

Who Is Like Our God: Incomprehensibility – Week 13

INTRO

A.W. Tozer – “What comes into our minds when we think of GOD is the most important thing about us.”

- Our view of GOD shapes our words, actions, and thoughts, and purpose.

HOOK

I’ve read most of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes books. I’ve just finished Agatha Christi’s first book. Looking forward to the next. The most fun part of a mystery novel for me is having the mystery unveiled and laid out clearly. What truly happened is revealed.

God chooses not to reveal everything.

- The extent of His nature.
- The Trinity
- How salvation really works. (soteriology)
- His decisions or why He does them.
- Why He’s ordered history or how He’ll close it.
- His return. (eschatology)
- Who He’ll save.
- Why we suffer.
- Our own personal futures.

It was God’s incomprehensibility from which the tempter fashioned his lie to Eve and Adam, “Don’t you wanna know more of what God knows?” When, in fact, they were already “like” Him and became further from Him in their sin. ([Gen.3](#))

BOOK

[Psalm 145:1-3](#) - *I will extol You, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever. 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.*

[Job 26:10-14](#) - *He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. 11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at*

His rebuke. 12 By His power He stilled the sea; by His understanding He shattered Rahab. 13 By His wind the heavens were made fair; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent. 14 Behold, these are but the outskirts of His ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

- V.10 Sidenote: Greek philosophers in the 5th century BC (400's) toyed with the concept the earth was round instead of flat. It wasn't until Eratosthenes proved and calculated it's circumference in 240BC that secular science knew for sure.
 - Scholars have no idea when Job was written. Most propose between the 6th and 8th centuries BC. Some believe it was written even before the exodus. That would God's word to Job about the sphere of the earth preceding science by 1,000 years.
 - Isaiah also mentioned it in 40:22, but he was only 100 years before the Greeks.

Deuteronomy 3:23-24 – (Moses told he'll not enter the Promised Land) *And I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, 24 "O Lord YHWH, You have only begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?"*

LOOK

"In thinking about God's incomprehensibility, especially his knowledge, it's important to remember that God's thoughts are not merely quantitatively greater than ours; they are qualitatively different." – Stephen Wellum

- **EX.** My knowledge fits in a bottle cap and His in this whole building. It's not just about amount. It's wholly different and above.
- **EX.** His thinking is creative. Ours is limited to what we've experienced in creation.

He is incomprehensible for two reasons:

1. He is infinite and we are drastically limited. We can't contain in our finite minds the vastness of Who He is or His ways.
2. Out of His sovereign wisdom, He chooses to withhold those things which He hasn't revealed.
 - a. We should find peace in that. If it hasn't been revealed to us, it's not something we need to know.
 - b. **John Calvin** – "Where God closes His holy mouth, I will desist from inquiry."
 - c. And what God HAS revealed, we will spend a lifetime searching.
 - i. "An elephant can drown in it, but a baby can swim."

God will eternally (here & in heaven) remain beyond our complete comprehension. **John 3:8** - *The wind (or spirit) blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*"

Job, in desperation, asked God some of our biggest questions. Why do the wicked prosper? Why do the righteous suffer? Why, do you do things the way you do? **God answered him**, "Who are you to question how I, Creator God, do things?"

Job 42:1-3 - *Then Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.*

- Tough to swallow. We can't grasp God.... And we cannot control God.

A.W.Tozer - "Left to ourselves we tend immediately to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him. We want a God we can in some measure control."

Isn't this why idols are so attractive? They are things we can understand. After all, we invented them. Even if they are false, empty, useless, even harmful idols, we have some ability to control and understand them. They're easy, comfortable illusions. We can set them on the mantle at home (like some religions). We can set them on the mantle of our hearts (like all sinners), but ultimately because we made them, we have some measure of control over them. This exposes that it's our control we're wanting and ultimately placing ourselves on the throne of our hearts.

- We prefer a known, but hollow idol over a real and mysterious Lord.

Isn't it good that He's incomprehensible? A god we can manage is a god less powerful than we are. A god we can understand, whose vision we share, and insight we grasp, isn't a God worthy of our worship or service.

- "For all eternity, we will never exhaust who God is in all of His transcendence, majesty, and covenant love, and faithfulness in Christ Jesus."
– Stephen Wellum
- That's a GOD worthy of our worship.

Turning point for hope!

(English understanding) **Mystery** – A secret for which no answer can be found.

(Greek and Biblical understanding) ***Mystery** – a secret which is being , or even has been, revealed and needs to be made known by God to men through His Spirit.

“Therefore, to say that **God is incomprehensible** is to gladly acknowledge that the glorious triune God of Scripture is in a category all by himself and that as such, he is unfathomable in his nature, knowledge, and works. However, due to his gracious self-disclosure, in general and special revelation, we can know the incomprehensible God truly but never fully or exhaustively.”

Transcendent, Creator God reveals Himself to us therefore He CAN BE KNOWN by us. He makes Himself intelligible to us.

- Richard Sibbes – “How shall finite comprehend the infinite? **We shall apprehend Him, but not comprehend Him.**”
- **Deuteronomy 29:29** - (context: Curses for breaking covenant) - *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*
 - We CAN know what He does reveal!

LEVELS OF REVELATION FROM GOD

1) GENERAL (or Universal) **REVELATION** – What God reveals about Himself in the cosmos. Creation points to God as Creator.

- Nature, its laws, order, beauty, the intricacies of humanity, the natural moral law woven into us.

Psalm 19:1-4 - *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

Romans 1:19-20 – (context: discussing the wrath of God against sinners) *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

- BUT, as exhaustive as general revelation is, it's limited. It cannot bring someone to saving faith. (**John 14:6** – *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* – Jesus)
- Out of God's grace and love toward us, He reveals far more.

2) SPECIAL REVELATION – God speaks specifically and directly to us.

Two forms of God's special revelation.

1) Scripture

- **2 Timothy 3:16** - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...*
- **Romans 16:25-27** - *...The revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26 ... has now been disclosed (unveiled, revealed) and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith....*
 - Scripture is God's accessible voice for the purpose of bringing us to obedience.
 - But scripture alone is not enough to bring us to salvation. It's only a road sign pointing towards Salvation Himself.

2) The person, life, and work of Jesus.

- **Colossians 1:15** - *He is the image of the invisible God...*
- **John 14:9** - *Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father.*
 - **Jesus is the climax and purpose of all of scripture. He is the perfect and complete self-revelation of God. Through Him we are brought into fellowship with GOD Almighty.**
 - "We see Jesus prophesied in the OT. We see Jesus historically in the Gospels. We see the theology of Jesus in the epistles. And we see the eschatology Jesus in Revelation." – Pastor Matt Karns

That's the beauty and majesty of this whole thing. **We CAN know GOD.** We will never know Him completely, but **we CAN know Him truly!**

Jeremiah 31:33-34 - *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they*

all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

- God is not abstract. He's not limited to a tent or a temple, and we don't need a priest to mediate between us. Each of His people has full access to **know** Him.

John 17:3 - *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

- And knowing Him is to have eternal life, and purpose, and peace.

Disclaimer: Continuing revelation is based on growth in our relationship. However, God's "Special Self-Revelation" is complete in Jesus. There doesn't need to be anymore because Jesus was both the Author and Finisher of our faith.

- EX. "My son and I are getting closer." Not proximity but relationship.

3) GLORIFIED REVELATION –When we will see Him clearly in heaven.

1 Corinthians 13:12 – *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

GOD'S INCOMPREHENSIBILITY BRINGS US TO WORSHIP IN 3 WAYS.

1) We pursue!

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins with the famous question: "What is the chief end (purpose) of man?" Its answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."

- **James 4:8** – *Draw near to God and He'll draw near to you.*

A.W. Tozer – To have found God and to still pursue Him is the soul's paradox of love.

EX. God's withholding isn't meant to be a secret. It's **like when my kids run to me** and I back up a few steps before picking them up and tossing them in the air. We're celebrating our emotional closeness in that moment. Point back and say, "Look how far you've come!"

- We get to pursue and apprehend the GOD of the universe again and again. And each time our joy increases, our minds are blown, and we love Him all the deeper.

2) We walk in faith.

Hebrews 11:6 – *Without faith it's impossible to please God.*

Romans 1:17 - *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

- His incomprehensibility gives us rest that He is in control when we are not even if we don't fully understand it. **What He has revealed** – His goodness, His care for us, His justice, His love, His purposes – **is enough**.

3) We celebrate His awesomeness.

Psalms 145:1-3 - *I will extol You, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever. 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.*

RECAP

- God is unsearchable and transcendent above our understanding.
- All we need to know about Him, He has revealed in General Revelation and Special Revelation.
- Special Revelation is God's speaking specifically through Scripture and the life and work of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus is the perfect and complete revelation of who God is.
- Through Jesus, God can be truly known.
- God's incomprehensibility calls us to worship through pursuit, walking in faith, and celebrating His awesomeness.

TOOK

Challenge 1: Give your life to Him.

Challenge 2: How can you grow in relationship with Him this week?

- Ex. Throw yourself into scripture and ask the question, "What can I learn about God from this?"