

# Gabriel Reyes-Ordeix

## SESSION 3 | God Knows

### I. INTRODUCTION: KNOWLEDGE AS “LIGHT”

1 John 1:5

"God is light and in him there is no darkness at all"

"[John] calls God light, and says that he is in the light; such expressions are not to be too strictly taken. Why Satan is called the prince of darkness is sufficiently evident. When, therefore, God on the other hand is called the Father of light, and also light, we first understand that there is nothing in him but what is bright, pure, and unalloyed; and, secondly, that he makes all things so manifest by his brightness, that he suffers nothing vicious or perverted, no spots or filth, no hypocrisy or fraud, to lie hid. Then the sum of what is said is, that since there is no union between light and darkness, there is a separation between us and God as long as we walk in darkness; and that the fellowship which he mentions, cannot exist except we also become pure and holy. In him is no darkness at all. This mode of speaking is commonly used by John, to amplify what he has affirmed by a contrary negation. Then, the meaning is, that God is such a light, that no darkness belongs to him. It hence follows, that he hates an evil conscience, pollution, and wickedness, and everything that pertains to darkness." (John Calvin, Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, 163)

"Light in Scripture, to be sure, also stands for purity, chastity, holiness, and further, for joy, delight, and blessedness (Ps. 27:1; 36:9; 97:11; Isa. 60:19; John 1:4; Eph. 5:8), just as darkness is a picture not just of ignorance and error but also of impurity and moral corruption, of sorrow and misery (Ps. 82:5; Eccles. 2:13-14; Isa. 8:22; Matt. 4:16; 8:12; Luke 22:53; John 3:19; Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:8ff.; 1 Pet. 2:9; etc.). Still what stands out in the figurative use of the word "light" is its intellectual meaning. For in the first place, light's main function is to make manifest that which is hidden and wrapped in darkness." (Herman Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, II.192)

### II. DEFINING DEVINE KNOWLEDGE

"He is light through and through. He lives in the light and is himself the source of all light. ... The trinitarian life of God is a completely conscious one [and] God is conscious of and knows all that exists outside his being. Scripture nowhere even

hints that anything could be unknown to him." (Herman Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, II.192)

God's knowledge is "that perfection in God whereby He, in an entirely unique manner, knows Himself and all things possible and actual in one eternal and most simple act" (Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 66).

Job 37:16

Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge,

Isaiah 40:27-28 |

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,  
"My way is hidden from the LORD,  
and my right is disregarded by my God"?  
Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable. (NIV: "no one can fathom")

Romans 11:33

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

## A. God's knowledge and ours

Archetypal: knows everything, always.

Echtypal: knows some things, sometimes.

"All our knowledge of God is echtypal or derived from Scripture. Only God's self-knowledge is adequate, underived, or archetypal. Yet our finite, inadequate knowledge is still true, pure, and sufficient. ... Our knowledge of God is not, in fact cannot be, exhaustive; it is analogical... but it is true knowledge and because God's attributes are identical with his being, we can speak truly about God as he really is." (Herman Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, II.96)

### 1. God's knowledge

- He knows all things and there is no space for doubt — Ps. 94:9
- He is identified with wisdom, might, counsel, understanding and knowledge all throughout Scripture — Job 12:13; 28:12-27; Prov. 8:12ff; Ps. 147:5; Rom. 11:33; 16:27; Eph. 3:10
- Because he is omniscient:
  - He knows himself and all things — Ps. 139:1-6; 1:6; 37:18.
  - He does not learn; his knowledge is not gained after the fact, but present from eternity — 1 Cor. 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4-5

- His knowledge and consciousness do not increase

"[About the knowledge of the Father and the Son] All the things that are in their knowledge, in their wisdom, in their being, each of them sees all at once, not bit by bit and one by one, nor by turning his gaze from here to there and there to here...as though he could not see some things unless he stopped seeing others. But as I said, each sees all things together, and there is nothing that he does not see always." (Augustine of Hippo, The Trinity, XV.14, p.418)

## 2. Our knowledge

- Because we are made in his image we can know.
- We acquire knowledge by learning.
- Our limited knowledge is enough for obedience and faithfulness.

## III. WISDOM AND TRUTHFULNESS

### We can see his wisdom in:

- His creation: Ps. 19:1-6
- In providence: Ps. 33:10-11; Ro. 8:28
- In salvation: 1 Cor. 2:6-10; Eph. 3:10

### We can see his truthfulness:

- God is true/truthful in himself.
- God is the standard of truth (Romans 3:4); therefore, he cannot/does not lie (Num. 23:19; 1 Sa. 15:29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18).
- God's Words are the standard of truth (John 17:17).
- Jesus is truth incarnate (John 14:6).

## IV. TWO APPLICATIONS

### We know

We know because he made us in his image, we know because he reveals. In learning from his revelation participate from his knowledge, wisdom and truthfulness.

**He knows**

Because he knows, we trust him.

We have security and hope in his loving sovereignty and omniscience.

Psalm 139:1-6

O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is high; I cannot attain it.