

- B) From the smallest to greatest, from good to evil, happy and sad, pagan and Christian, pain and pleasure -- God governs everything for His wise, just, and good purposes (Isaiah 46:10). This is most vivid during the most painful of times...
- i) Amos asks, during a time of disaster, "If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?" (Amos 3:6).
 - ii) After losing all ten of his children in the collapse of his son's house, Job says, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).
 - iii) After being covered with boils, Job says, "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10).
- C) Certainly, Job's woe's were not of God's doing though! Wasn't it Satan who was "sifting" Job (Job 2:7)?
- D) Job did not seek comfort in this secondary cause (Satan's actions), but rather sought God as the primary cause (Job 2:10). The author of Job concurs with this perspective, as did Job's friends (Job 42:11).
- E) James underlines God's purposes in Job's misery later in the Bible (James 5:11). Job himself concludes that God's purposes cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2). Satan is real (and terrible), but he is on a leash...

4) Why Did Jesus Remind His Disciples About God's Exhaustive And Perfect Knowledge?

- A) If you're not praying to the God who knows and has created all things, then why pray? Reality is that God does know all things, and every prayer to Him is effective (2nd Timothy 1:9).

Whaddya Know?

Long Beach Alliance Church • April 15th, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

REMEMBER THE FORMER THINGS LONG PAST, FOR I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NO OTHER; I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NO ONE LIKE ME, DECLARING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING, AND FROM ANCIENT TIMES THINGS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN DONE, SAYING, 'MY PURPOSE WILL BE ESTABLISHED, AND I WILL ACCOMPLISH ALL MY GOOD PLEASURE'; CALLING A BIRD OF PREY FROM THE EAST, THE MAN OF MY PURPOSE FROM A FAR COUNTRY. TRULY I HAVE SPOKEN; TRULY I WILL BRING IT TO PASS. I HAVE PLANNED IT, SURELY I WILL DO IT.

~ISAIAH 46:9-11 (NASB)

1) A Curious Introduction

- A) When asked about how to pray by His disciples, Jesus Christ warned His followers to avoid "meaningless repetition" (Matthew 6:7). There are no "magic" words in prayer.
- B) Rather, Christ tells us, God the Father already knows what we need "before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8). This begs the question... "What exactly does God know?"

2) God's Knowledge Under Attack

- A) For the better part of the past twenty centuries, the average church attender has affirmed that God is omniscient, that God knows all things (Psalm 139:1-6, 147:5).

- B) Omniscience means that God knows everything which can be known (1st John 3:20). This means that:
 - i) God knows all **previous** events (Job 38:2-7ff).
 - ii) God knows all **current** events (Hebrews 4:13).
 - iii) God knows all **future** events (Isaiah 46:9-11).
 - iv) God knows all **possible** contingencies of previous, current, and future possible events (Psalm 147:5).

- C) Simply then, omniscience is an exclusive characteristic of God which describes God's exhaustive knowledge of all past, present, and future events and all possible contingencies which could possibly occur (even those which do not occur).

- D) Except for a few heretics through the centuries (most notably the followers of Laelius Socinus of the 16th-Century), the omniscience of God has been largely accepted.

- E) Despite this tradition, in the late 1990's, God's omniscience began to come under heavy criticism from a group of theologians who believe in "Open Theism."

- F) Open Theism is the belief that God only knows actual events which have truly happened, and cannot know events which are still in the future.

- G) Open Theists believe that since God is wise and Has created all things, that He can predict the future with great clarity, but cannot actually know what has not happened.

- H) Most Open Theists place future events into two categories, those which God has foreordained (cf. Ephesians 1:3-5ff), and those events which fall under human choice (those events which God does not actually know about).

3) What Do We Know About What God Knows?

- A) Ephesians 1:11 notes that "God works all things after the counsel of His will." These "all things" include...
 - i) The fall of sparrows (Matthew 10:29).
 - ii) The rolling of dice (Proverbs 16:33).
 - iii) The slaughter of His people (Psalm 44:11).
 - iv) The decisions of leaders/kings (Proverbs 21:1).
 - v) The failing of sight (Exodus 4:11).
 - vi) The sickness of children (2nd Samuel 12:15).
 - vii) The loss and gain of money (1st Samuel 2:7).
 - viii) The suffering of saints (1st Peter 4:19).
 - ix) The completion of travel plans (James 4:15).
 - x) The persecution of Christians (Hebrews 12:4-7).
 - xi) The repentance of souls (2nd Timothy 2:25).
 - xii) The gift of faith (Philippians 1:29).
 - xiii) The pursuit of holiness (Philippians 3:12-13).
 - xiv) The growth of believers (Hebrews 6:3).
 - xv) The giving of life and the taking in death (1st Samuel 2:6).
 - xvi) The crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:27-28).

* This section adapted from various John Piper resources (www.desiringgod.org)