**Is It Only God That Can Read Our Minds?**

Someone recently said in a discussion we were having that the devil cannot read our minds. This is a popular belief among many who believe that God alone can read the mind of anyone. Here, we will briefly explore this matter from the Scriptures. The scriptures don’t plainly tell us whether or not the devil or angels can read our minds, therefore, we would have to make the deduction from the Scriptures ourselves.

First, by “thought” we mean something a person is thinking or imagining, in words, sounds, images and/feelings in his mind. This would also include memory.

**What Do Dreams and Visions Tell Us?**

Dreams are just a form of thoughts or imagination.

Dreams and visions pass through the mind [[Dan 2:28](isbtBibleVerse:niv/27%202:28;Daniel%202:28&qa=1); [7:1](isbtBibleVerse:niv/27%207:1;Daniel%207:1&qa=1)], and since intelligent conversations between different persons can take place in dreams and dreams take place in the mind [Dan 8:15-26; Rev 5:4-5; Rev 19:10; 22:8 *cf.,*Rev 1:1; 22:16], it means that, at the very least, our minds are accessible in dreams and visions. Certainly, if an angel brings a dream, then the angel, at the very least, while the dream lasts and within the limits of the dream has access to our thoughts.

Since angels, like Gabriel in Daniel’s dream and the angel that brought the Revelation to John, can give dreams and vision, then the devil certainly can as well. Job was, for example, tormented with nightmares [Job 7:13-15] and of course these wouldn’t have been from the Holy Spirit but from the devil who was testing him [Job 2:6].

However, we are not always dreaming and so such access to the mind is limited, nevertheless, it is a form of access to the mind. In addition, when someone accesses your mind by a dream, what he knows and hears would be limited to that dream.

This access to the mind is temporary and is confined to the dream or vision.

**What Do Prayers in the Heart Tell Us?**

God answering prayers in the heart suggests that God can hear our thoughts *(most certainly, the ones directed to him)*. We have the records of Abraham’s servant and Hannah praying in their hearts and being heard by God [Gen 24:45; 1Sa 1:13-17].

The fact that these people prayed in their hearts shows that they believed that God could hear their thoughts *(at the very least, those directed to him)*. This is all perfectly okay with many of us—God can hear our thoughts and prayers directed to him. This is perfectly fine for us because we often think of prayers as something that is personally heard by God since it was directed to him. If, however, prayers are handled by others than God, it would mean that they also hear our thoughts *at the very least, when it is prayers*.

The testimony of Scriptures is that God has a heavenly bureau, a design described in Moses [Exo 18:25-26,13-17,18-23]—an angelic priesthood that processes prayers. This can be deduced from the Law of Moses where, within the Tabernacle/Temple system, the people offered their sacrifices to God through the Aaronic priests. The priests also represented the people in offering incense to God, which is representative of prayers. In any case, we read of the 24 elders offering the prayers of saints to the lamb [Rev 5:8] and of an angel offering up the prayers of the saints [Rev 8:3].

This all shows us that our prayers are handled, not only by God, but by angels too. Therefore, if prayers prayed within the heart are heard and answered, then it strongly suggests that the angels can objectively read them.

However, like in the case of a dream where knowledge of the goings on in the mind is confined to the dream, here too, the knowledge of the thought may be confined only to the prayers.

If this is so, then it means that when one prays, his heart is opened to heaven. There must be some kind of address system in the spirit where one’s prayers in his thoughts are delivered to the right recipient. This suggests that for a strong connection to be made, one must pray with all his heart.

Since visions and dreams given to us are really imaginations of a spirit transmitted to us, it means that thoughts can be transmitted from one person to another and in fact, spirits do not communicate with words only but with visions. Put differently, if we can receive the thoughts of another, then they can also receive our thoughts. However, these transmissions have to be intended, it is not as though our minds are open to anyone who cares to listen to listen on.

**Paul’s Testimony**

“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” [1Cor 2:11]

Paul goes on to say that God has given us his Spirit so that we can know those things of God [1Cor 2:12]. In other words, we are able to read the mind of God as his Spirit will reveal to us. *(Let me emphasize that I am not suggesting that we can know all the thoughts of God at will, rather, we only know what God lets us know by his Spirit.)*Take note that even the Spirit of God has to search the deep things of God [1Co 2:10].

We should note that what the Spirit of God is searching out and making known to us is something that God has already determined. In other words, it is not that we are reading God’s current thoughts, rather we are reading an established thought in him. God’s plan that Paul is here speaking of was hidden since the age began [Rom 16:25; 1Co 2:7; Col 1:26-27], this is not God’s current thoughts.

Now, if we can know the deep things of God, his deep thoughts, his hidden plans, by his Spirit, then even our own thoughts can be read by anyone who has access to our spirits.

Indeed, the Scriptures state,

“The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.” [Pro 20:27 KJV]

If anyone has access to the spirit, he would have access, however temporarily, to the man’s mind.

Certainly, it is not the Holy Spirit alone who is able to have access to man’s spirit.

**Grand Deduction**

This leads to the conclusion that what is on our minds can be accessed by other spirits

1. If our thoughts, as in prayers, are directed to them
2. If they have brought a dream or vision to us

It is possible for our thoughts to be read by other spirits, but it is not as though our minds or thoughts are constantly open to them to be read at will. Instead, they can only access our thoughts through our spirits, just as we can only access the thoughts of God by his Spirit, which requires that our spirits be bonded to them, just as our spirits are bonded to the Spirit [1Co 6:17], temporarily or permanently. Of course, since God is the Creator of all things, he has no limitation whatsoever. That said, this is all like communication and access between phones.

Except for a number that has been blocked, any other phone number can dial another phone number. A phone is accessible to any call, and anyone who calls another knows what the other said. Nevertheless, except a bug has been installed on the phone, one does not know or hear every call that is made by another. No, you only have access to the calls that you made to the number.

**Reading the Mind as Proof of Divine Calling**

When people believe that only God can read the mind, they take any revelation of their thoughts or dreams as possible only by the Spirit of God. However, from the deductions above, that someone told us our thoughts or dreams, or visions may not necessarily be proof that he is speaking by the Spirit of God. The dream or vision may have been brought by the devil; therefore, he can tell such dreams.

Also, the thought may have been put there by the devil, and so he can tell the thought he put there.

In any case, in the Scriptures, a prophet reading the mind of someone else has never been put forward as proof of his being sent from God.

Apart from the above, naturally speaking, if men can read other men’s thoughts from their expressions and such, I don’t think that would be something that is so great for a spirit like the devil.

Although such a false sign would be rare, it is nevertheless possible.

**Rare and Hard Is Not Impossible**

If we did not hear of the magicians of Egypt turning a wooden rod into a real-life snake, and water to real blood and such, we may have thought it was only God through Moses or some other true and mighty prophet of God could do it. We may have argued that such are ‘creation miracles,’ and God alone is the Creator, therefore, it is not possible for anyone else to perform such miracles. We may even have argued that, even if it were possible, God wouldn’t allow it because there would be a challenge to his position as Creator. But, well, although their power was shown to be far less since they could not reverse what God did, the Egyptian magicians were able to perform the wonders of turning rods to snakes, and water to blood.

Also, Elijah said the God who answers by fire should be God and God answered by fire, confirming himself to be God. We may argue that, apart from Elijah or some powerful prophet of God, no one else can call fire down from heaven. We may even argue that God would not allow it because that would mean that such a power is God. Yet, it is plainly prophesied that the antichrist’s false prophet would call down fire from heaven [Rev 13:13*ff*]. As a matter of fact, Satan, to trouble Job, brought fire down from heaven [Job 1:16]. Therefore, the difficulty of a miracle or sign does not mean it is impossible.

So, again, although reading the mind or telling peoples thoughts and dreams as a false sign would be rare, it is nevertheless possible.

**Motives, Not Thoughts—Heaven’s Interest**

Below are some scriptures that at first glance seem to teach that God reads our minds, however, if we read closely, we would see that this is not what is being taught.

*“for you alone know the hearts of all men” [1Kin 8:39; 2Ch 6:30]*

*“Man looks at the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks at the heart.” [1Sa 16:7]*

Please note that the quotations above are not a statement of God reading the mind. Rather, they are a statement of God knowing people’s inclinations. The mistake is that often times, when we hear of knowing the heart, we equate it to reading the thoughts. If we read the scriptures contextually, however, it would be quite clear that they do not at all have reading thoughts in real time in mind but knowing a person’s true character and inclinations.

Whether a man loves God or not, for example, is a matter of the state and inclination of his heart and not about his thought at some point in time.

*“Yahweh searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.” [1Ch 28:9]*

The above still states the same thing, Yahweh knows our hearts, he knows our motives, he knows what we will do in any given situation. The point is not that he knows our thoughts in real time. Nevertheless, the above may also imply that God actually knows the “thoughts” themselves, yet it shows that the more important thing to God is not the “thoughts” but the “motives.”

*“But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. 25He did not need man’s testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.” [Joh 2:25]*

Again, the above does not mean that Jesus reads people’s minds, rather it is consistent with our deduction from the testimony of Scriptures about God and heaven’s focus on motives rather than the very thoughts themselves. It is not that Jesus reads the thoughts, but that Jesus knows a man’s heart. Jesus, for example, knows those who are sincere towards him and those who are not. Jesus knows whether we love him or not [Joh 21:17] and that is not a question of reading thoughts but of knowing the inclination and motives of the heart.

It is the motive of people’s hearts that God and heaven is interested in and this what he judges [1Co 4:5]

**In the Light of Judgment**

If the Scriptures testify that God can read our thoughts in real time, what would be the point?

Many see God as a lone ruler doing whatever pleases him. This is how many understand God’s running of the world; thus, such an idea seems like something important or of great consequence. However, the picture presented in scriptures is quite different.

In scriptures, while God is the Most High, he has many who serve under him with whom he runs heaven’s government over the world. Now, according to the testimony of scriptures, although he has the right to, God doesn’t just do whatever he likes, whenever and, however. Rather, God does things in such a way that his subordinates, and in fact all creation, may see the goodness, wisdom and justice of his decisions and character. He also likes to show his powers.

The goal of all this is that those under him may be able to trust him. If we are convinced that God is wise and good and just and kind, we will be able to put our faith in him for the future. If we are convinced about God’s good intentions and his wisdom and power to carry it out, then this will naturally result in willing submission to him.

This also includes God’s judgment of people and the places he assigns them in his kingdom. If we all are convinced about the justice and appropriateness of everyone’s place in the kingdom, including our place in it, then there will be great peace and most excellent order in the Kingdom of God forever. This is good for everyone.

The implication of all this is that, even coming from God, facts must be objective. Whatever is presented as fact must be something that others either see themselves or can verify. There is the great judgment coming where people will be judged according to the records in the books [Rev 20:12]. Thoughts would be useless as evidence except they are objectively perceivable. Those books cannot record men’s thoughts as something they will be judged by if only God could perceive them.

Thus, when we read that God is testing the heart to see what is in it, it is not really about God personally wanting to know, but about heaven wanting to know.

We have the example of Job of whom God gave a very good testimony, highly praising him. We see how God’s testimony about Job was severely tested to see if it were true or not. It is very clear from this account that it wasn’t that God was testing Job to find out anything for himself, rather, it was heaven that needed to know Job.