



“College Life Class”

***The Attributes of God:
Omniscience***

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God's Omniscience

Literally: omni = all science = knowledge

Historically, the omniscience of God was a straightforward doctrine:

- God knows everything--past, present, and future.
- He knows the actual and the possible; only the impossible (the contradictory) is outside the knowledge of God.

A contemporary debate, however, has changed the theological landscape on this doctrine. God's unlimited knowledge is now allegedly limited: His all-knowing is no longer the knowing of all.

If we adhere to this, we are left with the oxymoronic view of *limited omniscience*. This attack on traditional omniscience has come from both outside and inside evangelicalism.

Systematic Theology by Norman Geisler, vol. 2, 2003, p.180



Biblical Bases for Omniscience

1. Job 21:22

2. Job 36:4

3. Job 37:16

4. Ps. 139:2-4

5. Ps. 147:4-5

6. Isa. 46:10

7. Isa. 40:28

8. Isa. 48:3-5

9. Matt. 6:8

10. Rom. 11:33

11. Eph. 1:11

12. Eph. 2:10

13. Heb. 4:13



Biblical Bases for Omniscience

1. Job 21:22

“Can anyone teach God knowledge?”

2. Job 36:4

“Be assured that My words are not false; One perfect in knowledge is with you.”

3. Job 37:16

“Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of Him who is perfect in knowledge?”

Biblical Bases for Omniscience (cont.)

4. Ps. 139:2-4

“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.”

5. Ps. 147:4-5

“He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding has no limit.”

6. Isa. 46:10

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”

Biblical Bases for Omniscience (cont.)

7. Isa. 40:28

“His understanding no one can fathom.”

8. Isa. 48:3-5

“I foretold the former things long ago, My mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass...

Therefore, I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, ‘My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.’ ”

9. Matt. 6:8

“Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

Biblical Bases for Omniscience (cont.)

10. Rom. 11:33

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and His paths beyond tracing out!”

11. Eph. 1:11

“In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.”

12. Eph. 2:10

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

13. Heb. 4:13

“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.”

How do the other attributes of God support omniscience?

What can you infer from the other attributes of God to the reality of God being omniscient?

Aseity = Self-existent

Necessity = Impossible to not exist

Immutability = Unchangeable

Eternality = Beyond time; no past, present, or future; eternal present

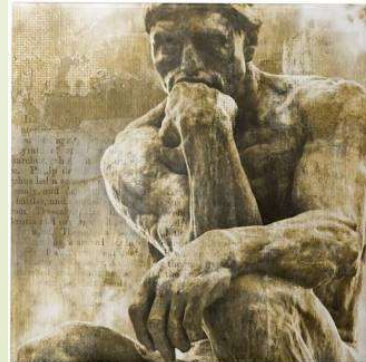
Infinity = Not-finite; limitless in His Being; without boundaries


Immateriality/Spiritual = Pure spirit; not composed of matter

Immensity = Not-measurable; transcends all space and time

Omnipotence = Unlimited power; all-powerful

Omnipresent = Everywhere present; ubiquitous





Omniscience: God fully knows Himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.

“Who is perfect in knowledge” Job 37: 16

God “knows everything” 1 John 3: 20

a. God knows himself.


- God fully knows Himself.
- This is an amazing fact since God's own Being is infinite or unlimited.
- Only He who is infinite can fully know Himself in every detail.
- This fact is implied by Paul:

“for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” 1 Cor. 2:10-11



b. God knows all things actual.

- This means all things that exist and all things that happen.
 - This applies to creation, for God is the One before whom “no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13; cf. 2 Chron. 16:9; Job 28:24; Matt. 10: 29-30).
- a. He knows the tiny details of every one of our lives Mt. 6:8; Mt. 10:30
- b. He knows our actions and thoughts Ps. 139:1-2
- c. He knows the words we will say before they are spoken Ps. 139:4
- d. He knows all the days of our lives even before we are born Ps. 139:16



c. God knows all things possible. This is included in the definition because there are some instances in Scripture where God gives information about events that *might* happen but that do not actually come to pass.

¹⁰Then David said, “O LORD God of Israel, Thy servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account.

¹¹“Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Thy servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Thy servant.” And the LORD said, “He will come down.”

¹²Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will surrender you.”

¹³Then David and his men, about 600, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When it was told to Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit.

1 Samuel 23: 11-13

The Argument from the Test for a False Prophet

Deut. 18:22 “If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD ***does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken.*** That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.”

Implications: a true prophecy is infallible
only false ones are fallible
all prophecies from God come to pass
any prophecy that does not come to pass did not come from God.

Explanation: Only an omniscient Being ***cannot be wrong*** about anything, including the future. Anyone who does not know the future with certainty, can, and eventually will be wrong, especially if he makes specific predictions about the future (he is at best only making good guesses).



God knows all things possible. (cont.)

Jesus could state that Tyre and Sidon ***would have*** repented if Jesus' own miracles had been done there in former days.

²⁰ Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.

²¹“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 sackcloth and ashes.” Matt. 11:20-21

²³“And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.” Matt. 11:23; cf. 2 Kings 13:19



d. God is always aware of everything.

Our definition of God's knowledge speaks of God knowing everything in one “simple act” (not divided into parts).

- a. Number of grains of sand on the seashore
- b. Number of stars in the sky
- c. He need not count them because He always knows all things fully present in His consciousness.
- d. He does not have to reason to conclusions or ponder carefully before He answers, for He knows the end from the beginning, and He never learns and never forgets anything (Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8)
- e. Finally, the definition talks about God's knowledge as not only a simple act but also an “eternal act.” This means that God's knowledge never changes or grows. From all eternity God has known all things that would happen and all things that He would do.



Questions

1. When should we try to hide our thoughts and deeds from God?
How is your answer to this question a blessing for your life?
2. With regard to the circumstances of your life, will God ever make a mistake, or fail to plan ahead, or fail to take into account all the eventualities that occur?
How is the answer to this question a blessing in your life?
3. When did God learn that you would be at the location you are now in, reading this sentence, at this time on this day?
How is the realization of your answer to this question a blessing to your life?



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God's Middle Knowledge

Concerning middle knowledge, so called because it falls in the middle of the list of three kinds of knowledge that we can distinguish in God:

*God's **natural** knowledge:* Knowledge of all things that God could do, including all the different kinds of worlds that He could create and what would happen in those worlds. (God necessarily knows this because He knows Himself exhaustively and therefore knows all the possible things He could do.)

*God's **middle** knowledge:* Knowledge of what every one of God's creatures would freely choose, given different sets of circumstances.

*God's **free** knowledge:* Knowledge of what is actually going to happen. (So called because it is the result of God's free choice to create the kind of world He did create and to influence circumstances in the world the way He actually does influence them.)

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem, 2020, p457



God's Middle Knowledge (cont.)

As for predestination of certain individuals to be saved, Craig says this:

God in His goodness provides sufficient grace for salvation to all people in the world, and the only reason they are not predestined is that they freely ignore or reject the divine helps that God provides...

In Molina's view, we might say that it is up to God whether we find ourselves in a world in which we are predestined, but that it is up to us whether we are predestined in the world in which we find ourselves.

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem, p458

Acts 17:26-27