

Lesson 2

THE EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

I. Introduction (pg. 7)

In lesson 1 we learned about theology – what it is (i.e., the study of God) and the importance of studying it (i.e., glorifies God). We also learned about the doctrine of the Word and the authority that Scripture contains over things such as church tradition and even our own subjective reasoning. During that time we thought about important characteristics of Scripture and the claims that it made for itself.

Well, as we studied in lesson 1 with the attributes of the Word of God, it would be fitting to consider the attributes of the God of the Word this morning.

There are two questions that lie at the foundation of not only of man’s religious knowledge, but also of every possible form of knowledge:

- 1) Is there a God? (Does God exist, and if so, how can we know that?)
- 2) What is God like? (What are his attributes?)

These are the questions that we will seek to answer during these lessons.

II. God’s Existence (pg. 7)

A. A Biblical, Presuppositional Apologetic

We begin this morning by thinking about the existence of God. In response to our first question, “Is there a God?” we should first begin by noting that the Bible doesn’t spend time arguing that God exists, but simply presumes that He does. So we too can adopt a presuppositionalist approach and simply state that we propose to assume the fact of God’s existence as granted.

In lesson 1, we said that our course will maintain two assumptions or presuppositions: (1) *that the Bible is true and that it is, in fact, our only absolute standard of truth; and (2) that the God who is spoken of in the Bible exists, and that He is who the Bible says He is: the Creator of heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them.* Let’s consider further why we should start our theological pilgrimage presuming the existence of God.

To get us started, if someone were to ask you why you think God exists, what would you say?

If we are Christians, we can say that we believe God is “really there,” because He has revealed Himself to all men *generally* by creation and providence, *propositionally* in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, *personally* in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and *savingly* through the work of His Word and Spirit.

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul tells us that God has made the fact of his existence plain to all humanity (v. 19). In verse twenty, he says that **“since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”** God has revealed himself generally to all men through creation, and all men are held accountable for this revelation.

The beauty and complexity of creation is enough for man to know that God exists. Who is it that sends the rain or sun, brings the night and the day, or separates the land from the sea? From the order of the seasons to the intricacies of a flower to the variety of creatures, we see God’s hand as the intelligent Creator. Indeed, even man bears testimony to God’s existence by being made in His image.

Well, despite this revelation in creation, Paul goes on to say in Romans that man willfully suppresses the truth and exchanges the truth of God for a lie. Yet, some awareness of God exists in every human mind by natural instinct, even idol worship adds proof to this, or our innate desire for something more, which can be only satisfied in following God.

Although fallen humanity sinfully rejects the truth of the God of the Bible, the Holy Spirit regenerates and reveals Christ to the heart. It’s then that new believers start to apprehend the grace of God and begin to understand the overwhelming evidence, which the Christian faith entails. Blessing often comes to **“those who have not seen and yet have believed”** (John 20:29).

B. Traditional Arguments For the Existence of God (pg. 7)

While we need no other reasons than these to convince us that God exists, the traditional arguments that Christians (and some non-Christians) have formulated for the existence of God can be very helpful in removing barriers to a belief in God. The traditional “theistic proofs” for the existence of God are attempts to demonstrate that it’s irrational to reject the idea of God’s existence. These arguments help to establish plausibility that there is a God. We will briefly consider three of them.

1. The Cosmological Argument (pg. 8)

The cosmological argument starts with the fact that every known thing in the universe has a cause. Therefore, it reasons, the universe itself must also have a cause, and the cause of such a great universe can only be God, who is the great First Cause.

This argument of cause and effect relationships is no doubt a strong logical argument. We base most of our decisions on logical conclusions. The apostles in the New Testament frequently rely on some form of evidence that inferred the truth. For example, the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 cites the fact that on a single occasion more than five hundred people saw Christ alive after the crucifixion as persuasive evidence for his resurrection. Eyewitness reports confirm the claim that Christ rose from the dead. So we are not called to believe these things with a blind faith, but rather with a faith that is informed by facts, by evidence.

2. The Teleological Argument (pg. 8)

The teleological argument focuses on the order, harmony, and design that exists in the universe, and argues that the design indicates the existence of a designer. If we discover a watch in the forest, we know that there must have been a watchmaker. Since the universe appears to be designed with a purpose, there must be an intelligent and purposeful God who created it to function this way.

This appears to be Paul's argument from creation in Romans 1. God has made His existence known by the simple fact that He has created.

3. The Moral Argument (pg. 8)

The moral argument begins from our basic sense of right and wrong and the desire for justice to be done. It then concludes that there must be an original, absolute source of right and wrong (i.e., God), which gives those categories meaning. You will often hear references, or appeals, to the "natural law" when this argument is made because it stems from man's innate moral sense.

We are all social beings as well as moral. Just as birds naturally congregate in flocks, and bees in swarms, so does man in communities. And within these communities, governments have originated. It's true that not all governments are wholly good. Some have been cruelly administered, but even the worst of them is considered preferable to wild anarchy. This is because the notion of moral government is indispensable and necessary, although no earthly form of it completely satisfies our desires.

(Bonus, and difficult point) The Ontological Argument *write at the top of page 8 *

Ontology is the study of being. The ontological argument tries to show that a proper understanding of what it means for God to be or exist will demonstrate that he must exist. The ontological argument states that because man can conceive in his mind of an absolutely perfect being, that being must exist. If this being is perfect, then it must exist because it is greater, and more perfect, to exist than not to exist. A Supreme Being cannot exist only in the imagination.

Conclusion

We know from reason, experience, and certainly from Scripture that the existence of God can be truly known, even if it cannot be known exhaustively. Apologetically speaking, it is the existence of God – the triune God of Scripture – that provides the only viable answers to the most perplexing questions respecting the origin and nature of the world and mankind.

Comments or Questions?

III. The Attributes of God (pg. 8)

Now that we have explored the existence of God, let us now turn and examine His character by carefully considering what Scripture tells us He is like for it is not enough to believe that He exists – we must acquire knowledge of Him.

While evidence abounds of God's existence, sin blinds and distorts our perceptions of God. So if we are to know anything about God, if we are to know what He is really like, we must turn to His revelation of Himself in the Bible. It is in the pages of sacred Scriptures where God reveals His character. If we love God and want to obey Him, we will long to get to know Him.

When you think of describing God from Scripture, what are some words that first come to mind? (*e.g., love, sovereign, good*) These words make up God's attributes.

When theologians speak of the attributes of God, they're referring to those qualities that are essential to the nature of God. **Every attribute is identical with His being. He is what He has. Whatever God is He is completely and simultaneously.**

Most systematic theologians choose to classify God's attributes by dividing them up into two classes: incommunicable attributes and communicable attributes. Incommunicable attributes are said to be those attributes of God that God does not "communicate" or share with us, such as omnipotence or omnipresence. Communicable attributes, by way of contrast, are those attributes that we share with God – albeit in a fallen and finite way – as creatures made in His image. Attributes such as love, justice, and mercy can be found in this category.

Those who use these categories always have to add qualifications to the distinctions they are making, so we're just going to take note of this method of organization, and simply discuss God's revealed attributes in an orderly manner.

1. The Independence or Self-Existence of God (pg. 8)

God's existence and character are determined by Himself alone and are not dependent on anyone or anything else. No one has ever contributed to God anything that did not first come from God who created all things. John 5:26 tells us, **"For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself."** Paul proclaims to the men of Athens, **"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else."** (Acts 17:24-25)

It should be obvious that the fact of God's independence necessarily means that He doesn't need us. The reason why he did create was to manifest his glory according to his good pleasure (Eph. 1:11). Some people think that God created man because He was lonely. The fact that God was not lonely before creation is seen clearly in the relationship of the Trinity. The three Persons among the Trinity share perfect love, fellowship, and communication for all eternity (John 17).

2. The Immutability of God (pg. 8)

This doctrine affirms the unchangeable nature or character of God. It says that God, in His being and in His eternal decrees, does not and cannot change.

God does not change in his essence. Numbers 23:19 declares, **"God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"** Psalm 102:26-27 say, **"They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end."** James 1:17 says God **"does not change like shifting shadows."** God has not evolved, improved, or weakened. He says in Malachi 3:6 **"I the LORD do not change."** He is altogether perfect in his being and is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8). Hebrews 6:17-18, **"So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath,¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us."**

But God is not just unchangeable in his nature – he is also unchangeable in his decrees. As finite people, what causes us to change our minds and plans? (*e.g., lack of foresight and lack of power to carry our plans out*) Well, this is not so with God.

God is certainly powerful to carry out all of his plans. The Psalmist says, **“the plans of the LORD stand firm forever.”** No one can thwart his purposes. The writer to the Hebrews also says, **“God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear”** (Heb. 6:17).

So what does God’s immutability mean for His children? Well, the author of Hebrews tells us we should be greatly encouraged by this truth. Why? Because it means that God can be trusted and that we can rely on His promises in the Bible. He will always act in conformity with what he has promised.

There is a movement in theological circles that seeks to portray an “open” view of God known as “open theism.” This movement distorts the God we see in Scripture by portraying a limited view of God. In this view, God waits to see what we will do, and then when he sees our choices, he responds to us, and changes with us over the course of history. Those who support this position claim that the God of Scripture is a risk-taker, an ever-evolving deity who evidences surprise at the actions of His creation and changes in response to human decisions. They say He’s a pretty good guesser, but deny His omniscience (that is to say they deny that he knows the future with any degree of certainty). Some go as far as to even suggest that God repents when He “gets it wrong.”

As evidence for their position, such scholars point to passages where God appears to be searching for information. Passages where God’s asking questions, seeking facts. But are we to suppose that God really doesn’t know the answers? When God calls out to Adam and Eve after the Fall, and asks “Where are you?” Are we really supposed to believe that God doesn’t know where they are? Isn’t the point of the question to emphasize the separation from God that has resulted because of sin?

Or, again, in John 6 where we see Jesus feeding the five thousand. He asks Philip, **“Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”** Was Jesus stumped on where to find a grocery store? Of course not! Scripture goes on to say that, **“[Jesus] asked this only to test [Philip], for he already had in mind what he was going to do.”**

In many of these instances, such as the one about Philip, God is using such questions as a teaching tool. So for example, when the Israelites worshipped the golden calf in Exodus 32, God spoke of destroying the Israelites until Moses pleaded on their behalf and God relented. Here was a grand lesson on sinful man’s need for a mediator before God.

Ultimately, Open Theism is inconsistent with the biblical doctrine of God. If God responds to us, how can we trust in his promises? What would be the purpose of prayer if God cannot finally help us? Ultimately, God’s plans cannot be thwarted. He is an unchanging God in his decrees and being.

3. God is Infinite (pg. 9)

This means that God is free from all limitations. God is infinite in time, space, and being.

When thinking about this idea that God is infinite, most people relate it to time. Psalm 90:2 reads, **“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”** In Revelation the Lord God says, **“I am the Alpha and Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come....”** He is the great I AM, and so we see that for all eternity, God has existed.

This may be difficult for us to understand or imagine, as are other attributes that we’re considering this morning. But just because we cannot understand it fully, does not mean that we should doubt it. We must resist the sinful desire of thinking of God as part of His creation rather than as Creator. Here, we understand that God is timeless and does not experience a sequence of moments. He sees and knows all

past, present, and future events with equal clarity. This is why the Psalmist says, **“For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by....”**

In Jeremiah 23:23-24 God says, **“Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? ²⁴ Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.”** Isaiah 57:15, **“For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”** Proverbs 15:3, **“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”**

God is also infinite in space; that is, He is omnipresent, or present everywhere. This means that God transcends spatial limitations, is without size, and is present at every point of space with his whole being. When people refer to God as being “a big God”, they are referring to his greatness rather than a quantitative measurement. Psalm 139:7-10 conveys this clearly when it says, **“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will hold me fast.”**

God is also infinite in His being; that is, He is absolutely perfect. So for example, God’s holiness is free from all limitation or defect. Other attributes, such as His love, are also boundless and flawless. And so we see that **“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom (Psalm 145:3)”**

4. The Unity of God & the Trinity (pg. 9)

God is the only Divine Being. He has an inner, qualitative unity of character. Everything he does is fully consistent with all of his attributes; there are no contradictions in His character. Being one in essence, He is indivisible. This is often referred to as the *simplicity* of God, which basically means that God’s attributes are not composed of parts like a car would be. Instead, each attribute is completely true of God and all of His character.

We can see this in the seemingly contradiction of God’s mercy and justice that we read about in Exodus 34:6-7, **“The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”** Here we see the riddle of God’s mercy and justice resolved in Jesus who is the fullness of God’s glory.

The Bible clearly shows that while God’s being exhibits oneness and unity, the one God also exists in three eternally distinct persons. This doctrine of the Trinity is a summary of six propositions that can be explicitly extracted from Scripture: 1) the Father is God, 2) the Son is God, 3) the Holy Spirit is God, while at the same time 4) the Father is not the Son, 5) the Son is not the Spirit, and 6) the Father is not the Spirit. The first three propositions describe God’s divine unity, while the last three describe the diversity of the persons of the Godhead. We’ll talk more about the triune nature of God in Lesson 7, when our class will be on the Person of the Holy Spirit.

5. God is Spirit (pg. 9)

There have often been questions about God in regards to what He is made of. Is God made of flesh, energy, or some other matter? Well, Jesus tells us, in John 4:24, that God is Spirit. He is not like created things and so does not have size or dimensions. Being spirit is a form of existence that transcends our knowledge and understanding. However, we do know that, because God is Spirit, it is the most excellent way to be. In God's grace and wisdom, He has helped us to understand Himself in Scripture by providing us with humanlike references about Himself. So in Psalm 34 it says, "**The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry.**"

We also understand that by being Spirit, God is invisible. In 1 Timothy 1:17 Paul bursts forth in praise to God saying: "**Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God.**" Many passages in Scripture speak to this fact. John 1:18 says that, "**No one has ever seen God.**" Yet, at the same time, we know that Moses was hidden from God's face but saw a glimpse of his back (Ex. 33:20-23). We even see a greater manifestation of God in Jesus who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). And one day, we are told that as those who serve God, we will see His face (Rev. 22:4).

So how do we resolve this? Well, God is invisible in essence but is able to make himself visible and to reveal himself to man. We will never be able to see God's total essence in Spirit because we are finite and God is not, but we do have hope that He will reveal Himself to us more fully so that we may see His glory (John 17:24).

6. God's Omniscience – His Perfect Knowledge (pg. 9)

Omniscience means "all knowing". God knows Himself perfectly, and He knows all things – both the actual and the possible. In 1 John 3:20 we read that, "**[God] knows everything.**"

God's knowledge is not like ours. It's not obtained from experience or observation. It never changes or grows. It is complete, not partial. Jesus tells us that even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered in Matt. 10:30. God knows our every thought before we think it. He knows our every act before we do it. God knows when you were born because He knit you together in your mother's womb, and He knows when you are going to die because He has numbered your days. God knows perfectly because he has ordained and decreed all that comes to pass, and His eternal purposes are carried out by His sovereign power.

7. God's Omnipotence, His Sovereign Power (pg. 9)

God is absolutely sovereign over every atom of his creation at every moment. Consequently, God is able to do all that He decides to do. Jesus tells us in Matt 19:26 that "**with God all things are possible.**" Isaiah 40:12-15 reminds us of how our big world is so incredibly small compared to our God. It also reminds us that creation was not difficult for our God, "**Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?**" ¹³ **Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel?** ¹⁴ **Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?** ¹⁵ **Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust.**" Jeremiah declares that there is nothing too hard for the Sovereign Lord (Jer. 32:17). Indeed, Paul says that God is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." Imagine that...if you can.

So does this mean that God can do everything? Well, it would not be entirely accurate to say that God can do everything. For example, according to Hebrews, God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). In II Timothy 2:13, we

find that God cannot disown Himself. God cannot cease to be God or act in a way inconsistent with any of his attributes. It would be better for us to qualify our statement that “God can do everything” by saying that “God can do everything that He wills to do or that is consistent with his character.” It is true that God is infinitely powerful, but the use of that power is qualified by His other attributes.

8. God’s Wisdom (pg. 9)

Because God has perfect knowledge as we have seen earlier, His wisdom is simply the perfect application of that knowledge in the way that glorifies Him the most. He always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals. If we are to be wise, then we must become a reflection of God’s wisdom. The more we study the Master, the more we will know how to follow Him better.

Scripture affirms this wisdom of God. Job says that God’s wisdom is profound (Job 9:4) and that counsel and understanding are His (Job 12:13).

We can see this wisdom shown in creation. In Jeremiah 10:12-13 we read that, **“God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.”** We also see God’s wisdom in the plan of redemption. God’s wisdom and power are perfectly shown in the gospel where we see that **“the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18).”**

9. God’s Truthfulness (pg. 10)

We already touched on God’s truthfulness in the last lesson on God’s Word. This characteristic of God shows that God is the true God and that all of his knowledge and words are both true and are the final standard of truth. Jesus prayed to the Father, **“Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”**

God’s truthfulness may not be as difficult to understand as some of the other attributes we have gone over, but it is one attribute that we must not forget. It is God’s truthfulness that holds all that we know of God together. We can hold onto His promises firmly because God will do all that He says He will do.

Titus 1:2 says that we are, **“in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.”** In John 14:6, Jesus Christ claims that He is truth, **“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** John 17:3, **“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”**

God’s revelation of himself is absolutely reliable. Numbers 23:19 states that **“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”** God is the source of *all* truth whether it be in science, religion, or philosophy. God’s truthfulness also means that he is faithful in that He fulfills all of the promises that He makes. Hebrews 10:23 exhorts us to **“hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”** 2 Timothy 2:13, **“if we are faithless, he remains faithful.”**

For application: “Does God lie to us? Do we believe what the culture says about sex, relationships, money, etc.? Doubting God’s truthfulness began in Eden and the consequences were horrific.”

10. God’s Goodness (pg. 10)

God is perfectly good. He always does what is best, and is the source of all that is good. Jesus affirms His deity in Mark 10:18, **“And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.”** Jesus challenged the ruler to think through the implications of ascribing to Him the title “good.” Since only God is intrinsically good, was he prepared to acknowledge Jesus’ deity? By this query Jesus did not deny His deity; on the contrary, He affirmed it. In James 1:17 we read that, **“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father.”** In 1 Timothy 4:4 we read that false teachers were teaching people to abstain from marrying and eating certain foods, and Paul reminds Timothy that, **“everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.”**

God’s goodness manifests itself in several ways. He is benevolent and cares for his creation, as we in Ps. 145:9-16, **“The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. [The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.] The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.”** God’s goodness is also demonstrated in his love and grace towards the undeserving. Furthermore, God’s goodness is also shown in his longsuffering; He is slow to anger (Exod. 34:6).

By way of application, what does God’s goodness mean for us? Think of all the ways that we doubt God’s goodness: When we sin, when we fear for the future, when we fear men more than God, when we worry.

God’s goodness allows us to keep from being anxious, and it reminds us that he will *always* do what is best. We need to trust His character. He is a good God.

11. God’s Holiness (pg. 10)

What is it? The word literally means to cut or to separate (from sin). Holiness is not perfection, but the separation of God from all else because of his perfection. In holiness, God eternally wills and maintains his own moral excellence, abhors sin, and demands purity in his moral creatures. Hebrews 10:10 tells us, **“And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”** “*Sanctify*” means to “*make holy*,” to be set apart from sin for God. When Christ fulfilled the will of God, He provided for the believer a continuing, permanent condition of holiness. Habakkuk 1:13a says that God’s has **“purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.”** In 1 Timothy 6:15-16, we see how God stands alone from all else in creation, **“which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.”**

Again, by way of application, what does this mean for us? The more we meditate on God’s attributes, the more we realize how separate He is from us – how holy He is. Who is like the Lord our God? And the greater that separation seems, the more amazing God’s gift of redemption becomes.

12. God’s Righteousness (pg. 10)

God is perfectly just. He is just and acts rightly according to his promises regardless of our merit, and He justly punishes sin. In Deuteronomy 32:4, Moses says of God that “**his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.**” God’s righteousness gives us confidence that all will one day be put right. In addition, we can stand in awe that God’s grace in salvation has worked in perfect unity with his perfect justice. When Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins it showed that God was truly righteous, because he did give appropriate punishment to sin, even though he did forgive his people their sins.

In Romans 3:26, Paul says of God’s righteousness that, “**God presented [Christ] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.**”

13. God’s Glory (pg. 10)

God’s glory may properly be called a “summary attribute.” That is to say, God’s glory is the sum total of all of his attributes as well as any one of His attributes. To deny any of God’s attributes is to attack the very glory of God.

When the Bible speaks of God’s glory, it refers to what God is in his essential being or nature. That is to say, God’s glory is simply the inescapable “weight” of the sheer intrinsic Godness of God, inherent in the attributes essential to Him as the Deity.

In another sense, God’s “glory” means the bright light that surrounds God’s presence. We see this in Luke 2:9 where it says that the “**glory of the Lord shown around them.**” In Revelation 21:3 the heavenly city has no need of a sun because the glory of God will be its light. Since God is spirit, though, and not energy or matter, this visible light is not part of God’s being but is something that was created. We may define it by saying that God’s glory is the created brightness that surrounds God’s revelation of himself.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the subject of God is a difficult matter to grasp. This is because God is an incomprehensible and infinite being that cannot be exhaustively known. But just because we cannot obtain perfect knowledge of Him does not mean that we should abandon all efforts to try to understand Him at all.

While we haven’t been able to speak fully to every attribute of God’s this lesson, we should praise God that those in Christ will have an eternity to know Him better.

*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!
Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?
For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever! Amen.*

- Romans 11:33-36

Comments or Questions?