



"The first and most important thing we know about God is that we know nothing about Him except what He Himself makes known."
—Emil Brunner

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The Unique Greatness of Our God (Part Two)

What the apostle Paul writes in [1 Corinthians 2:6-11](#) tells us plainly that the human mind cannot truly grasp the greatness of [God](#):

However, we speak [wisdom](#) among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 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." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

In man's carnal state, he does not have what it takes to understand God or what He is working out among men. An unconverted mind can catch only a

fleeting glimpse of the grandeur and greatness of God. Those who have God's Spirit are allowed a better view, a closer, more exact view of what God is, what He is doing in their lives, and what His purpose is. Yet, even this view has its limits. As Paul says elsewhere, we have been given only an earnest or down payment of the Spirit as a guarantee ([II Corinthians 1:22](#); [5:5](#); see also [Ephesians 1:14](#)). We certainly do not know everything—in fact, only a fraction—about God.

The apostle writes of this in the context of *agape* love in [I Corinthians 13:9-11](#): "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. . . ." In comparison to God, that is how we speak, understand, and think, like children, and truly, to Him we are undeniably mere children. All of the things that we know about God and His purpose are similar to what toddlers know about adults and their plans. As the toddler is to the adult, so are adults to God—but the gap is exponentially greater.

Paul continues the comparison in [I Corinthians 13:11-12](#): ". . . but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then [when we are perfected] face to face [that is, we will have full, personal knowledge; [I John 3:2](#)]. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." So, just as God knows us inside and out now, we will then be able to know what He knows.

What a mind-expanding concept! When we are glorified at Christ's coming, we will be inundated with the intricate and expansive knowledge of God, and thankfully, we will have a spirit body and mind to be able to take it! What God knows is beyond all comprehension to man; it takes a God-being to store, comprehend, and utilize it. As Paul explains, our knowledge is only partial right now, obscured by a fog in which we see snatches of reality as the clouds drift past, but then we become engulfed by the fog again and fail to grasp all that God reveals.

Paul uses the metaphor of seeing in a mirror. The mirrors produced today—a piece of clear glass over a highly reflective mercury backing—create near-perfect reflections. We receive a precise image of what we look like when we look into one. Not so in New Testament times, when the common mirror

was a piece of polished bronze or brass or some other metal. Chrome, which is highly reflective, was not available to them. Thus, the common mirror in those days produced only a dim reflection, probably good enough to comb one's hair, but a person had a difficult time seeing anything in detail.

This is what Paul is referring to. What we can comprehend of God is a dim reflection, foggy, dark, and obscured. Perhaps we can relate to this by looking at ourselves in a mirror that has been fogged by a hot shower. Until the humidity decreases, all we can see is a fuzzy-looking image staring out of the mirror. The reflection falls far short of the reality.

Isaiah 40—which contains a well-known challenge by God: "To whom then will you liken Me? Or to whom shall I be equal?" (verse 25)—continues this theme. A few earlier verses provide us something to ponder regarding how great God is: "O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'" ([Isaiah 40:9](#)). In a way, this series of essays is attempting to do just this. God continues:

Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. . . . Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? ([Isaiah 40:10](#), 12)

How much water can a person hold in the palm of his hand? Less than a cup, perhaps a few tablespoons. God's hand, though, holds all of the water on the face of the earth! We humans are puny folk! A span is the width of a splayed hand, from thumb-tip to pinky-fingertip, roughly nine inches long. Yet, God measures the entire universe in the span of one hand! We have a big God! These verses tell us that He has a measuring cup that will hold all the dirt—all the matter—of the earth. He also owns a pair of scales that can weigh all the earth's hills and mountains.

We know that God is not gargantuan in actual size, for God made us in His image and likeness. He came as a normal-sized Man. We are to understand

from this section's hyperbole that our God is so much greater than we are that He is without comparison. While it is difficult to convey in words how much greater God is, we can observe what He can *do*—and God is gigantic in His works! He has absolute power, and He can bring whatever He desires to pass.

[Isaiah 40:13-14](#) show that He not only has absolute power, but He has unfathomable intelligence and wisdom. Nobody has taught Him or instructed Him how to create because He already knows everything. We, certainly, cannot tell Him anything. As Paul says in [1 Corinthians 1:25](#), even "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." So, if we ever imagine that we bring anything to the table, we should humbly reconsider!

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Image and Likeness of God \(Part Three\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The invisible things of God are clearly seen through the things that are made. The numerous scriptural references to angelic beings (experiences of Abraham, Lot, and Daniel and the references to Michael, Gabriel, and Satan (the Prince of Persia) indicate that the spiritual entities have tangible substance. The main proof text of the "no parts, no shape or form" teaching (John 4:24), far from teaching that God has no body, indicates that spiritual substance is just as real as natural substance, except that it is a much higher type of matter, governed by higher laws including refined feelings, emotions, and thoughts. We have abundant testimony from the both the special revelation (God's Word) and the general revelation (the Creation) that God and angels are not universal nothingness floating around in nowhere.

From the Archives: Featured Article

Focus on the Father

by Staff

Instead of some grandiose title, God asks us to call Him simply "Father." We have human fathers, church fathers and since our calling, a spiritual Father. The role of father is very important!

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