

It is Unacceptable to God to Believe that Truth is Humanly Unattainable

Intro: Some skeptics classified truth seekers into three groups: (1) those who think they have found truth, (2) those who admit that they have not found it and who claim the impossibility of anyone's finding it, and (3) those who continue to look for it.

If truth is not humanly attainable, then salvation is impossible. Yet, we have had preachers/teachers who have and do deny the possibility of the absolute knowledge of God. Thus, this is an essential study.

I. SOME THINGS WE DO NOT KNOW.

A. Some things are only knowable by revelation and God has not revealed them.

1. Deu. 29:29 ²⁹“The secret *things* belong unto the LORD our God: but those *things* which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”
2. God has revealed some things; 1 Cor. 2:7-10 ⁷“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: ⁸Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

B. God cannot reveal all He knows.

1. God is infinite.
2. Some things are incomprehensible; Rom. 11:33-36 ³³“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ³⁴For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? ³⁵Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? ³⁶For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”
3. This does not mean that man cannot know anything, but that his knowledge is limited.

C. Man has not discovered it yet even though it is discoverable.

1. We continue to make advances in various fields of study.
2. Man will continue to study and make continual advances; there is always something else to be comprehended.
3. Even regarding God's revelation, we might not know something because we have not spent the time and effort to learn it.
 - a. Some are not willing to put forth the effort.
 - b. There are some things hard to understand; 2 Pet. 3:16 ¹⁶“As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

II. HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT WE KNOW?

A. Psychological means

1. One can comprehend his own consciousness by mental reflection.
 - a. Human consciousness is a fact.
 - b. We can each probe our own mind; 1 Cor. 2:11 “¹¹ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”
 - c. I know something because I am comprehending my own mental state.
 - d. We keep learning certain facts and we know that we know them.
2. Man’s psychological awareness of his own mental powers makes philosophical inquiry possible.

B. Empirical Means

1. By utilizing my five senses, I can understand certain information.
2. My spirit is connected to and housed within my body, so I am able to gain some truths by my body’s relationship to the physical universe.
3. My body can affect my spirit and my spirit can affect my body.
 - a. Mat. 13:13-15 “¹³ Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: ¹⁵ For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”
 - b. Deu. 4:28 “²⁸ And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.”
 - c. Psa. 115:1-7 “¹ Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth’s sake. ² Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God? ³ But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. ⁴ Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. ⁵ They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: ⁶ They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: ⁷ They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.”
4. Two of the three avenues to sin indicate the vulnerability of the human spirit in its attachment to a physical body.
 - a. Lust of the flesh and eyes.
 - b. 1 John 2:15-17 “¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

C. Ontological Means

1. Ontology refers to “being.”
2. There is in the nature of being a way to prove the possibility of human knowledge.
3. No one can criticize or deny the possibility of knowledge without presupposing it.
4. No one can deny the reality of the “laws of thought” without making use of them (law of identity, excluded middle, contradiction).
5. For example:
 - a. If one says that he knows that no one can know, then he affirms a logical contradiction.
 - b. If he says that he does not know that no one can know (though he suspects that such is the case), then he admits the possibility of knowledge.

D. Revelational Means

1. I know that I can know because God told me so.
2. God states that man can know saving truth and that man must know this truth.
 - a. John 8:31-32 ^{“31} Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; ³² And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
 - b. 1 Tim. 2:4 ^{“4} Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”
 - (1) The ultimate end is for man to be saved.
 - (2) The means by which the end is attained is mentioned second: come to a knowledge of the truth.
 - c. John 6:69 ^{“69} And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”
 - d. 1 Tim. 4:3 ^{“3} Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”
3. For God to communicate with man implies the possibility of man’s understand what God is saying.
4. If man cannot understand God’s communication to him implies (either/or):
 - a. God had the ability to create a message that man could understand but was not good enough (benevolent enough) to do so.
 - b. God did not have the ability to create a message that man could understand.

E. By Falsifying Agnosticism

1. Proving agnosticism is false verifies the possibility of knowing.
 - a. Either it is possible to know or impossible to know.
 - b. If an agnostic says that he knows that no one knows, he has contradicted his own position.
 - c. If an agnostic says that he does not know that no one can know, he admits the possibility of what agnosticism denies (the possibility of knowledge).
2. Agnosticism cannot be verified.
 - a. It can easily be falsified.
 - b. When falsified, the possibility of human knowledge is proven.

3. While it is possible for one to know and to know that he knows, it is impossible for one to know he cannot know.
4. Knowledge claims are possible only because one is aware that he has or possesses certain information.

III. WHY THE BIBLE IF WE CANNOT KNOW TRUTH?

A. Why did God write the Bible if we cannot know what it contains?

B. We can know:

1. We exist (are existing).
2. The universe exists.
3. Adequate explanation for the universe is required.
4. God (the eternal Mind) is the only adequate explanation; Gen. 1:1 “¹In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”
5. The Bible exists.
6. The only adequate explanation for the Bible is that God wrote it.
 - a. This book requires that I come to a knowledge of the truth; 1 Tim. 2:4 “⁴Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”
 - b. This book requires that I obey the truth; Gal. 5:7 “⁷Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”
 - c. This book requires that I abide in the truth; John 8:31-32 “³¹Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; ³²And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Conclusion: We need to appreciate and abide by the Biblical concept of knowledge and resolve to rightly resist all agnostic efforts to take us away from what God has said we must know. It is only by knowledge that we are in a position to confront error and stand for truth. Yes, we can attain truth and know that we know.