

God's Attributes Cannot Be Discovered

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God's attributes are revealed in His works (Rom. 1:20).

God's attributes cannot be discovered (Job 11:7; Isa. 40:28).

These are two separate subjects but those who want to discredit God present them as being the same. Therefore, the difference has to be understood when examining and comparing the scriptural references above.

The first section of scripture is dealing with God's creation and the fact that His creation is proof that He exists. It has nothing to do with every attribute of Almighty God,

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and God head (divine nature, deity), so that they (sinners; cf. Rom. 1:18-19) are without excuse (Rom. 1:20; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Those who attempt to take credit away from Almighty God, by claiming all the complexity of the universe just happened by chance, are described as fools in the scripture that follows. In essence, these people are setting themselves up as the ones to be admired, or "worshipped", in today's society because they assume they have figured out how the earth and universe came into existence without giving God any credit or expression of gratitude for His marvelous works (1Chr. 16:12, 24; Ps. 105:5; 139:14; cf. Rom. 1:23-25),

... although they knew God (from the sheer complexity and interconnectivity of the universe), they did not glorify Him as God (the Creator), nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and **their foolish hearts were darkened.**²² **Professing to be wise** (in explaining the origin of the universe), **they became fools** (Rom. 1:21b-22).

It is some of the very people who claim the universe evolved by itself that also acknowledge numerous "laws" like gravity, thermodynamics, biogenesis, nuclear fusion, etc. Ironically, it is impossible to have so many laws in motion without a lawgiver, and that Lawgiver is Almighty God.

The remaining two scriptural references claiming that God contradicts Himself are not specifically dealing with the creation of the universe. Instead, they are dealing with the ability of mankind to discern Almighty God's many attributes. The apostle Paul pointed out that it is not an easy task for anyone to comprehend the depth of God's wisdom and attributes,

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! (Rom. 11:33).

Nevertheless, Paul pointed out that it is possible to understand more about God and this can occur progressively, based on an attitude of willingness to obey Him,

For we (obedient followers) know in part and we prophesy in part.¹⁰ But when that which is perfect (complete) has come, then that which is in part will be done away.¹¹ When I (Paul) was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly (lack some details), but then (in a future resurrection from the dead) face to face (with God). Now (during this lifetime) I (Paul) know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known (1Cor. 13:9-12; Ed. notes in parentheses).

With this background the two remaining scriptures can be examined,

Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? (Job 11:7).

The scripture above presents some rhetorical questions that point to the fallibility of mankind. In other words, a human being who has existed for a very short time cannot possibly come to a full understanding and appreciation of Almighty God's wisdom and attributes. Many physical lifetimes would not be long enough. However, this does not mean mankind cannot learn more about God, but He reveals Himself to those who seek to obey Him (Ps. 119:155; cf. Ac. 5:32b; 1Pet. 1:2). This explains why some people make statements to the effect that God contradicts Himself. They simply do not know Him well enough and they have no desire to live by His every word (Mt. 4:4).

The final scripture that some use to discredit God is also in the form of a rhetorical question, but there is an emphasis contained within that is meant to challenge the reader to learn more about God, even though this may seem humanly impossible,

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. There is no searching of His understanding (Isa. 40:28).

There are a number of examples in scripture confirming it is possible for mankind to know Almighty God better. In fact, God challenges us to do so by acting on His commands,

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and **prove (test) Me now in this, says the Lord of hosts**, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it (Mal. 3:10; cf. study: The Tithing Law; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Based on the scripture above, it requires faith to know God better because His many commands challenge mankind to do things that are not always convenient or easy for a human being to do. In fact, Job is a good example of someone who had to go through some very difficult times before he reached the point that he knew Almighty God better,

I (Job) know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.
³You asked (me), 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge (when compared to God's)?
Therefore I (Job) have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.'⁴ Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I (God) will question you (Job), and you shall answer Me.'⁵ I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.
⁶Therefore I abhor (despise) myself, and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:2-6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is natural for human beings to believe that God thinks and acts in ways that are similar to theirs. This is how the pagan nations relate to their many gods, but Almighty God makes it clear that His motivations and actions are nothing like ours. This is the basic starting point for anyone who wants to know God better,

For My (God's) thoughts are not your (mankind's) thoughts, nor are your ways (like) My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your (mankind's) thoughts (Isa. 55:8; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is easier for mankind to criticize God than it is to know Him better. When someone begins to know God, they see themselves and their many shortcomings more clearly. When this occurs, it can eventually lead an individual to repentance. After repentance and baptism, an individual relates to God differently. At this point, there is a greater respect and appreciation for God, His mercy, love, commands, patience and forgiveness. God explained this process as it affected the ancient nation of Israel but history shows that they ignored Him and went into captivity,

Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair? ³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,' says the Lord God. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions (sins; cf. 1Jn. 3:4), so that iniquity will not be your ruin (Eze. 18:29-30; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Jesus Christ made a promise to his disciples that they would eventually know a great deal more about his Father, Almighty God. But as mentioned previously, there are conditions involved. Unfortunately, this is not taught by the majority of Christians today and therefore they cannot know Him, even though they claim to,

But the Helper (Comforter; Intercessor), **the holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my** (Christ's) **name, that one will teach you all, and he will remind you all that I have said to you** (Jn. 14:26; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Paul was a second witness to this truth,

But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him' (cf. 1Jn. 2:3-4; 5:2-3). ¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. **For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.** ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except (by) the spirit of man which is in him? **Even so** (in like manner) **no one knows the things of God except (by) the Spirit of God** (1Cor. 2:9-11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In conclusion, God's attributes can be known by those who seek to obey Him. A willingness to live by every word of God is the starting point that can lead to a better

understanding and appreciation of Almighty God. Those who refuse to willingly obey every word of God cannot discover Almighty God's attributes.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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