

King's Online Bible School
Doctrine 101: Learning about God

15. The Omniscience of God (adapted from R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths*)

The word *omniscience* means "to have all (*omni*) knowledge (*science*)." It is a term that is properly applied to God alone. Only a being that is infinite and eternal is capable of knowing everything. The knowledge of a finite creature is always limited.

God, being infinite, is able to be aware of all things, to understand all things, and to comprehend all things. He never learns anything or acquires new knowledge. The future as well as the past and present are completely known by Him. He is surprised by nothing.

Because God's knowledge far exceeds our knowledge, some people believe that His thinking differs radically *in kind* from ours. For example, some have suggested that God operates with a different form of logic than ours. They think that if God uses a different kind of logic they can say, "This may all be contradictory to us, but it isn't in the mind of God."

This kind of reasoning is fatal to Christianity. If God in fact has a different order of logic so that what is contradictory to us is logical to Him, then we have no basis for trusting a single word of the Bible. Whatever the Bible says to us could then mean its exact opposite to God.

God's superior knowledge allows Him to be able to resolve mysteries that baffle us. But that points to a difference of *degree* in God's knowledge, not a difference in the *kind* of logic He uses. To be true and faithful, God must be rational. There are no contradictions with Him.

God's omniscience also grows out of His omnipotence. God knows all because He created all and He has willed all. As sovereign Ruler over the universe, God controls the universe. Though some theologians have tried to separate the two, it is impossible for God to know all without controlling all, and it is impossible for Him to control all without knowing all. Like all attributes of God, they are codependent, two necessary parts of the whole.

God's omniscience, like His omnipotence and omnipresence, also relates to time. God's knowledge is absolute in the sense that He is forever aware of all things. God does not have to "access" information. All knowledge is always directly and immediately before God.

God's knowledge of all things is a two-edged sword. For the believer the idea offers security, knowing that God is in absolute control and that He understands everything perfectly. But God's omniscience brings fear to unbelievers. No one can hide from God. He is aware of every sin and every thought. There is nothing into which God's gaze fails to reach.

The omniscience of God makes God's promise to bring about justice certain. For a judge to render a perfectly just verdict he must first know all the facts. No evidence is hidden from the scrutiny of God. All mitigating circumstances are known to Him.

Summary

1. Only an infinite Being can possess infinite knowledge.
2. God has a higher *degree* of knowledge than His creatures, but it is of the same logical order.
3. To attribute a different kind of logic to God is fatal to Christianity.
4. God's omniscience is grounded in His infinity and His omnipotence.
5. God's omniscience is crucial to His role as the Judge of the world.

Biblical passages: Psalm 147:5 Ezekiel 11:5 Acts 15:18 Romans 11:33-36 Hebrews 4:13