

Psalm 73:11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

Sermon to the servants of God gathered at Westboro Baptist Church on December 4, 2022

Today's sermon is titled the "Omniscience of God." Omniscience is defined as the state of knowing everything. In considering His perfections, we examine God as an intelligent Spirit. God is said to have a "mind" and "understanding." *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?"* **Romans 11:34.** *"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding."* **Isaiah 40:28.** These are referring to His attributes of "knowledge" and "wisdom." *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* **Romans 11:33.** Today we will talk about his knowledge; his omniscience.

Knowledge belongs to God. Blaspheming atheists object to this attribute: *"They say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?"* (**Psalm 73:11**) They say this in particular about human affairs. They conclude that their acts of oppression and violence, and their insolent words against God and men would pass unobserved and with impunity. *"They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth."* (**Psalm 73:8-9**) *"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God., Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good."* (**Psalm 53:1**); *"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error."* (**2 Peter 2:18**). (Think **Revelation 13:6**: "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." And, think **Jude 16** on "great swelling words.") *"He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face: he will never see it."* **Psalm 10:11.**

They suppose from the great distance of God in heaven, from men on earth, and partly from the thick and dark clouds which intervene between them, that their wicked works are not seen, and their hard speeches not heard. **Job 22:12-14**: *“Is not God in the height of heaven? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.”* These impertinent fools think that they are outside of God’s jurisdiction. They still call courts in some states, “Circuit courts.” It stems from the judges riding a circuit (from town to town) to render judgment. *“Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, the Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.”* (**Ezekiel 8:12**). *“And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.”* (**Zephaniah 1:12**).

These fake objections are easily answered by observing the omnipresence of God, or his presence in all places; and that the darkness hides not anything from his all-piercing, all-penetrating eye, the darkness and the light being alike to him. See **Psalms 139:7-12**: *“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”* See **Jeremiah 23:23-24**: *Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.”*

And there are these verses: **Psalms 44:21**: *“Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.”* **Psalms 139:1-6**: *“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying*

down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” Hosea 7:2: “And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doing have beset them about; they are before my face.”

In all rational creatures there is knowledge; there is much in angels, and so there was in man, before the fall, both of natural, divine, and civil things. See, for example, **Genesis 2:19**: “*And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*” Since the fall there is a remainder of it, notwithstanding the loss sustained by it; and there is more, especially divine and spiritual knowledge, in regenerate men, who are renewed in knowledge. **Colossians 3:10**: “*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*” Now if there is knowledge in any of the creatures of God, then much more in God himself. Besides, all that knowledge that is in angels or men, comes from God; he is a "God of knowledge", or "knowledges", the God of all knowledge. **1 Samuel 2:3**: “*Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.*” God is the source and fountain of knowledge, and therefore it must be found in him in its perfection. Knowledge of all things, natural, civil, and spiritual, is from him, is taught and given by him; therefore strong is the reasoning of the Psalmist, “*He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?*” **Psalms 94:10(b)**. His knowledge may be inferred from his will, and the actings of it. That he has a will is most certain, and works all things after the counsel of his will, which cannot be resisted. See **Ephesians 1:11**: “*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*” And, **Romans 9:19**: “*Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*” His will and the acting upon it can never be supposed to be without knowledge. It cannot be imagined that God wills anything ignorantly and rashly; he must know what he wills and nills, and to whom he wills anything, or refuses. **Romans 9:15,18**: “*For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have*

compassion... Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Knowledge appears from all his works; from the works of creation, the heavens, earth, and sea, and all in them; which are ascribed to his wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, and could never be made without them.

Proverbs 3:19-20: *"The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens; by his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew."* The government of the world, and the judgment of the last day, suppose and require knowledge.

Romans 11:33: *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!"*

1 Corinthians 4:5: *"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."*

Without knowledge God would not be perfectly happy; the blessed one, and blessed forever, as he is. See **Psalm 21:6 and Romans 1:25**. It is knowledge that gives men the preference to the brute creation, and makes them happier than they, **Job 35:11**. (*"Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven."*) And the spiritual knowledge which good men have, gives them a superior excellency and superior state of happiness to unregenerate and reprobate men; and their happiness in a future state will lie, as in perfect holiness, so in perfect knowledge, or "to know", as they "are known."

1 Corinthians 13:12: *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."* In short, without knowledge, God would be no other than the idols of the Gentiles, who have eyes, but see not; are the work of errors, and are falsehood and vanity; but the portion of Jacob is not like them.

Jeremiah 10:14-16: *"Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The Lord of hosts is his name."*

The knowledge of God reaches to all things. **Joh 21:17**: “*He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all thing things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*” **1 John 3:20**: “*For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*” (Similar Bible verses are found at **John 2:24-25, 16:30, 18:4, Acts 1:24 and 15:8**).

God knows himself, his nature and perfections (**1 Corinthians 2:11**). Somewhat of this is known by creatures themselves, even by the very heathen, through the light of nature, and in the glass of the creation, wherein God has showed it to them; even his invisible things, his eternal power and Godhead, **Romans 1:19-20**: “*Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*” These are more clearly displayed in Christ and redemption by him; and more evidently seen by those who are favored with a divine revelation. “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” (**2 Corinthians 4:6**). Rational creatures are endowed with knowledge of themselves, of their nature; since even men, in their fallen and imperfect state, know something of themselves, of the constitution and temperament of their bodies, and of the powers and faculties of their souls; what is in them, in the inmost recesses of their minds, their thoughts, purposes, and intentions, **1 Corinthians 2:11**: “*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*”

If creatures know themselves to any degree, infinitely more must the Creator of all know himself? God knows himself in all his persons, and each person fully knows one another; the Father knows the Son (**Matthew 11:27**), begotten by him (**Psalms 2:7**), and brought up with him (**Proverbs 8:30**); the Son knows

the Father (**Matthew 11:27**), in whose bosom he lay (**John 1:18**); and the Spirit knows the Father and Son, whose Spirit he is (**1 Corinthians 2:10-11**), and from whom he proceeds (**John 15:27**); and the Father and Son know the Spirit, who is sent by them as the Comforter (**John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, and 16:7**). **Matthew 11:27**: *“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”* **1 Corinthians 2:10-11**: *“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”*

He knows his own thoughts, which are the *“deep things of God,”* and as much above us as the heavens are above the earth, and as much out of our reach (**Isaiah 55:8-9**); but he knows them, **Jeremiah 29:11**: *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”* That is to say, his decrees, purposes, and designs, as he must, since they are purposed in himself; he knows the things he has purposed, and the exact time of the accomplishment of them, which he has reserved in his own power. See, e.g., **Ephesians 1:11**: *“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”* And, **Ecclesiastes 3:1, 17**: *“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose for every work.”* And, **Acts 1:7**: *“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”* **Isaiah 14:27**: *“For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”*

God knows all his creatures. There is not any creature, not one excepted, "that is not manifest in his sight", **Hebrews 4:13** (*“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes*

*of him with whom we have to do.”). Known unto him are all his works; all that his hand has wrought, **Acts 15:18** (“*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*”). When he had finished his works of creation, "he saw everything that he had made", looked over it and considered it, and pronounced it good, **Genesis 1:31** (“*And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*”). And his eye sees all things in their present state and condition (**Psalm 33:13**). He knows all things "inanimate", all that is upon the earth, herbs, grass, trees, etc. and all in the bowels of it, metals and minerals (**Psalm 24:1**: “*The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*” **Haggai 2:8**: “*The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.*” (Also see **Psalm 89:11**; **Psalm 5:12**; **Job 41:11**, **1 Corinthians 10:26**); He knows all things that are in the heavens (**Nehemiah 9:6**), not only the sun and moon, their nature, motion, rising, and setting, with everything belonging to them, but the stars innumerable. He "*bringeth out their host by number*" (**Isaiah 40:26**), or them as a mighty army, and numerous; and yet, as numerous as they are, "*he calleth them all by names*" (**Psalm 147:4**). Such a distinct and particular knowledge of them, and that because he "*hath created*" them; and he upholds them in being, "*by the greatness of his might*", so that "*not one faileth,*" **Isaiah 40:26. Psalm 147:4-5**: “*He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*” The context of **Isaiah Chapter 40** is “*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.*” (**verse 1**), and after the Spirit gives details of his wisdom, knowledge and sovereignty in the earth among the animate and inanimate, he addresses the heavens, at **verse 26**: “*Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number, he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for he is strong in power; not one faileth.*”*

He knows all the "irrational" creatures, the beasts of the field, "*the cattle on a thousand hills*"; "*I know*", says he, "*all the fowls of the mountains*", **Psalm 50:10-11** (“*For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beast of the field are*

mine.”) As worthless a bird as the sparrow is, "*not one of them falls*" on the ground without the knowledge and will of God, **Matthew 10:29**. He knows all the fishes of the sea, and made provision for one to swallow Jonah; and which, at his order, cast him on dry land again, **Jonah 1:17 Jonah 2:10**. And if Adam had such knowledge of all creatures, as to give them proper and suitable names, **Genesis 2:19-20**; and Solomon, could "*[speak] of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall*"; and "*of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes*", **1 Kings 4:33**, even of their nature, properties, use, and end; can it be thought incredible that God, the Creator of them, should have a distinct and perfect knowledge of all these? (Gill writes in his exposition: “Suidas {In voce} says it was reported that Solomon wrote a book of medicines for all diseases, which was fixed to the entrance of the temple, which Hezekiah took away, because sick people applied to that for cure of their disorders, and neglected to pray to God.”)

He knows all "rational" beings, as angels and men. The angels, though innumerable (**Hebrews 12:12, Deuteronomy 33:2, Psalm 68:17, Daniel 7:10, Jude 14, and Revelation 5:11-12**), being his creatures (**Revelation 4:11; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 19:10**), standing before him (**Luke 1:19**), beholding his face (**Matthew 18:10**), and are sent forth by him as ministering spirits (**Psalm 91:11; Mark 1:13; Luke 16:22; Hebrews 1:14**): the elect angels (**1 Timothy 5:21**), whom he must know, since he has chosen them and put them under Christ (**Hebrews 1:4**), the head of all principality and power (**Colossians 2:10**) and who stand on his right hand and left (**1 Kings 22:19**), hearkening to his voice (**Psalm 103:20**), and ready to obey his will (**Daniel 4:35**); and are employed by him in providential affairs, and in things respecting the heirs of salvation (**Hebrews 1:14**). The apostate angels, devils, are known by him, and are laid up in chains of darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day (**2 Peter 2:4**), and are under the continual eye of God, and the restraints of his providence. **2 Peter 2:4**: “*For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of dark, to be reserved unto judgment.*” **Jude 6**: “*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains*

under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” The questions put to these by God, at **Job 1:7** (“*And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?...*”), and by Christ, at **Mark 5:9** (“*And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying My name is Legion: for we are many*”) do not imply any kind of ignorance of them. The one is put to lead on to a discourse concerning Job, and the other to show the greatness of the miracle wrought in casting them out of the possessed man in the country of the Gadarenes.

God knows all men, good and bad, all the sons of men, the inhabitants of the earth, wherever they are, in all places and in all ages, **Psalm 33:13-15**: “*The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.*” **Proverbs 15:3**: “*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*” He knows their hearts, for he has fashioned them alike, and is often said to be the searcher of them; he knows the thoughts of the heart; as his word, so is he a "discerner" of them. **Hebrews 4:12**: “*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” **Psalm 139:2**: “*Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*” This is peculiar to God; it is his sole prerogative (“*I the Lord search the hearts*” **Jeremiah 17:10**); and this reality is a strong proof of the Deity of Christ, who is the essential Word. **Matthew 9:4**: “*And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*” **John 2:24-25**: “*But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.*” **Hebrews 4:13**: “*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*” He knows the evil thoughts of men, which are many and vain, **Psalm 94:11**: “*The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*”

He knows the good thoughts of men, as he must, since they are of him, and not of themselves; and he takes such notice of them, as to write a book of remembrance of them. **2 Corinthians 3:5**: *“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.”* **Malachi 3:16**: *“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remember was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.”*

We are just getting warmed up on this subject. It turns out, in our examination so far, that God does in fact know everything, and there is perfect knowledge of all things in the Most High. Next time I hope to talk more of the omniscience of God and examine the truth of that attribute in his Word of truth.

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 24-25)