

## “Google” and God

Just recently I discovered something called “Google Earth”, a programme that lets you use satellite images of the earth so as to zoom in on any area you like. It’s an amazing experience to come down from a point in space at which you can see the whole globe to just a few hundred feet above the manse in Garrabost! And it’s all there; as you zoom in you come to see every field, house, tree, even cars and people in some cases! I was astonished to be able to see our son Iain’s drive and front door in Uphall, West Lothian! A technology created by human beings at its most exciting and amazing level!

So what has this to do with God? Well, quite a lot actually. For one thing, people who have no difficulty believing that a human being can scan the world from a computer in their own home and can “land” anywhere so as to see the details of the place, have great difficulty, (or reluctance maybe?) to believe that God can see everything all at once. Yet if we can zoom in by Google Earth to view our world in amazing detail surely it’s not too difficult to believe that the God who created the earth and ourselves has all the information to hand at every moment!

Just as by using Google Earth I can zoom in on any part of the world I choose, so in the knowledge of God my every action, every word, every thought, even every motive that passes through my will, is known by him. Indeed, he doesn’t need to wait till it happens; God knows all these things, as he knows everything else, before it ever comes to pass, from all eternity. Google Earth is great; but it’s nothing like the technology of omniscience!

This should leave us with two reactions, both of which are vital to our wellbeing, and both of which should exist in our hearts at the same time.

Firstly, we should feel ***profoundly uncomfortable*** with omniscience. In Psalm 139, David speaks about his knowledge of God’s knowledge of him. He says that he is aware of God searching him, discerning all his thoughts, sifting through all his actions and words. He feels like a live exhibit in a glass case being examined from all sides, and there is no place in the whole universe to hide from this constant scrutiny – “*where shall I go from your Spirit, or where shall I flee from your presence?*”



The fact that we have God looking into the very nucleus of our lives at every moment should make us also feel as David did. Just as the satellite records in very detailed fashion every nook and cranny of the earth without us being aware that it’s happening, so God records and maps the terrain of our behaviour. And most of the time we are not aware that it’s happening! But we should be! We have God’s own word to remind us daily, and as we realise his all-knowing eye is upon us, like David we should have a profound sense of awe and discomfort in our awareness of God examining us. Our lives would be better lived and directed if we had more of this daily realisation that God is sifting and weighing us. Sadly, in the case of too many people the Bible’s comment is all too true, that “*God is not in all their thoughts.*” (Psalm 10 verse 4)

Secondly, we should have come to know ***profound comfort*** from this. In Psalm 139 David goes on to say that he values God’s perfect knowledge of him! “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” David put his awareness of God’s examination of his life and the discomfort he felt from that to good use. It led him to trust in God, to value fellowship with God. God’s knowledge of him was something he could rely on. He was sure that whatever defects needed to be provided for in his life God knew about them and could fix for him.

When God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die on the cross, he did so in a way that had zoomed in on every aspect of human need, focussing especially on our need as sinners. God saw that from every an-

gle possible; he knew we needed a Saviour who would fully represent us and take our sin to himself so as to fully pay our debt in his death. So he provided just that!

In some cases Google Earth technology is not quite as good as you would like; the most famous sights, like the Eiffel Tower in Paris, can be seen in great detail, but the manse in Garrabost is not quite as clear when you zoom in! But no such defects arise in the divine technology of salvation. Sin is totally seen and totally atoned for in every detail! The loving and merciful God's knowledge has ensured that!

Which is why David finishes Psalm 139 by asking God to search him even more! He wants God to put his perfect knowledge to further use in highlighting any remaining sin in David's life and so help him to get rid of it and live a life pleasing to God.

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Rev. James Maciver