

- I. Session 76: The Omniscience of God Part 4: Objections
- a. Review: In the past three two sessions we saw what Scripture has to say about:
    - i. God’s omniscience in the Old Testament.
    - ii. God’s omniscience in the New Testament.
    - iii. God’s omniscience involves knowing the future.
  - b. Purpose: In this session we shall consider a survey of some biblical verses used as objections against the doctrine that God is omniscient so that we truly believe in God’s omniscient and let it shape our life.
  - c. Reminder: We don’t look at these objections in a vacuum; remember that the last three sessions have established biblically God is omniscient.
  - d. Objection #1: “*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, 10 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’; 11 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)
    - i. Argument: “God declares the future, rather than knowing it.”<sup>1</sup>
    - ii. Answer:
      1. It is interesting to note that this passage was used last session to establish that God does know the future but now is used by an advocate of establishing Open Theism that God does not know the future.
      2. This individual does not interact with **verse 10**. God certainly knows the future in the sense that He knows the truth before it happens for God says: “*Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.*” (v.10b)
      3. Our critic here has the mistaken assumption that if God declares the future does not mean God knows the future.
        - a. It is true that for human beings to declare what will happen in the future does not mean they know that will be the case in the future since that don’t have the means that is certain in making sure it would happen. That is, humans don’t have the power to bring it to pass.
        - b. But is this how God is like? Not so with for in **verse 11** God declares “*Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.*”
        - c. If God brings His plan to pass by means of declaring it, then that means God does know the future contrary to the critic’s argument. God’s way of knowing the future is different than others; He ordained it, and it is so. For us, if we know the future it is because God has revealed His plans to us.
      4. This passage establishes God’s omniscience of the future contrary to our critic’s claim.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://realityisnotoptional.com/2010/11/09/95-open-theism-verses/>.

- e. Objection #2: *“The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.”* (Genesis 11:5)
- i. Argument: The Lord has to come down in order to see and know the people were building the tower of Babel therefore God is not omniscient.
  - ii. Answer:
    1. Remember the context that in **verse 4** the people *“said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’”*
    2. There is a great irony that God has to come down (**v.5**) in order to see this alleged tower that was supposed to *“reach into heaven”* (**v.4**)
    3. This ironic insult must not be missed as the main point of **verse 5** because of the deliberate contrast with **verse 4**. The main point is not about how much God knows but God insulting how puny the tower was.
    4. Yet in **verse 5** we still see that God did know beforehand about *“the city and the tower”* since that was why *“the Lord came down to see the city and the tower.”*
      - a. In the Hebrew the infinitive verb *“to see”* is conveying the purpose of why the Lord came down.
      - b. That is, God intentionally came down on earth for the goal of seeing this tower.
      - c. So God must have known ahead of time about this tower before He even went down to see this tower.
- f. Objection #3: *“He said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’”* (Genesis 22:12)
- i. Argument: *“God learns that Abraham would go to not withhold even his son.”*<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. Answer:
    1. In the context Abraham has just offered Issac as sacrifice to God and God has just abruptly stopped Abraham.
    2. This verse cannot mean that God is not omniscient since within the chapter of Genesis 22 we see God does know the future: *“and said, ‘By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’”* (**v.16-18**)
      - a. Notice the future is being declared here which did happened:
        - i. Abraham will be blessed (**v.17**).

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://realityisnotoptional.com/2010/11/09/95-open-theism-verses/>.

- ii. Abraham will have many descendants (v.17)
    - iii. Nations of the earth will be blessed because of Abraham (v.18)
  - b. One of the reason of why God knows the future is because of His sovereignty; since He swore it will happen (v.16) it will happen.
  - c. His knowledge of the future was not just confined to what He will do but also what human beings will do too since He know Abraham will have many descendants and that involves knowing the future that humans will procreate.
  - d. Thus the chapter rules out Genesis 22:12 as a proof text against God's omniscience but on the contrary the context establishes it.
- 3. God's omniscience is compatible with God saying "*now I know that you fear God*" if we understand that one can know truths in various ways.
  - a. For instance I can know about September 11<sup>th</sup> from seeing videos of it and also hearing eyewitnesses. With each method of knowing, you know in different ways.
  - b. Here in light of Genesis 22 already presupposing God knows the future ahead of time it is best to take that God knows that Abraham fear God in a relational sense and not just through the means of God ordaining it according to His plan, God's general omniscience, etc.
- g. Objection #4: "*I thought, 'After she has done all these things she will return to Me'; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also. 9 Because of the lightness of her harlotry, she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. 10 Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception,*" declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 3:7-10)
  - i. Argument: "God predicted Israel would repent, but admits He was wrong."<sup>3</sup>
  - ii. Answer:
    - 1. In the context this is God speaking to the Prophet Jeremiah "*in the days of Josiah the king*" (v.6)
    - 2. In the context of the rest of the chapter, Jeremiah 3:7-10 is part of the prophetic description of Israel and Judah being analogous to a harlot in her unfaithful relationship towards God (see Jeremiah 3:1-5 and 11-25 where there are languages of unfaithfulness).
    - 3. Remember all analogies break down. Also not everything here is literal; that is, somethings are figurative especially the closer we examine the finer details.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://realityisnotoptional.com/2010/11/09/95-open-theism-verses/>.

- a. For instance God says Judah “*had a harlot’s forehead*” (v.3). The nation of Judah did not literally had a physical forehead of a harlot. Rather the point was obvious unfaithful and as **verse 3** goes on to say they “refused to be ashamed”
  - b. God was also not literally married to Israel and Judah. Marriage was a symbol of God’s covenantal relationship with Israel/Judah.
4. We should be cautious of anyone using **Jeremiah 3:7-10** to establish God is not omniscient of the future given this is symbolic.
5. Given the use of analogies God was condescending down to man when he said that He said “*I thought, ‘After she has done all these things she will return to Me’; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.*” (v.7)
6. The emphasis on **verse 7** is that Judah and Israel should have been expected to repent but she did not. God’s people not repenting was disappointing (and you can be disappointed in the sense of not pleased even if you know it is going to happen).
7. Contextually in other areas within the chapter in which things are more clear and direct, we see God does know and predicts the future: “*It shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land,*” declares the Lord, “*they will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ And it will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor will they miss it, nor will it be made again. 17 At that time they will call Jerusalem ‘The Throne of the Lord,’ and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart. 18 In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance*” (v.16-18)
  - a. Here there is no use of marriage and harlotry motif.
  - b. It is talking about after Israel and Judah’s repentance.
  - c. This is something future and yet God knows about it.
- h. Principles in dealing with proof texts used to deny God’s omniscience:
  - i. Find out what is going on in the passage.
  - ii. Consider if there is anything within the chapter that the passage is situated in that affirm, presupposes or even explicitly teach that God is omniscient.
  - iii. Consider also the larger context of the book which the passage is from that affirm, presupposes or even explicitly teach that God is omniscient.
  - iv. Is there poetry or symbolism going on in the passage as suggested by the immediate context?
  - v. Take into account that there is more than one aspect of knowledge and more than one means of knowing something. Therefore when we see different means that God says He knows something that doesn’t mean it is a denial of God’s omniscience.

- vi. Finally is there antropomorphism going on within the passage that is cited to deny God's omniscience? God often engages in "baby talk" to explain things to us who are finite.
- i. Implications
  - i. Do you truly believe that God is all knowing?
  - ii. Does your life show you really believe God is more knowledgeable than you are? In other words, are you living according to the wisdom of man or the wisdom of God? If you live by the wisdom of man contrary to God's knowledge revealed in Scripture, know that it is ultimately not wise nor true knowledge.
  - iii. Have you learned today how to handle false teachings that twists the Scripture?