

Lesson 11

GOD IS INCOMPREENSIBLE

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GOD IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE

This seems like an impossible attribute of God to understand. How can we possibly understand that which is incomprehensible? How could we even approach learning something for which God Almighty has declared that we do not have the capacity to fully comprehend.

Logic is the answer.

When stating that something is incomprehensible it means that it is impossible for me to comprehend the **totality** of the subject. And that is the small beacon of light. Incomprehensibility doesn't mean we can't know anything about the subject, rather our comprehension will be severely limited. I may know something or learn useful information without knowing the subject.

Biblically speaking, incomprehensible does not mean that we cannot know anything about God, but rather that our knowledge of Him will always be severely limited. We cannot totally comprehend all that God is because our minds are finite, lacking the capacity to grasp or understand all that is God. He surpasses our ability to comprehend Him in His fullness. By using the term incomprehensible, we are not referring to something we are unable to comprehend or know at all. Therefore, theologically speaking, to say God is incomprehensible is not to say that nothing about God, rather it is to say that none of us can comprehend God exhaustively.

- *2 Samuel 7:22 For this reason You are great, O Lord GOD; for there is none like You, and there is no God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*

Compare a 12 ounce glass. This glass is finite and will only hold 12 ounces of water and no more. I may foolishly try to pour the Atlantic ocean into this glass, but it would be a task doomed to failure. It simply cannot be done, the glass does not have the capacity to begin to hold the Atlantic Ocean. In the same way, our minds are finite, lacking the capacity to grasp or understand all that is God. His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. He surpasses our ability to comprehend Him in His fullness.

- *Isaiah 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. (9) "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.*
- *Job 37:5 "God thunders with His voice wondrously, Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.*
- *Ephesians 3:17-19 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (19) and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*
- *Colossians 1:16-17 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*
- *Ephesians 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*
- *1 Timothy 6:16 who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*

God has always existed and is eternal, that is incomprehensible even though we know what it means. God is infinite, that is also incomprehensible. God has form, but His form is unlimited, that is incomprehensible. God is omniscient and omnipotent, and that is incomprehensible. In fact, each and every attribute of God is incomprehensible. We get some idea and we experience these attributes by virtue of being one of "His" creatures.

God's divine incomprehensibility reminds us that God is so great, so infinite, and so uncontainable that His sovereign power and glory make a claim on every facet of who we are. As people bought at the price of Christ's precious blood (1 Cor 6:19-20), the entirety of our lives should be given over to the mission of knowing God and making Him known. If you have experienced salvation, you should be compelled to never want to look away, and ready, willing and able to lay down your life to let the whole world see.

- *Romans 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? 35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*

Since humans are finite creatures, our minds will always work from a finite perspective. We live, move, and have our being on a finite plane, but God lives, moves, and has His being in infinity. Our finite understanding cannot contain an infinite subject; thus, God is incomprehensible. This concept represents a check and balance to warn us lest we think we have captured altogether and mastered in every detail the things of God. We will always be limited in our understanding of God.

If we misunderstand the doctrine of God's incomprehensibility, we can easily slide into two serious errors.

1. The first error says that since God is incomprehensible, He must be utterly unknowable, and anything we say about God is gibberish. But Christianity affirms the rationality of God alongside the incomprehensibility of God. Our minds can go only so far in understanding God, and to know God we need His revelation. But that revelation is intelligible, not irrational. It is not gibberish. It is not nonsense. The incomprehensible God has revealed Himself truly.
2. The second error says that since God is incomprehensible, we are left groping around for a hidden God. Scripture teaches us that God has revealed Himself, and that is basic to the Christian faith. Christianity is a revealed religion. God the Creator has revealed Himself manifestly in nature. This is what we call "natural revelation." God has also revealed Himself verbally. He has spoken, and we have His Word, the Bible. Here we're talking about special revelation—information God gives us that we could never figure out on our own.

God remains incomprehensible because He reveals Himself without revealing everything there is to know about Him. *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."* (Deut. 29:29). It's not as if we have no knowledge of God or as if we have consummate knowledge of God; rather, we have a working knowledge of God that is useful and crucial for our lives.

We relate to God by way of analogy. There is a point of contact between man and God. The Bible tells us that we are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). That makes it possible for communication to occur. God has built this capacity for communication into creation. We are not God, but we are like Him because we bear His image and are made in His likeness. Therefore, God can reveal Himself to us, not in His language, but in our language. He can talk to us. He can communicate to us in a manner that we can understand—not exhaustively, but truly and meaningfully, yet incomprehensible.