

1John 3:20

God is Omniscient

Open your Bible to...

1John 3:20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

Pray

Intro

✓ Omniscience

In our continuing series on the awesome topic of God...

Who He is and what He is like...

...with the goal that we might know Him better so that we might love Him more.

We turn now to the attribute of His Omniscience, and by “omniscience” we mean that God knows everything...

“omni” = the Latin for all

“scientia” = the Latin for knowledge

So when we say that God is Omniscient we mean that He is all-knowing...

...He knows everything, the past, the present, and the future, all that actually is, and all that will be or could be, and He knows it all at once.

The Biblical Foundation for God's Omniscience

✓ Biblical foundation

As with all of God's attributes we see His Omniscience displayed on the pages of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. For example, Job declares...

*"Do you know how the clouds are balanced,
Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in
knowledge?" ~ Job 37:16*

Solomon tells us that God is the source of all knowledge...

*"For the Lord gives wisdom; From His
mouth come knowledge and understanding."
Proverbs 2:6*

Psalms 139:1-6 is probably the scripture by which God's omniscience is most famously known, where the psalmist's pen...

*"Lord, you have examined me and know all about me.
You know when I sit down and when I get up.
You know my thoughts before I think them.
You know where I go and where I lie down.
You know everything I do. Lord, even before I say a
word, you already know it. You are all around me—in
front and in back—and have put your hand on me.*

*Your knowledge is amazing to me; it is more than I
can understand.” ~ NCV*

In the New Testament Paul waxes eloquent as he meditates on the Omniscience of God writing...

*“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and
knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His
judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who
has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become
His counselor?”*

Romans 11:33-34

And finally, as the disciples sat with Jesus in that Upper Room the night before He was crucified they acknowledged...

*“Now we are sure that You know all things, and have
no need that anyone should question You. By this we
believe that You came forth from God.”*

John 16:30

Clearly and incontrovertibly the Bible proclaims that God possesses all knowledge...

Therefore, any human doctrine or philosophy that claims that God is somehow limited in His knowledge is both false and blasphemous for that claim would make God less than perfect!

The God Who is revealed on the pages Scripture is perfect in all that He is, all that He does and all that He knows.

Therefore, He cannot be limited in His omniscience for the Bible tells us that...

...God is omniscient, He is the Knower of all things!

The Implications of God's Omniscience

√ Implications

I would suggest that the truth of God's Omniscience is fairly simple to grasp, that is, the concept that God has all-knowledge is not so difficult for our minds to comprehend...

...but when we begin to consider the implications of that truth—that's when God's Omniscience will blow our minds!

√ Let me illuminate...

Because God possesses all-knowledge it follows, and the Bible affirms that He knows the tinkest details of life. Jesus tells us that God knows...

Like the number of the hairs on your head!
(Matthew 10:28-39)

And when a small bird falls from the sky!
(Matthew 10:28-39)

The moment of conception and the hidden wonder of a child's development in the womb (Jer. 1:5 & Ps. 127:3).

And at the same time He is intimately familiar with the details of the furthest reaches of the universe that we cannot yet see! The Bible tells us that...

He knows the names of every star that exists and those that no longer burn but have collapsed into a black oblivion! (Ps. 147:4-5)

He knows the exact moment that the universe came into existence, how fast it is expanding, and the very moment that it will cease to be!

Additionally He knows the grand sweep of human history from beginning to end before it happens!

He knows our thoughts before we think them! (Ps. 139:3)

He knows what could have been and all the choices we could have made, but did not! (Matt. 11:20-24)

He knows the secret counsel of the wicked who vainly plot against Him and His ways! (Ps. 2)

He knows every secret sin and all that men do to hide that sin! (Hebrews 4:13, Ecc. 12:14 & Jer. 16:17)

He knows the private pain that His people suffer and the number of tears that we shed! (Ps. 56:8)

Furthermore His Omniscience tells us that there is nothing that He can learn because He is the Master of all knowledge!

That is because God knows Himself perfectly and, because He is the source and Creator of all things, He therefore knows all that can be known about everyone and everything that He created!

He knows all things perfectly!

He has no rival, and none can challenge His mastery on any topic and subject whether it be math, or science, language or art, politics, or history.

And He knows all things equally well!

He is never surprised!

He never discovers anything because He already knows everything that can be discovered!

All knowledge, facts, and truths that have ever been known, forgotten, or yet to be discovered by human beings and angels is already fixed in God's perfect mind...

...because He is God Omniscient the Knower of all things!

Objections to God's Omniscience

✓ Objections

A number of objections have been raised by both the simple and the intellectual against the truth of God's Omniscience...

...therefore it's important that we have a solid biblical foundation to answer the sincere skeptic.

1. The Garden of Eden

The first objection to God's Omniscience is that supposedly God didn't know where Adam and Eve were hiding after they ate the fruit of the Tree. In Genesis 3:9 we read...

*"Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him,
"Where are you?""*

That certainly seems to imply that God is limited in knowledge as it sounds like He was unsure as to the whereabouts of His disobedient children.

But we would respond that God's question wasn't for His benefit as He already knew exactly where Adam and Eve were hiding.

As we've already seen the Bible makes it clear that God knows the location and name of every star in the universe...

...therefore He would certainly know under what tree or bush Adam and Eve sought to escape His presence!

The reality is that God's question...

"Where are you?"

Was for the benefit of those first human sinners! His question was designed to...

Arouse Adam and Eve's sense of being lost as a consequence of their sin.

To lead them to confess their sin.

To express God's sorrow over their lost condition.

To demonstrate that He seeks after lost people—both then and today.

To establish the accountability that people have before God for their sin.

So His question, "where are you" does not suggest or demonstrate that God is not Omniscient...

...rather God asked the question so as to teach His children a very important lesson about sin and its consequences.

Ex. Parents and their children

As Colin pointed out in his study a common practice of parents is to ask a disobedient child a question that the parent already knows the answer to!

Ex. Empty cookie jar

You walk into the kitchen where you find a chair pushed to the kitchen counter, the cookie jar turned on its side and all of the cookies missing.

The only other person in the house is your 4-year-old.

Whom you discover is hiding in the closet licking crumbs off of their fingers and with chocolate smeared on their hands and face!

So, looking to teach your child the value of honesty you ask...

“Honey, do you know who ate all the cookies?”

The question isn't for your benefit!

You already know the truth!

You're just giving your child an opportunity to own up to their sin...

And no matter how the child responds—either confessing the truth or covering their actions with a lie, their answer provides you with a teaching opportunity—a life lesson that will help to shape the child's character.

So too God's question to Adam and Eve does not in any way suggest that He is not omniscient...

...rather He asked the question for the benefit of His disobedient children.

2. Jesus didn't know the day of His return

Another common objection, both to God's omniscience, and the deity of Christ is the claim that during Jesus' earthly ministry there were times when Jesus didn't know certain things.

For example, when speaking about His return to the earth Jesus said...

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Mark 13:32

Well that sure looks like a pretty strong argument to prove that Jesus isn't God, and/or that God the Son is not omniscient.

That's why it is a favorite verse the cults love to quote because they believe that they've got you penned.

But the truth is—and we all need to know this answer so that you can refute the Jehovah's Witness and any other cult member at your door...

Is that their argument simply demonstrates that they do not understand the unique nature of Christ Who is both God and Man (One Person with Two Natures, Human & Divine).

That during His earthly ministry the Bible tells us that Jesus laid aside His right to use His divine attributes so that He could live as human being...

...that He might experience life in this Fallen World just as you and I do so that He can be our sympathetic High Priest (Hebrews 2:17 & 4:15).

The apostle Paul explains it this way...

Ex. Philippians 2 ~ J.B. Phillips

“Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God’s equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, and the death he died was the death of a common criminal.”

That is, when Jesus took on human flesh He never ceased to be God, but rather He willingly chose to live out His 33 years on earth as a human being...

Not using His divine attributes but rather living as we do—dependent upon His Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit to do life and ministry.

So...

Even though as God Jesus is omnipresent—able to be everywhere all at once, nonetheless while on earth living as a human He could only be in one place and one time.

Even though as God Jesus has all-power—nonetheless while on earth living as a man He became tired after a hard day’s work and needed to eat and sleep to regain His strength.

Even though as God Jesus is the Giver of Life and cannot die—nonetheless while on earth living as a man He died on the Cross.

All of this underscores the mystery of the Incarnation, that God the Son took on human flesh and lived His life on earth as a human being...

...fully God and fully Man.

√ So why didn't Jesus know the day of His return?

So back to our text in Mark where Jesus said that He didn't know the day that He would return to the earth...

He was speaking from His human nature, not His divine nature.

Therefore, He could only know what the Holy Spirit revealed to Him and at this point the Spirit has not made known the date of His return.

That's why we read that at the beginning of His public ministry Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John who tells us...

*"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove,
and He remained upon Him."*

John 1:32

That is, at Jesus' baptism He was empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the work of the ministry for which He was sent.

A work He did as human being—fully surrendered to His Father and empowered by the Spirit.

As such Jesus provides us with model for how we are to do ministry.

We do life and ministry just as Jesus did...fully surrendered to the Father and empowered by the Spirit.

So, the fact that during His earthly ministry Jesus didn't know everything doesn't mean that He isn't God, nor does it prove that God is not omniscient.

Rather, it is evidence of what the apostle Paul taught in Philippians—that is...

...that Jesus chose to live out His life on earth with the limitations of a man so that after He gave His life to redeem us He could become our sympathetic High Priest (Hebrews 2:17 & 4:15).

Bottom line—God knows all things and the objections raised to disprove God's omniscience are based on poor theology and a misreading the Bible.

Ap. Today

Now that Jesus has been glorified and has returned to Heaven where He sits at the righthand of the Father...

...He has taken back all of His divine privileges including His omniscience and therefore knows exactly the day of His promised return!

The Blessings & Benefits of God's Omniscience

✓ Blessings & Benefits of God's Omniscience

Well the fact of God's omniscience should strike fear into the heart every sinner and bring comfort and joy to the heart of every saint!

You might wonder what comfort and joy we ought to experience now that we understand that God is omniscient...

...so let me enumerate just a few of the reasons that God's omniscience is a blessing and a benefit to the child of God.

1. We don't have to live under condemnation any longer!

That's the comfort that the apostle John offered when he wrote...

"For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things." ~ 1John 3:20

At first pass the fact that God knows all things about us doesn't seem to be very comforting!

And that's because there are things that we have thought, done, or said that we kind of hope that God doesn't know about!

But stop and consider what John said...

...because God already knows everything about us...our past, present, and future, we can be sure that...

No gossip can inform on us.

No enemy can make an accusation stick.

No forgotten skeleton hidden in our past can be exposed to our shame.

No secret character flaw will come to light that would turn God's love from us!

There's nothing about us that is hidden from the God Who knows everything!

And He knows our pure motives even when our own heart would condemn us by questioning those motives for serving Him!

So when our thoughts, or the world, or Satan would bring some condemnation to our heart that would bring fear of rejection, or cause us to doubt our salvation, we can find comfort by reminding ourselves...

That the Omniscient God already knew everything about you before He called you to Himself, and He loved you anyway and still does!

Nothing in our past, present, or future will change God's perfect, eternal love for you—the child of God by faith in Jesus!

The next benefit and blessing that the Christian experiences is closely related to the first we have just examined, that is...

2. He has chosen not to remember our sins!

God's omniscience teaches us that God cannot forget anything.

For if He could forget one single fact then He would no longer have perfect knowledge.

So we might ask...

“How then do we interpret promises such as that found in Isaiah 43:25 where God says...”

“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.”

First notice that God doesn't say that He will "forget" our sins, rather...

He tells us that He has chosen not to remember our sins!

The idea is communicated in the original language is that the Omniscient God Who knows all things about us...

...is also able to freely decide not to bring that perfect knowledge of our sins to His remembrance!

Rather, because you have accepted God's offer of forgiveness found in Christ, God has chosen to no longer bring those offences to His mind because the penalty that our sins deserved have been fully paid by Jesus' sacrifice!

Ap. You can be sure that God does not remember your sins!

In addition to the promise in Isaiah 43:25 I would encourage you to meditate on and memorize these promises from God...

Psalm 103:12

*"As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us."*

That is, just as you could run east forever and never catch up to the west...

...so too God has removed your sins so that they will not catch up with you!

Micah 7:19

*"He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities."*

*You will cast all our sins
Into the depths of the sea."*

Ex. Cruise

If you were on a cruise to Australia and the captain informed you that the ship was sailing over the Mariana Trench, which is almost 7 miles deep...

...and your dropped your phone overboard while trying to take a picture...you aren't ever going to see that phone again!

So too God has buried our sins in the ocean depth of Jesus' blood so that our sins will never rise again!

1Corinthians 13:5, which is alternately rendered...

"love...keeps no record of wrongs."

That is, having come into a saving relationship Jesus the Father has moved all of the record of our sins to Jesus' account...

...and moved Jesus' perfect righteousness to our account!

Therefore, when God looks upon us He longer sees many wrongs that we have, and will commit...

...now He sees our record cleared!

So even though God knows all things, He has chosen not to keep a record of our sins because our account has been cleared by Jesus!

3. Because God knows everything we cannot disappoint Him!

This is because there is no past, present or future with God...

He does not exist in time.

Rather, He lives above and outside of time.

So there is no sequence of events in His experience.

Therefore He is not limited by time because the past, present, and future is all “now” for God!

So, everything that we have done, are doing, and will do is already known to God because He sees everything in the eternal “now”.

Ex. Experiencing a parade at street level verses from the roof

Because God already knows everything we have ever done, or will do—there is no way that we can disappoint Him!

That reality should bring great freedom to our lives.

That’s because we don’t have to worry about failing to meet His expectations.

Here’s my point.

Fear of failing, or of disappointing someone, especially God, can and often does inhibit people from stepping out in faith to serve Him.

Like the man who buried his Master’s talent for fear he would not prosper his Lord...

So too many in the Church never step out and use the gifts that God has given them for fear that they might blow it, or not be as successful as other believers.

But, when we recognize that we can’t disappoint the Lord because He already knows everything we will ever do...

...we are set free from our wrong expectations and are then empowered to attempt great things for God!

- Ap. While we can't disappoint God, we can and should be disappointed in ourselves when we chose to disobey the Lord or fail to step out in faith.
4. He rewards us for our secret service

In Revelation 2:13 Jesus mentions one Christian by name... Antipas, a believer who was killed for his unyielding faith in Jesus.

Interesting thing is that we have no information at all about this man except for what Jesus tells us here in the Revelation.

His life and death seem to have been missed, or ignored, or lost by both the Christian and secular historian.

Who was he? His name means...

"Against all"

Which may indicate that he stood alone against the powers of darkness and was faithful unto death.

However, he was apparently not esteemed by the people of Pergamos.

Perhaps he was a slave, or a person of such low estate that no one really cared if he lived or died.

One might wonder if anyone gave him a decent burial?

But look at this—Jesus didn't miss him!

In His final communication to Mankind Jesus makes special note of this "faceless" man.

Ap. Jesus knows your sacrifice

I take great comfort in that truth, that you and I could live our whole life and be counted as insignificant by the world (and even by other Christians!), and yet be esteemed highly by Jesus Christ!

Most of us will never be famous this side of glory!

When we die we won't have funeral like Princess Di, or Mother Teresa, or Billy Graham.

It will be a small simple affair attended by family and a few friends.

You might even get a couple of paragraphs in the local newspaper.

The World and even the Church will hardly notice. Oh but if you've lived a life faithful to Jesus *He will take note!*

He knows the number of the hairs on your head.

He knows every sacrifice you've made for Him in your private and public life.

So be encouraged this morning the truth of God's Omniscience tells us that God will reward you openly for everything you do for Him...

...whether anyone else noticed or not!

Because God knows all things He sees your secret service! So serve Him with the confidence that He Who sees in secret will reward you openly!

Close