

—{1}. **Ecclesiastes 11:5 Too Wonderful Knowledge**

A. Introduction

1. In the Scripture that we just read (Isaiah 40: 18-26)
 - a. it is the God who reveals Himself to mankind in the Bible
 - b. through the voice of the prophet Isaiah
 - c. is brought into comparison and sharp contrast with man's conception
 - d. particularly man's conceptions of God
 - e. and in particular, in comparison and contrast with the idols that man may fashion with his hands to worship them
 - f. and, by way of clinching the difference between what man thinks and who God really is, Isaiah points to the stars

2. now, recently, Carlos in his visitation
 - a. met a gentleman
 - (A) who, as part of his objections to the gospel message
 - (B) questioned as to whether he was ready to meet God
 - (C) said that he couldn't see how – if there were a God – that God would be concerned about him when he was only one out of 6 billion people
 - (D) and, in particular, why God would even know about his deeds, his sin, among such a multitude
 - (E) the very thing Isaiah goes on to say in Isaiah 40: 27 NAS: *Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"?*
 - b. so, think back for a moment to what Isaiah had just said
 - (A) the God of the Bible; our God
 - (B) created the stars
 - (C) not only that, but He calls each by name
 - (D) and, in fact, keeps each one in its place
 - (E) now, astronomers tell us that there are many millions of times as many stars as there are people on this earth

- (F) so, would such a God have any problem in keeping track of what you do, ... say, ... think?
- c. you see, this gentleman was basing his objections to the gospel on the inadequate view that he has about God
3. why do people have inadequate views and conceptions of God?
- a. in Isaiah's day, it was because they had tried to reduce
- (A) the infinite God, creator of all things
 - (B) to images made out of stone or wood
 - (C) the true God can be only poorly described with words
 - (D) so think how grotesque to represent the living God in stone and wooden images
- b. but God is not only misrepresented by being depicted in wood and stone – relatively rare here in North America
- (A) but also when based on man's ideas, making Him to be
 - (1) a capricious, hateful God enslaving mankind, or,
 - (2) a careless, loving God, indifferent to sin
 - (B) or, as is now so prevalent
 - (1) the god that has been made out of science
 - (2) which is what our young people are going to face in a couple of days when they return to school
 - (3) which has really boiled down to worshiping man
 - (4) so that the sole arbiter of what constitutes truth is thought to be found only between a person's ears
 - (5) what pride and arrogance!
- c. no wonder faulty concepts of God abound!
4. which brings us to our text, Ecclesiastes 11:5 (NIV): [As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.](#)
- a. you see, there are things of Too Wonderful Knowledge for us to understand
- (A) the wonders of the weather and other parts of nature
 - (B) the wonder of the birth of a child
 - (C) the wonder and beauty of His creation

- b. and what conceit it is that we should shove God out of our way and out of our life based on our own faulty ideas!
- c. Solomon, who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, was wise not only in the social and religious realms, but in the natural realm: if you read this book and the Proverbs you discover that he had studied this natural creation so that he could build wonders such that they astonished the Sheban Queen
- d. so, scientist today can observe God's creation and build wonders which we see and use each day
 - (A) but, just as the verse says, when Katrina was formed they could not say what its path would be, but only observe it and behold its destruction
 - (B) so, also, in the birth of a child, they can observe and describe what is happening, how the DNA carries the blueprint of the person being born, they cannot answer the why of how this could be so; science's so-called evolution solution is faulty, raising more questions than it has ever answered
 - (C) can we expect science, then, to provide anything other than a faulty, non-representative portrait of God? No!

B. But Christians, too, can have a faulty view of God

1. this is the theme of J. B. Phillips' book ^{-(2)}}. "Your God is Too Small" — depicting unreal gods that people worship
 - a. the "resident policeman" — the voice that makes them feel guilty before, during and after wrong-doing
 - b. the "grand old man" — all of whose activity was long ago and whose attitudes are "old-fashioned"
 - c. the "meek-and-mild" — giving a false picture of the Man of Truth, unafraid to challenge hypocritical rulers
 - d. the "God-in-a-box" — to be taken down, dusted off, and used when ever the need or occasion calls for Him
 - e. the "second-hand God" — One who was our parents' (or grand-parents') but who we do not know ourselves
 - f. the "projected image" — picturing God as Someone much like ourselves, only somewhat larger and greater
2. so, we as Christians need often to be taken back and reminded of how great is our God, how beyond our

comprehension!

- a. it is worth remarking at this point on the lesson that is to be learned from the book of Job on this point
 - (A) after Job and his three friends, and later Elihu, debated and discussed the reason for Job's suffering and Job's effrontery in demanding a time of accounting before God in order to plead his case
 - (B) God answers out of the storm
 - (1) does He explain the reason for suffering? No!
 - (2) does He answer all the questions raised in the 30-odd chapters preceding? No!
 - (3) what does God do?
 - (a) He asks questions of Job
 - (b) "Were you there when I created all things?"
 - (c) "Do you understand how this earth works?"
 - (d) "Can you see things as I see them?"
 - (C) and Job, when he confronts these questions and sees what God is really like – does he continue his debate? No! – he repents in dust and ashes

C. Too Wonderful Knowledge

1. if, then the things of this created world are Too Wonderful Knowledge for us to comprehend, then certainly that is true of the God who created them
 - a. and, as in the natural realm, so the supernatural
 - b. Paul, after describing God's wonderful plan for man's salvation, concludes that section of Romans starting with these words (Romans 11:33, NAS): *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!*
2. So, for that reason among many others, we pause this morning to remember our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only One who can give us a true portrait of God
 - a. John 1:14 (NAS): *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
 - b. Hebrews 1:3a (NAS): *and He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature ...*
 - c. so, let us remember Him around this communion table.

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick’s database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. Your God is Too Small, J. B. Phillips, © 1952, published by The Epworth Press, 25-35 City Road, London