

## Lesson 4

**THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**

- I. **DEFINITION OF AN ATTRIBUTE:** An attribute is a property intrinsic to its subject and by which the subject is distinguished or identified.
- II. **CLASSIFICATION**
- A. Attributes belonging to God alone (incommunicable, absolute, immanent).
  - B. Attributes which are also found in man (communicable, relative, transitive).
- III. **THINKING RIGHT ABOUT GOD**
- A. God must be given His proper place—**SOVEREIGN GOD!**
  - B. God must be properly worshipped (Rom. 11:36).
  - C. Brings all false concepts of God to light (Psa. 50:21).
  - D. Brings the God of the Bible into conflict with all other philosophies and religions.
  - E. A right view of God brings right actions; a wrong view wrong actions.
  - F. A right view of God gives a right view of the world and salvation.
- IV. **WHAT IS GOD LIKE?** “There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.” (John 4:24; Mal. 2:16; John 14:9; Ex. 15:11; Psa. 147:5)  
*Westminster Confession of Faith II-I.*
- A. ***What is God like in Himself? No answer, for God is incomprehensible and there is no end to an infinite God.***
  - B. ***What is God like in what He has revealed of Himself in Scripture? An answer which is full, rich and satisfying.***
- V. **ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**
- A. **Self-containing:** God is **self-existent** in that He has no origin; He always was and is (Ex. 3:14). God is **independent** but also causes everything to depend on Him and exist through Him. God is **self-sufficient** in that whatever God is, and all that God is, He is in Himself, and needs no one or anything to fulfill His essence. God does not need man, but man needs Him desperately. God is **simplicity** in that He is uncompounded, incomplex and indivisible. God is **unity** meaning He is one. God is infinity meaning He is without termination.
- Application:
1. Man was created to be dependent on God.
  2. Man’s will is in conflict with God’s will—man refuses to dethrone himself.

3. God does not need man but man needs Him desperately.

- B. **Omniscient:** God is **all-knowing**. He is perfect knowledge and cannot learn anything new (Job 37:16). With God there is no “before” or “after,” but only “now” (Isa. 40:13-14; Rom. 11:34). When making the plan for the world, He knew everything actual or possible and chose the plan that brought Him the most glory. God knows all about the unbeliever (Hosea 7:2) and the believer (Heb. 4:13).

Application:

1. God knows everything about a Christian—thoughts, actions, words, struggles, sins (Psa. 139:4, 23-24; Job 23:10).
2. Christians can never hide anything from God.
3. God can spy out grace in our hearts when we cannot find any.

- C. **Omnipotence:** God is **all-powerful**. God has absolute power which cannot be checked, restrained or frustrated by man (Job 9:4, 19; Psa. 62:11 cf. Dan. 4:34b-35). God is the first cause of all matter, force and energy (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 89:11-12a; 33:9); thus the Creator of the universe (Gen. 1:1). God’s power upholds and directs all events (Heb. 1:3), restrains the devil (Job 1:12) and controls corruption (Dan. 2:21).

Application:

1. God’s power saved the Christian (Eph. 2:1-5).
2. God’s power keeps the Christian saved (1 Pet. 1:5).
3. God’s power is working daily in the Christian (Eph. 3:20; Phil. 2:12-13).

- D. **Omnipresence:** God is **everywhere present** (Jer. 23:23-24)—in heaven (Psa. 123:1), earth (Isa. 57:15) and the universe (1 Kings 8:27). Because God is Spirit, He can be everywhere all at once (John 4:24).

Application:

1. Christians are always in the presence of God, and cannot run or hide from God (Psa. 139:7-8).
2. By faith, the Christian believes God is present.
3. There is joy for the Christian who learn to practice the presence of God (Psa. 16:11).

- E. **Eternality:** God is **eternal** (Psa. 90:2 cf. Gen. 21:33; 1 Tim. 1:17; Isa. 57:15). There never was a time when God was not and there will never be a time He will not be. God is not only eternity past, and eternity future but He is the **eternal now**.

Application:

1. The eternal God created eternal souls which will live in eternal heaven or hell (Gen. 1:27 cf. Mat. 25:46; John 17:2-3).
2. Christians have eternal life now (John 3:15)
3. Christians can live and die because eternity is settled by the eternal God
4. Understanding eternity gives the Christian a sense of urgency to preach the gospel to the lost.

- F. **Immutable:** God is **never changing** (Psa. 102:25-27; James 1:17). An unchanging God has an unchanging plan (Psa. 33:11; Isa. 46:10).

Application:

1. Sinful people change but a perfect God never changes so He can be trusted (Isa. 2:22)
2. Christians run hot and cold but God’s love is constant (Jer. 31:3).

3. Christians break promises but God never breaks His promise (2 Tim. 2:19; 2:13).

4. A God who does not change does not need to be coaxed or bribed.

G. **Holiness:** *God is holy (Psa. 11:9; Job 6:10; John 17:11; Isa. 6:3; Psa. 111:9; Rev. 15:4). God has majestic holiness (1 Sam. 2:2; Ex. 15:11) and eternal holiness (1 John 1:5). God is absolutely perfect, pure and separate from the slightest taint of sin; therefore, He has a perfect love of righteousness and a perfect hatred of sin (Psa. 30:4; 103:1).*

Application:

1. A holy God hates sin and sinners and will judge them (Psa. 5:5).

2. Christians are commanded to share God's holiness (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

3. Christians have been chosen by God to share in His holiness (Eph. 1:4) and have been called to holiness (1 Tim. 4:7).

4. Christians are to be perfecting holiness daily (2 Cor. 7:1).

H. **Justice:** God is **just** (Deut. 32:4; Psa. 89:14). God judges all sin fairly and impartially and all that He does is right (Zeph. 3:5; 2 Chron. 19:7; Gen. 18:25). God's righteousness and justice are closely connected (Psa. 89:14).

Application:

1. God will judge the unsaved fairly and find them guilty before a holy, righteous God.

2. God treats Christians fairly even though at times it does not match our human sense of justice.

3. God's commands, promises and probings are just (Prov. 3:33; Psa. 19:7-8; Rom. 2:6; 1 Cor. 4:5).

I. **Wrath:** God is a **consuming fire** (Heb. 12:29). Wrath is God's hot, holy anger against **sinful things** (Amos 5:21), **sinful acts** (Zech. 8:17) and **sinful people** (Psa. 5:4-5; 11:5; Rom. 9:13).

Application:

1. Mere professing (unbelievers) will face God's wrath (Heb. 10:26-31).

2. True Christians are free from God's wrath (1 Thess. 5:9 cf. Rom. 8:1).

3. Christians face the loving anger of God the Father in discipline (Heb. 12:5-11).

4. Awareness of God's wrath on unbelievers should cause Christians to have a desire to tell others about Christ (2 Cor. 5:11).

J. **Truth:** God is **truth** (John 14:6). God agrees to and is consistent with all that is represented by God Himself. God is always true and faithful in His inner being, in His revelation, and in His relation to His people. God cannot lie. He is the only true God and can be trusted explicitly (Num. 23:19; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 10:23).

Application:

1. God is true and every other god is false and an idol.

2. God can be trusted because He is the only true, unchanging Person in the universe.

3. God has revealed Himself in the Bible and He cannot lie.

K. **Righteous:** God is **righteous** (Isa. 45:21). God maintains Himself as the Holy One over against every violation of His holiness. God is always right. He makes no errors or mistakes. He rewards obedience and punishes disobedience (Psa. 99:4; Isa. 33:22; Rom. 1:32).

Application:

1. God will judge the unsaved rightly and they will be found guilty before a holy God.
  2. Whatever God does in the life of the Christian is right even if it does not seem right.
  3. God is faithful to reward His people for faithful service even though men may not.
- L. **Goodness:** God is **good** (Naham 1:7; Psa. 25:8). All that God does is good (Psa. 119:68). God is good towards man (Psa. 139:14; Acts 17:28) and animals (Psa. 145:9, 15-16). God is good to both saved and unsaved.

Application:

1. God can never do anything to the Christian that is not good.
2. God is working everything for the Christian's good.
3. God has created the Christian to do spiritual good works (Eph. 2:10).
4. Contemplating the goodness of God should take away a complaining and critical spirit (Psa. 107:1, 8-9).

M. **Love:** *God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). Love is that perfection of God's divine nature by which He is eternally moved to communicate with people and set His affections on them. God has a common love for all people because they are His creatures, but He has a special love for His own people who are in Christ (Deut. 7:7-8a; Eph. 1:5; Rom. 9:13; Eph. 2:1-5). From God's love flows His mercy, grace and patience.*

Application:

1. God loves the Christian unconditionally (Deut. 7:6-8).
2. God secures the Christian in His love which allows him to deal with fears (1 John 4:18).
3. God's love makes a Christian feel valued and meets the inner need for self-worth.
4. Because God loves the Christian, the Christian can love others (1 John 4:11).
5. God loves the Christian so much that He disciplines them when they sin (Heb. 12:5-6; 8, 10).

N. **Sovereign:** God is **sovereign** (1 Chron. 29:11-12; 2 Chron. 20:6). There is no law in the universe that can coerce God to do anything which He does not please to do (Isa. 46:9-10). God is a law unto Himself and must not be called into question (Isa. 45:9). God is sovereign over governments (Rom. 13:1; Dan. 2:21; Prov. 21:1; John 19:10-11), and over salvation (James 1:18; John 15:16; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Application:

1. A Christian can work out salvation because God is working in the Christian (Phil. 2:12-13).
2. Prayers offered up according to God's will shall be answered (1 John 5:14).
3. Sovereignty enables the Christian to give thanks (1 Thess. 5:18).

## VI. CONTEMPLATING GOD

- A. We experience God by meditation on Him as He is revealed in Scripture (Psa. 63:6; 77:12; 104:34; 19:14).
- B. Contemplating God we see ourselves (Gen. 18:27; Job 42:5-6; Isa. 6:3) and sense our humanness and sinfulness.
- C. Contemplating God we see the greatness of salvation which is from start to finish from God (Jonah 2:9; 1 Cor. 1:30-31).
- D. Contemplating God we see our need for service (Isa. 6:1-8).

- E. Contemplating God we see our need for worship (Psa. 135:3; 107:8; 9:1; 34:1; 145:1-2; 47:7; 135:3). Praise is a tonic for discouragement (Psa. 42:11).