

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

LESSON 2 – OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, OMNISCIENCE

I. God is *transcendent*

A. He resides outside of *time* and is *eternal*; time is finite, and He is not, since He created it

- 1.** Since God is *eternal*, He is not restrained in His view of the creation (Col. 1:16)
- 2.** We can comprehend a beginning and an end to the universe, but we cannot picture God this way - finite descriptions and finite human characteristics are meaningless to His existence

B. He resides outside of *creation* - the universe is finite in size and lifespan, but He is independent of its restrictions since He created all matter

- 1.** God is thus able to intervene in its providential control and management at will, in order to further its purposes and oversee His children
- 2.** He thus has the authority and ability to use creation to work whatever purpose He designs

C. He resides outside of our understanding of *knowledge and truth* – He created both, and we cannot alter either one

- 1.** All consciousness is a product of creation, as we were made in His image
- 2.** All that we know about Him is what He chooses to reveal about Himself
- 3.** We cannot understand or comprehend Him by our own power or mental ability
- 4.** We are unable to control most of our universe, except for certain small details
 - a.** We cannot master all of creation, so as to alter

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God's intentions for the universe; in fact, we will never be able to fully understand it

b. We are unable to order our lives properly or make sense of life on our own

c. We are basically unable to alter the future significantly except in regard to our relationship with God

d. The only power we truly have is to direct our own free will (which was first given by God)

5. We cannot develop a relationship with Him by our own effort, or by our own goodness

II. His Omnipotence

A. God's all-powerful nature over the universe – reinforced throughout scripture (Job 36:22; Psalm 21:13, 62:11, 93:4)

1. There is nothing outside of His ability to accomplish, change, or create – He can do whatever He desires without being thwarted (Job 42:2; Luke 1:27))

a. As the Creator, He made the exact kind of world He wanted - He set things in motion for the universe to accomplish His ultimate purpose, that of creating man so as to develop a relationship with Him

b. God's purposes cannot be stopped or altered by any other being or human free will

c. God's word always accomplishes whatever He has sent it out to do (Isa. 55:11; Jer. 32:17)

2. There is no one else who can exercise power over Him

a. No one can significantly alter our world or the universe so as to drastically alter the future of mankind without God's permission – as the

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universe was spoken into existence by God, so will it end only when He is ready

b. No one can manipulate God's thinking or emotions so as to force Him to violate His basic nature (Gal. 6:7-8; Psalm 115:2-8)

c. God can even use the sinful deeds of men to accomplish His will (Ex. 4:21; Acts 2:23; Rom. 9:18)

B. There are things God **cannot** do (not just *chosen* not to do)

1. He cannot *lie* (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; Num. 23:19)

2. He cannot be *tempted by evil* (James 1:13)

3. He will not *change His mind* (I Sam. 15:29; Num. 23:19)

4. He cannot do anything *inappropriate* to His nature

5. He cannot perform any *immoral action*

6. Since He created truth, He cannot do anything that is logically *contradictory*

4. He cannot do anything *inappropriate* to His nature

7. He is *immutable* (Heb. 13:8)

8. While some would argue that these 'limitations' shows weakness in His character, *doing* these inappropriate negative acts would in reality violate His nature and show weakness; His character is always perfectly consistent

C. He exerts total power over all mankind

1. Over the large events of history

a. Where nations will dwell (Acts 17:26)

b. The rulers of nations and time of their influence (Isa.44:28)

c. He decides whether the purposes and works of rulers and governments will succeed or fall (Psalm 33:10-11)

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d. The greatest event: that evil would take the life of His Son, so repentant sinners might live (John 3:16; Acts 2:23-24)

2. Over the lives of individuals, for good

a. He knit us together in our mothers' wombs (Psalm 139:13-16)

b. He watches over decisions about our travels (James 4:13-17)

c. He influences the decisions of the wicked (John 13:26-28; Acts 2:23)

d. He exerts His power to save sinners and provide forgiveness (Eph. 2:8-10)

e. He has helped open our hearts to believe (Acts 16:14-15; John 6:44; Phil. 1:29)

D. Although God is completely independent as far as *needing* anything from us (Acts 17:25), He does *want* something from us – our *love* (Matt. 11:28-29; John 3:16-17; Rom. 5:8; I John 3:1)

III. His Omnipresence

A. God is not a *spacial* being; His power and knowledge are everywhere, so His presence must also be everywhere

1. His omnipresence is seen in both location and time (Psalm 139; Prov. 15:3); as He controls everything He created, He is by definition also present to do this

2. As He is not confined to just one location, we can therefore worship Him everywhere (John 4:22); a house of worship is insufficient to contain Him, so He does not reside in any one physical building so as to make it exclusively holy beyond any other location (even His temporary 'residence' in the temple did not preclude His worship elsewhere); each of His children now serves as His temple (I Cor. 3:16)

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3. We can receive great consolation and comfort by knowing God is present wherever we are to assist us (Isa. 57:15 and 41:10; 2 Chr. 16:9; Zeph. 3:17; Matt. 18:20; Rev. 21:3)

B. He is the only uncreated and limitless Spirit (Acts 17:27-28; Jer. 23:23-24; Psalm 139:7-10)

1. These qualities do not apply to the angels or demons, as they were created (Psalm 148:2&5; Neh.9:6; Col. 1:16)

2. Since even Satan was created, he cannot be everywhere at the same time and requires the assistance of his servants

3. No force, in heaven or on earth, can overwhelm God or escape His attention (Prov. 15:3; Jer. 23:23-24) as He is present wherever His creation is present

C. God's omnipresence is both a blessing and a curse to mankind

1. A source of comfort to the righteous (Psalm 34:18 & 46:1; Acts 17:27; John 14:16-17 & 16:4-15)

2. A warning to sinners (Jer. 23:23-24; Prov. 15:3; Psalm 139:7)

IV. His Omniscience

A. God's all-knowing nature

1. I Samuel 2:3 states, "...the Lord is a God of knowledge."

2. He knows all things (I John 3:20; Rom. 11:33-34; Heb. 4:12-13; John 21:17;) including *details* of the future (I Sam. 10:2; I Kgs. 13:1-4; Acts 2:23 & 4:27-28), and is always *aware* of everything He knows

3. Since He knows all things, He is aware of the past, present, and future simultaneously

a. There are 3 possibilities theologians propose for God's perfect knowledge of the future:

1). *Calvinism*: God can know the future perfectly

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because He has already foreordained it; FALSE

2). *Open Theism*: the future is completely open to God as to us, but God is still omniscient because He knows everything there is to know, as the future does not yet exist (and there is nothing there to be known about it yet); FALSE (how could Rom. 8:28 be possible?); some suggest God chooses to block His knowledge of the future to allow for free will (a contradiction)

3). *Classic Theism*: He knows all of the future because all His knowledge is present in one long / eternal state of cognition; TRUE (but incomprehensible to us)

4). God states that the definition of deity is the ability to accurately declare the future (Isa. 41:21-23), as He has done, noted in passages such as Rom. 8:29, and I Peter 1:2; (this is similar to the mark of a true prophet divining God's message found in Deut. 18:20-22 and Dan. 2:45)

4. As God is intimately involved in mankind's historical flow, He is able to adjust and condition present and future circumstance so as to bring about the future event just as it was foreknown (Rom. 8:28); the certainty of a future event does not necessarily declare the necessity of the event

B. Practical consequences of God's omniscience:

1. A curse and warning to the wicked

a. The evil man cannot hide from God (Psalm 139; Psalm 10:11 & 73:11; Isa. 29:15 & 47:10)

b. That judgment will occur and account for every evil

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deed is assured by God's omniscience (Gal. 6:7)

- 2.** A blessing and faithful promise to the righteous
 - a.** God is always aware of our problems and our needs (Psalm 33:18-19, 34:15, and 38:9; Matt. 6:32)
 - b.** God is constantly watching us and diligent to assist and comfort us (Psalm 147:3; Matt. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:4; 2 Chr. 16:9)