

Does God Know the Hearts of Men?

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God knows the hearts of men
Acts 1:24; Psalms 139:2-3

God tries men to find out what is in their heart
Deuteronomy 13:3; 8:2; Genesis 22:12

The scriptures above are used to accuse Almighty God of contradicting Himself. For those who understand who God is and how He manages His creation, there is no contradiction. In this study, the meaning behind each of these scriptures will be examined.

And he (the Angel of the Lord; **see vs. 11**) said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad (Isaac), or do anything to him; for now I know that you (Abraham) fear God (Almighty), since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me (Gen. 22:12; NKJV throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In this example, the Angel of the Lord did not know ahead of time what Abraham would do in this unbelievably hard situation. It would be very normal for any parent to refuse to follow through with this command to kill their child, and yet Abraham obeyed. This is why the Angel of the Lord was surprised and expressed his amazement by saying, "for now I know that you fear God." In a previous study: ***Is God Everywhere?***, it was shown that the spirit-being who became Jesus Christ does not know all things (cf. Mk. 13:32). Only his heavenly Father is all-knowing, or omniscient. Therefore, when any spirit-being expresses surprise because something has occurred that they were not aware of ahead of time, it should be clear the

scripture is not referring to Almighty God. Instead, the scripture indicates that another spirit-being is responding to some event that they were not expecting. Another example of this occurred during Christ's earthly ministry when he asked his disciples a question that no one else could answer up to that point in time. When the answer came, it took Christ by surprise because he was not expecting that his disciples would respond correctly.

He (Christ) said to them (his disciples), "**But who do you say I am?**" ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." ¹⁷And Jesus answered and said to him, "**Blessed are you Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in the heavens** (Mt. 16:15-17; RNT; cf. Lk. 7:9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

If anyone had the power to see what would happen before it occurred, they would not be amazed when the event they foreknew actually took place. Instead, they would already be expecting it. Therefore, when Christ was amazed at the centurion's statement in the next scriptural reference, it proved that Christ was not all-knowing like his heavenly Father.

And Jesus, hearing this (the centurion's statement of faith), **marveled**, and said to those following, '**Amen, I say to you from no one in Israel have I found such faith!**' (Mt. 8:10; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses, emphasis added).

In the final two scriptures used to claim that Almighty God contradicts Himself, the spirit being referred to as, "the Lord who brought you (nation of Israel) out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" was the Angel of the Lord (1Cor. 10:4; cf. Nu. 20:16). This angel learned as he worked with the nation of Israel. So when the next scripture states that, "the Lord tested Israel to know what was in their heart", it means

that through personal experience the Angel of the Lord grew in skill and understanding. This growth occurred as he dealt with all the challenges and problems associated with bringing a million rebellious people out of a country they had been dwelling in for about 400 years (cf. Gen. 15:13).

And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know (SHD 3045 – to know by experience) what was in your heart, whether you would keep His (Almighty God's) commandments or not (Dt. 8:2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is important to note that when Almighty God divided the inheritance of the nations among the angels, He gave the responsibility for the nation of Israel to the one who became known as the Angel of the Lord, and much later as Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Angel of the Lord has always had a close and intimate relationship with the nation of Israel, which today is a spiritual household and not a group of people claiming to have descended from Jacob (cf. Rom. 3:29; 10:12; Gal. 3:28). Consequently, it should be no surprise that Jesus Christ is regarded as the head of that spiritual body today (1Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18).

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you; ⁸when the Most High (Almighty God) divided their inheritance to the nations. When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the angels (LXX, DDS, *angels of God*; Symmachus, Latin, *sons of God*). ⁹For the Lord's (Angel of the Lord's) portion is his people; Jacob is the place of his inheritance (Dt. 32:7-9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Not only do the loyal angels grow in understanding as they deal with mankind, but human beings also have the potential for a closer relationship and deeper appreciation of Almighty God as they experience various challenges and difficulties during their life, and hopefully learn to trust and obey Him in the process. This is the context of the next apparent contradiction in scripture and it is not correctly understood by most people.

You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is **testing you to know** whether **you love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul (Dt. 13:3; emphasis added).

Therefore, if the emphasis is placed correctly, what this last scripture is saying is that God allows people to go through various challenges and difficulties in the hope they will eventually appreciate what He has done in order to restore their relationship with Him. When individuals have been led to this point of spiritual maturity, they will repent of the sinful life they have led and deeply desire to obey God's law and commandments (Rom. 2:4a; cf. Ac. 2:37-38; 1Jn. 5:3).

In conclusion, Almighty God knows the hearts of men (cf. Mt. 6:8), but the rest of the loyal host of heaven are learning just as Jesus Christ did through all the challenges and difficulties he faced as he dealt with ancient Israel, this included attacks from the fallen host (Phil. 2:8; Heb 5:8-9). The loyal host continue to learn from the process of teaching God's people into the present age and will do so into the future as they work with the spiritual nation of Israel. So when the words "Lord" or "God" are used in the context of a spirit-being not knowing something, or being surprised at some event, it can never be referring to Almighty God.

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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