

Knowledge

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom 11:33)

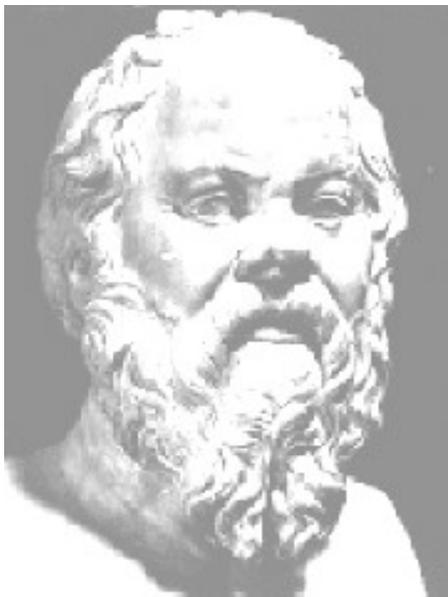


Let us begin to consider knowledge from the perspective of God! We humans possess only a slight impression of God's unfathomable knowledge! On the other hand, we have a pretty rich historical background full of information regarding the development of human knowledge.

After the great flood of Noah the gentile world was held captive under the concept that the gods ruled the universe. These ideas are expressed in early Greek Mythology.



However, an entirely different flood of new ideas poured into Athens Greece during the 5th century BCE; these new ideas came as a result of an influx of Ionian thinkers into the Greek peninsula. Athens (*boxed – see center of picture immediately below the 38th parallel*) became the intellectual center of the Greek world. The Persian and Peloponnesian Wars taught



the Greeks the important lessons that the actions of men and women determine their own destiny. This concept represented a whole new way of thinking! Advanced thinkers began to reject traditional explanations that the world of nature was fashioned by the gods. As a result, the traditional religious beliefs in a pantheon of gods were on a fast decline. During this period of decline, gods and goddesses were no longer held in the same regard, as they had been during previous centuries.

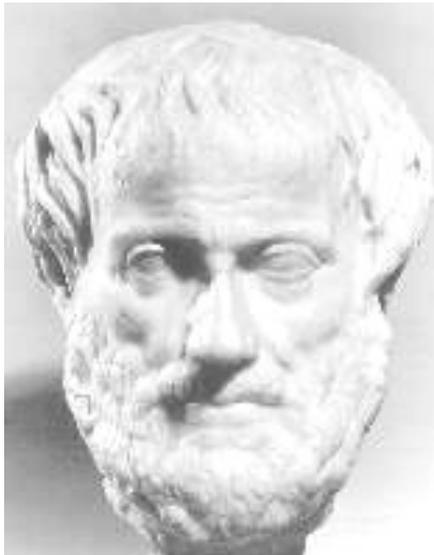
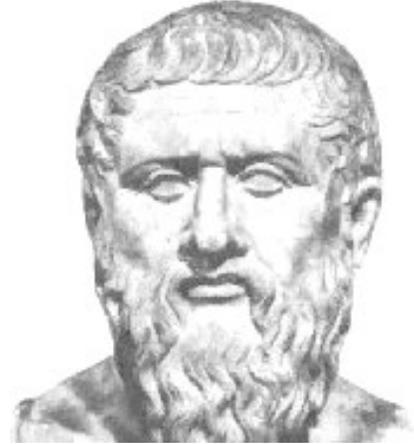
There are three preeminent Greek teachers from that period; they are Socrates (*pictured above left*), Plato, and Aristotle.

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Socrates was mentor to Plato an aristocratic young man who became the most famous student of Socrates. After the death of Socrates, Plato (*pictured below right*) carried on much of his teacher's work; he eventually founded an academy that taught the wisdom of the philosophers who had gone on before him. However, not long after the time of Socrates, Plato established an academy where he refined a carefully reasoned a model which was used to explain the existence of all things. His classical Greek model for the origins of mankind changed the Greek explanation of origins for all time. After Plato, the Greek explanation for the universe would never again revert to the divine capriciousness of their earlier mythological gods. Under the inspiration of Plato and his pupils the concept of creation grew out of a logical and then scientific focus. Plato is really considered to be the father of our modern western educational system. In *The Republic*, who some claim to be Plato's best work, he asks many questions including: "What is knowledge?" "What is illusion?" "What is reality?" "How do we know?" "What makes a thing, a thing?" "What can we know?" These questions are epistemological – that is to say, they are questions concerning knowledge itself.



Aristotle (*see picture at left*) was the most famous student who came out of Plato's academy.

Although he studied under Plato, Aristotle disagreed fundamentally with his teacher on just about everything. He could not bring himself to think of the world in the same abstract terms that Plato had clearly advocated. Aristotle believed that the world could be best understood through observation and classification of phenomenon. He held that knowledge (*which is literally what the word "science" means*) is essentially experiential. Aristotle was the first person to really think out the problem of evidence. Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of Aristoteleanism is the classification of knowledge according the objects of that knowledge.

As we have recently noted, the Greeks were seriously concerned about the nature of human knowledge. This area of learning known as epistemology focused on the "study of knowledge." Greek philosophy dealt with questions of certainty. They asked, "How can



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one be certain of knowledge? Suppose everything was an illusion? Aristotle resolved the question by categorizing knowledge based on their objects and the relative certainty with which you could know those objects. An example is the pure logic in mathematics that permits you to arrive at a conclusion that is true all the time: i.e., two plus two will forever equal to four. Other types of knowledge were characterized as imprecise explanations; these kinds of knowledge fell into this category of: ethics, psychology, and politics. Unlike Plato and Socrates, Aristotle did not demand certainty in everything. These major teachers formed the core of our modern system of knowledge, as we know it.

The educational platform that was established by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle has truly withstood the test of time. Their educational model of knowledge is considered the best in the modern world; therefore, their model which is founded upon logic and reasoning is the most widely accepted in our time.

Unlike human knowledge, Scripture reveals that the Almighty is perfect in knowledge! Twice toward the end of his famous period of trial the ancient Biblical hero declared that God, "**is perfect in knowledge**" (Job 36:4). Again Job said just a little later, "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of **him which is perfect in knowledge?**" (Job 37:16). What does that mean that God is, "**perfect in knowledge?**" The Hebrew word for perfect is (*tamiym*). It means "entire" literally, figuratively and morally. *Tamiym* is also translated in the Bible as: "without blemish," "upright," "whole," "sound," and "full." We discover through the revelation of the Bible that God has complete knowledge. The Scripture says that "**by his knowledge** the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew" (Prov 3:20).

Who taught God knowledge? Isaiah asks the question, "**Who** hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? 13 **Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?** 14 **With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him,** and taught him in the path of judgment, and **taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?** (Isa 40:12-14). God's knowledge is well beyond what we can comprehend! The Scripture concludes that God possesses knowledge, "**How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?**" (Ps 73:11). Instead, we learn that God teaches the human family knowledge, "**he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?**" (Ps 94:10). God is not only perfect in knowledge and possesses knowledge beyond our comprehension, but He is the preserver of knowledge, "**The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge**" (Prov 22:12). He operates in knowledge of which we can only speculate how He may have obtained.

In the eyes of Jesus Christ, knowledge was very important. In the presence of the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus rebuked the lawyers as He told them, "ye have taken away **the key of knowledge**" (Luke 11:52). Here Jesus recognized and identified that knowledge should be considered to be a major key for humanity!

Even though it is a major key, knowledge has been rejected by humanity! The point is that any knowledge that fails to recognize the Almighty God, who is the source of all knowledge, cannot therefore be knowledge; instead, it is rebellion against Him, "And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,** God gave them over to a **reprobate**



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mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Rom 1:28). Remember that Adam and Eve illicitly partook of the tree, which is called, "the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:9). Thereafter, humanity settled for a "form of knowledge" that is clearly inferior to God's knowledge, "form of knowledge" (Rom 2:19-20). Where has this false "enlightenment" led humanity? Apart from God's knowledge humanity has gone into captivity. The prophet Isaiah laments, "my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge" (Isa 5:13). Worse than captivity, the people end up being destroyed because they are deficient of God's knowledge, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hos 4:6).

When we refuse instruction, we essentially turn our back on knowledge, "If you stop listening to instruction, my child, you have turned your back on knowledge" (Prov 19:27 NLT). When we turn our backs on instruction we cease to obey and the resulting disobedience naturally leads to death, "they shall die without knowledge" (Job 36:12).

That knowledge which the human family clings to; the knowledge that seems so important is merely carnal, "Every man (*Scripture here specifically identifies an idolater. However, anyone who has gone after his own knowledge is in idolatry!*) is brutish in his knowledge" (Jer 10:14). The carnal mind has even created religion in their attempt to return to God, "they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom 10:2). There is only one way to God and that way is only through Jesus Christ. Any other man-made attempt is merely brutish!

Humanity does have the God kind of knowledge within its grasp; however, the same process through which human knowledge is acquired simply cannot be used to take a hold of the God kind of knowledge. So how then is the God kind of knowledge acquired? Solomon wrote, "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov 1:7). Knowledge begins with the fear of God in our hearts, "The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge" (Prov 15:14).

Once an individual begins his/her search for knowledge through the fear of the Lord, they must seek that knowledge with the same intensity of a treasure hunter because God's knowledge is a great treasure, "if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov 2:3-6). God is happy to share His knowledge but only in the heart of a pliable disciple.

Then, once we find knowledge, we are to carefully protect that understanding, "Wise men lay up knowledge" (Prov 10:14). We begin to understand that our God-given information is what saves us, "through knowledge shall the just be delivered" (Prov 11:9).

Knowledge is not merely found when actively sought out, it can unknowingly be obtained by the seeker through external reproof, "reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge" (Prov 19:25). God recognizes a seeker and gives them knowledge as they grow, "he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (Dan 2:21). As a man of knowledge grows he gains intensity, "a man of knowledge increaseth strength" (Prov 24:5). This individual who is growing in



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knowledge epitomizes the proverb, "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and **knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul**" (Prov 2:10).

Who is the person that can discover the God kind of knowledge? The scripture reveals that, "**Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge**" (Prov 12:1). Those who love God's knowledge grow to the point where they effortlessly gain that information, "**knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth**" (Prov 14:6). These people who understand the God kind of knowledge have become wise, "**the prudent are crowned with knowledge**" (Prov 14:18); "**when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge**" (Prov 21:11).

The Scripture asks a powerful question that we also wonder about, "**Whom shall he teach knowledge?**" (Isa 28:9-11). In other words who or what sort of person can obtain God's knowledge? And, even beyond whom; the question extends, "How does God teach us?" Paul provides that answer, "God hath revealed them unto us **by his Spirit**: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 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**" (1 Cor 2:10-11). Knowledge and understanding come only through the Spirit of God!

Knowledge must certainly be one of the greatest gifts that God has ever given to Christians. Paul was convinced that we possess the knowledge of God, "I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, **filled with all knowledge**, able also to admonish one another" (Rom 15:14). Yet Paul who understood the value of knowledge said, "I count all things but loss (*Notice Paul's past – "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God"*) (Acts 22:3). *Paul's educational background is the chief thing that he considered as "but loss!" Now notice why Paul prioritized his education in such a reduced perspective.)* for **the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord**" (Phil 3:8). Compared to the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, Paul said concerning his human background and knowledge, that I "**do count them but dung**, that I may win Christ" (Phil 3:8).

Paul wrote that our new spirit man increases and is renewed through knowledge. He explained that we, "have put on **the new man, which is renewed in knowledge** after the image of him that created him" (Col 3:10). We must increase in knowledge, "**that ye might be filled with the knowledge** of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and **increasing in the knowledge of God**" (Col 1:9-10). God gave us the light of understanding when He saved us out of darkness, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath **shined in our hearts**, to give **the light of the knowledge of the glory of God** in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).

Here is an important point; notice how we grow! It is through knowledge that we experience spiritual growth, "**Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God**, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2). Everything needed for spiritual growth has been provided in God's knowledge, "his divine power hath given unto us **all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge** of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). Notice in yet another place Peter said that we came



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out of darkness through God's knowledge; he said that we "have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 2:20). God has designed that we continue to grow in His knowledge, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). Obviously all Christians will receive God's knowledge; however, His knowledge is for the whole of humanity, "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4).

Obviously, God's knowledge is wonderful; however, can there be a down side to gaining His knowledge? Doesn't the Scripture teach that, "in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. What on earth does that mean? Let's allow the Amplified Bible give us the most complete answer, "For in much [human] wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow" (Eccl 1:18) AMP. The human wisdom is where sorrow is produced not the God kind of knowledge.

That may be true; but, doesn't the Scripture say in what is clearly an unfavorable tone, "knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor 8:1)? Yes indeed the Scripture does make that statement! Knowledge, even godly knowledge, can manifest in problematic ways! Notice one negative situation that Paul describes, "For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols. 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" (1 Cor 8:10-11). We learn here that the free exercise even of godly knowledge must be tempered! Notice what Paul told the Corinthians, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:2). Therefore, knowledge without love is completely empty! That is why Paul wrote just a few verses later, "whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (1 Cor 13:8).

Essentially, the Love of God surpasses even the knowledge of God! That is why Paul wrote, "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, (*The AMP says "which far surpasses"*) that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:19). We merely need to look to Jesus to observe God's form of knowledge. Notice that Jesus had all knowledge; yet, he used His superior knowledge to become a sacrifice for our sins, "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa 53:11)! Out of Jesus' knowledge He endured the cross for our sins!

We are to likewise grow in knowledge through love and vise-versa! We must grow in knowledge and love together, "I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge" (Phil 1:9). Notice that it is through knowledge that we abound in love.

God maintains all knowledge within Himself; at the same time He is Love, "to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3). Our mission is to become like God. We are to possess knowledge and express love in the same equal proportions, "if these things (the love of God and the knowledge of God) be in you, and abound, they make



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you that *ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 1:8). We will continue to grow in both!

God's kind of knowledge was prophesied to show-up during our time, "seal the book, *even to the time of the end*: many shall run to and fro, and *knowledge shall be increased*" (Dan 12:4). That kind of knowledge is also prophesied for a time yet future. The prophet Isaiah described a future period when, "the earth *shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD*, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9).



God will continue to pour out upon us His knowledge, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which *shall feed you with knowledge and understanding*" (Jer 3:15). Since God will act so gracious, we are to "grow in grace, and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 3:18).

None of the humanly devised lamps of knowledge such as those

identified in many of the coat of arms from modern universities can represent the lamp of God's knowledge. At best the lamp of God's knowledge can be observed in the seven branched candle stick which was pictured in the tabernacle in the wilderness and which the Book of Revelation depicts in the hand of Jesus, "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last" (Rev 1:16-17).



God is the source of all human knowledge; it is only from his hand that we receive knowledge!

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