to deny the very trait that God has said makes Him God and the only true God.
- v. *“I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. 9 “Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.”” (Isaiah 46:9-10)*
1. Here it is God that is speaking.
  2. God certainly knows the future in the sense that He knows the truth before it happens: *“Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.” (v.10b)*
  3. Again there’s the connection that God makes with His knowledge of the Future separates Him from others and especially with false gods or *“graven images” (v.9)*
  4. God’s omniscience of the future is something that makes Him glorious and He said *“I will not give My glory to another,”*
- vi. *“So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” (Matthew 6:8)*
1. The context is Jesus’ teaching on prayers.
  2. Before this Jesus has exhorted His hearers not to engage in meaningless repetition in their prayers: *“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words” (Matthew 6:7)*
  3. **Matthew 6:8** is actually giving us the reason why we shouldn’t engage in meaningless prayer in light of the causal conjunction *“for.”*
  4. God’s omniscience of the future is stated as the reason: *“for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”*
- e. Implications
- i. Have you ever stopped and marvel that God is a God who knows the future?
  - ii. Do you worry about not knowing something in the future? Knowing that God knows the future should make us trust in Him rather than being anxious. Combined with other attributes of God such as His kindness and sovereignty, it is a great antidote for dealing with anxiety.
  - iii. In dealing with anxiety continue to:
    1. Meditate on the verses we studied demonstrating that God knows all.
    2. Read the Bible regularly which demonstrates God’s omniscience.

- iv. Knowing that God knows the future should make us want to learn truths about the future that He has revealed in the Bible. Do you study the End Times to be encouraged in your faith?
- v. Does God's omniscience effect your prayers for the better? Do you pray with more confidence?