

The Attributes Of God

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INTRODUCTION

It is our desire that these articles will be helpful and informative. These lessons will not cover all the material on each attribute, but they will give you a general idea of the subject. I am sure there are more attributes than those I have listed. Since there is no end to God, there will be no end to His attributes.

Job 11:7-9, Zophar says, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said, "Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued, investigation of the great subject of the Deity. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the science of Christ and Him crucified and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity."

I very firmly believe that the Christian has not begun a proper study of the Bible until he begins a study of the Godhead. A Biblical study of God, His Name, His nature, His person, His doings, and His existence is the most uplifting study possible. It will expand the mind and soul, lifting them above this lowly, fleshly existence to a greater and more fulfilling and glorious existence in our Savior, Jesus Christ. When we study other Biblical subjects, we come away with a good understanding of the subject matter and are apt to say, "I am wise." But a proper study of the Godhead will find us with a subject we cannot reach the end of. We will come away from such a study knowing that we are but flesh and God is spirit. We will know that we are nothing at all and God is all in all. We will worship Him as never before, for we will understand one thing quite well, we can never know all about God. Eph. 2:7 says we will spend all eternity learning about God and never be able to know all about Him.

Job 26:14 states that we can know only those "little" parts of God. Consider Moses, Exodus 33:12-23, who desired to see God. God allowed him to see only His hind parts. There is no doubt that Moses could not have lived had He seen God "face to face". I Cor. 13:12 states that one day, when we have our glorified bodies, we will see God "face to face". Even then, we won't be able to look into the depths of God's glory. If we could fully contemplate God, then we would be equal to God and this will never be.

Colossians 1:16,17 states that God created everything in heaven, the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by God and for God. This means that God doesn't need us or any of His creation. He was complete before He created man and He was complete after He created man.

In Daniel 4:34,35, Nebuchadnezzar said that God lives forever and ever, His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom from generation to generation,

no one is heaven or on the earth questions God. This teaches us that God is not subject to any rules or laws. He is the rule or law. Nobody makes any rules that God must obey.

I Tim. 1:17, "Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for every and ever. Amen.

I Corinthians 13:12, There will come a day when we won't see through a glass darkly, but will see Jesus Christ (God) face to face.

Eph. 2:7 declares we will spend all eternity learning about the greatness of God, especially as to how our salvation works.

A DESCRIPTION OF GOD

The purpose of this series of articles is to better acquaint ourselves with God. Just as we are better able to understand our friends as we become more acquainted with them, so we can better understand God when we become more acquainted with Him. This will allow us to get rid of the "wood, hay and stubble" in our lives and be more pleasing to Him.

First of all, we will not try to prove the existence of God. The Bible says the fool hath said in his heart, "there is no god". Ps. 14:1.

John 4:24 - "God is a spirit". This means that God does not exist in a body like ours. He is entirely invisible and is able to be in every part of every place at all times. Men bring their gods down to their level by making images of them, but this is not so with our God. We could never make an image that fully describes God. He is pure spirit and cannot be described in material things.

Isaiah 55:8,9 - "...so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." God lives in a realm very much above the realm in which we live. His life is entirely unburdened by any care or worry or any such things. He is completely satisfied with everything in heaven and earth. From His high vantage point, He is able to see the beginning from the end (and all the middle). Since He can see the end of all things, He is completely at peace about all things.

There are two general names given to God. (1) Genesis 1:1, "Elohim", meaning the "God of creation", and (2), "Jehovah", which means the "everlasting, or eternally existing one".

Every person, including lost people, can recognize "Elohim", the God of creation, and worship Him as such. But the saved can go one step further by worshipping Jehovah, the everlasting One. In this lesson, we would like to notice seven ways the saved can worship Jehovah.

1. Genesis 22:14, Jehovah-Jireh - "God will provide." When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Abraham was willing, but God intervened and provided a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So it is with us today. God will ask us to give our most precious possession to Him. He may not want that possession, but He wants us to be willing to give it to Him.

2. Exodus 15:26, Jehovah-Roefeckie - "The Lord Heals". God promised Israel that He would keep diseases from them if they followed His commands. This doesn't mean we will never be sick if we worship God. It means we will avoid many of the sicknesses associated with worldly living. Your "chances" of getting lung cancer is less if you don't smoke, mouth cancer if you don't dip or chew tobacco, skin cancer if you cover your body from the sun, (avoiding nakedness, forgetting the "tan") cirrhosis of the liver if you don't drink. Most of all, Jesus heals us from our sinfulness, giving us a home in heaven.

3. Exodus 17:15, Jehovah-Nissa - "The Lord is my banner", or "The battle is the Lord's". When Israel defeated the Amalekites, Moses gave the glory to the Lord. When God gives us the victory over our enemies, we can also give Him the glory. It is not what we have done, but what God has done.

4. Judges 6:24, Jehovah-Shalom - "God is peace". God had given Gideon a job he didn't want. He was to lead Israel against the Midians who held them captive. Before the battle ever started, God gave Gideon peace that everything would turn out all right. This is an example of living by faith, totally trusting an all wise God to make everything right. Isn't this the true peace the world is searching for today?

5. Jeremiah 23:6, Jehovah-Tsidkenu - "God is our righteousness". We, like Israel, do not stand on our own righteousness, but on the righteousness of God. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We must be cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

6. Ezekiel 48:35, Jehovah-Shammah - "God is there, or God is ever present". Today we may erroneously "feel" that God is somewhere else and that He doesn't watch over us like we think He ought to. But there is coming a day when our feeling will be the same as the facts. We will know that God is present with us.

7. Psalms 23:1, Jehovah-Roeshee - "God is the one who shepherds me". We were as sheep going astray, but Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He found us headed for eternal destruction, picked us up in His arms, and brought us back to the fold. He continually watches over our lives, guiding us toward the green pastures and keeping Satan from devouring us. We don't have to worry, for our Shepherd watches over us all the day long.

It is very interesting to think of God in the above mentioned ways. He is everything to us. We are able to say with Moses in Deuteronomy 32:4,31, "...there is no God like our God."

THE INFINITY OF GOD

The infinity of God means that He is without limits of any kind. He is boundless, immeasurable. Man is just the opposite, being described as "finite". Man is contained within limits of time, space, and material substance. God is limited by nothing.

God cannot be measured with time

Ps. 90:2, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou are God." This verse tells of God's eternal existence. There was never a time when God was not. As far back into eternity as you could go, there would still be God. And this God would be exactly the same as He is now, and exactly the same as He will be in the eternity which is still future to us. Daniel 7:13 calls God the "Ancient of Days", not the ancient in days. This means that God does not get any older even though He has been alive for all eternity. There is simply no measurement of eternity. Time began in Genesis 1 when God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:5 states that the evening and the morning were the first day. The word "day" means a 24-hour measured period. "Time", according to Webster's Dictionary, means a period between two events, or during which something exists, happens or acts, a measured or measurable interval. Time means nothing to God. He has created time as a measurement of our lives. He doesn't need time to measure His life, for His life has no beginning and no end. God is the eternal NOW.

God's infinity is declared by His attributes

1. God's immutability (unchangeableness) declares His infinity. Psalms 102:27, "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." James 1:17, "...with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning". The very fact that God does not change proves He never had a beginning. If God had a beginning, there would of necessity be a time when God would change through a progression of development. God did not start out as a "baby God" and develop into an "adult God". God never started out at all. He was always God, perfectly developed with all of His powers.

Some religions teach that God is no more than a fuller developed human being. They teach that if we continue to develop we will be like God. Of course, at that time, God will be much further developed than He is now, so when we get to the place God is now, we will still have much developing to do. This type of religion is straight from the devil and will cause many to go to hell.

2. God's power declares his infinity. Romans 1:20, "...even His eternal power and Godhead...". God is not like men in that He increases in power or strength. Men are born into this world as babies. They have very little strength at first, but they eat and grow strong. Their bodies develop muscles and as they continue working, they develop more strength. Then there comes a time when their strength slowly leaves them. It takes longer and longer to rest, until finally they spend more time resting than they do working. When their strength is finally gone, they die and go to their

long home. This is not the way of God. He has always had exactly the same amount of power He does now. He never had to gain any power because He always had all the power there was. He will not lose any power for His power is eternal. There is no time with God so He doesn't grow old and feeble.

3. God's knowledge declares His infinity. Acts 15:18, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

John 7:15, "The Jews marveled saying, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?'" Jesus didn't go to school. He didn't have to for He was God and knew all things from the very beginning.

Isaiah 40:13,14, "With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught Him in the way of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?" He has never had an advisor or counselor. Simply put, God knows everything there is to know about everything.

4. God's mercy is eternal. Psalms 103:17, "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting..." God has always had mercy toward fallen mankind, even before Adam actually sinned in the Garden of Eden. The fall didn't take God by surprise, causing Him to develop mercy.

5. God's love is eternal. Jeremiah 21:3, "...I have loved thee with an everlasting love...". Just as God didn't have to develop mercy, He didn't have to develop a love for fallen mankind. He had always loved them and this love caused Him to give His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might be saved. Salvation is God's eternal plan. It was not developed after the fall.

Conclusion

God never changes. If God were to change, this would be admitting there was something wrong that needed to be improved. God never improves because He is perfect, totally sinless and the absolute standard of righteousness for all.

THE TRINITY OF GOD

In A. H. Strong's Systematic Theology, p. 144, the trinity of the Godhead is defined as follows: "In the nature of the one God there are three eternal distinctions which are represented to us under the figure of persons, and these three are equal." The word "trinity" does not appear in the Bible, but the principle behind the doctrine certainly does appear as we shall see in this study.

First, let us prove that each part of the trinity is God

The Father is God. John 6:27, "Labour not for the meat which perished...for him hath God the Father sealed." I Peter 1:1,2, "Elect...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father". There are many scriptures that teach that the Father is God, but these two should suffice.

The son is God. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". Verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth". When we compare these two verses we find that the Word, who is God, is said to be Jesus. Therefore Jesus is God. John 10:29,30, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one". Could there be any clearer scripture to teach that Jesus and His Father are One?

The Holy Spirit is God. Acts 5:3,4, "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?...thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." There is no difference between lying to the Holy Spirit and to God. They are the same.

Second, let us prove the three parts of the Godhead are equal

I Peter 1:2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you and peace, be multiplied". All three distinctions of the Godhead have a part in our salvation. We are elected by God the Father, cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and sanctified (set apart) by the Holy Spirit. Without each part of the Godhead doing His job, we could not be saved.

Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". This passage teaches that the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal. It is not baptism unless the authority of all three parts of the Godhead are used. Some claim to baptize while baptizing only in the name (authority) of Jesus. But this is not baptism at all.

Matt. 3:16,17, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the

water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". When Jesus began His personal ministry, He did not begin with only His authority, but with the authority of the entire Godhead.

II Cor. 13:14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen". In this benediction, Paul prays that Jesus will give grace, God the Father will give love, and the Holy Spirit will enable the believer to be in communion (partnership) with the other two parts of the Godhead. This combination will provide all the necessary ingredients for the successful Christian life.

Third, let us distinguish between the three parts of the Godhead

The Father and Son are different from each other. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life". This well known passage makes the distinction between the begetter and the begotten. God the Father was the sender, Jesus was the sent.

The Spirit and the Father are different from each other. John 15:26, "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:" Jesus declares that the Spirit comes from the Father, therefore the Spirit is different from the Father.

The Son and the Spirit are different from each other. John 14:16, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;" Jesus is the first comforter, the Holy Spirit is the second comforter and is sent at the request of Jesus. Therefore, the Son and the Spirit are different.

Conclusion

We do not believe in three Gods, but in one God who manifest Himself to us in three distinct ways. The doctrine of the Trinity is not self-contradictory and we will make no attempt to explain away the mysteries of the nature of the Godhead. We can only search the scriptures, believing by faith what they teach us, leaving the mystery for solution in eternity.

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD

The definition of "Omnipresence". The word "Omnipresence" is a combination of two words. "Omni" is a Latin word (omnis) meaning "everywhere". "Presence" is from another Latin word (praesens) meaning "vicinity within close view". Therefore, the word means "God is everywhere present".

The Blessing or Comfort of an Omnipresence God

Proverbs 15:3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." This verse will either give us great comfort or great sorrow. God sees everything we do and everywhere we go. He knows all the thoughts and intents of our heart. If we are involved in evil things, this knowledge will give us great sorrow, for we know He sees all our sins. If we are involved in good things, we have great joy and comfort for we know He sees our faithfulness.

The Fact of an Omnipresent God

Psalms 139 is probably the best place to read concerning the omnipresence of God. We do not have the space to print all of this Psalm so we ask you to turn in your Bibles and slowly and carefully read this great scripture.

Verse 7-13 states there is no place to go where God is not. God is in the heavens above and in hell ("shoel", the grave) below. He is in the uttermost part of the heavens and the earth. He is in the light as well as the darkness. He is in the depths of the sea and the most remote area of land. When the United States sent astronauts into space, they came back telling of the presence of God. Russia sent their astronauts into space and they came back telling that they didn't see God. Of course, they didn't. If they didn't see God on the earth, they wouldn't see Him in space. God is upon the earth and in space. He is everywhere.

Some folks believe that God has a body like the body of a man, with a head, arms, legs, so forth. They believe that God's head is in heaven, His arms are in space, and His legs and feet are on the earth. This is not so. God is not made like fleshly man. He is spirit. All of God's presence is everywhere at all times. We cannot divide God into sections and place one section in one place and another section in another place. He is one and is completely present in all places at all times.

The Mystery of an Omnipresent God

Compare these two scriptures. Acts 7:56, When Stephen was being stoned to death, he saw heaven opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Heb. 13:5, "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." How can it be that Jesus is in heaven and promises to never leave us nor forsake us? Doesn't He have to be in either heaven or on the earth? For the answer see John 3:13, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." Jesus is telling Nicodemus that He is on the earth and in heaven at the same time.

God has changed the way He reveals Himself to us down through the years. Gen. 2:16,17, in the beginning of this world, Jesus appeared to Adam and Eve and talked openly with them, showing them the way of salvation and giving them a commission to teach their children. I Samuel 3:1 states that when Samuel was a child, (about 3,000 years after creation) the word of God was precious because there was no open vision. It was during this time that God began to speak only to His prophets. This continued until the time of Christ, at which time He left dealing with rebellious Israel and turned to the Gentiles. He organized His Church and gave her a commission to go into all the world, teaching the gospel and baptizing believers and then teaching them the all things of the Word of God. Today, God doesn't speak audibly. Ps. 50:3 states that God is a silent God, but He will speak in judgment one day. He speaks to us through His written Word, the old and new testament, II Peter 3:2.

Objections to the Omnipresence of God

Genesis 4:16, "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord..." Jonah 1:3, "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord..." These scriptures do not mean that Cain and Jonah found a place where God was not present. It means they left the place where God is worshipped. They left the place of abiding in God's will.

Conclusion.

What does the Omnipresence of God mean to us? Psalms 139:23,24. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." There is a reason God reveals His Omnipresence to us. And it's not to scare us into obedience. He desires us to have confidence that He sees and understands us exactly as we are. Men may sometimes misunderstand us and misjudge us, but God never does. He wants us to know we can't fool Him. We will all stand before the Omnipresence God one day. Some will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, while other will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment. Nothing will be hid in that day. Shouldn't we get ourselves right with God now?

THE INDEPENDENCE OF GOD

According to Webster's Dictionary, "independent" means, "not dependent; not subject to the control, influence, or determination of another or others; not subordinate." Sometimes we hear of a person that is "independently wealthy". This supposedly means they are so wealthy they don't need anybody or anything. But nobody is truly independent. A person cannot become so wealthy as to never need anybody or anything. When we think about God, we realize He is totally and completely independent. God doesn't need anything. He doesn't need money, for He can create anything He needs or wants. He doesn't need the earth or this vast universe we live in, for He was entirely happy and complete before the earth and universe was ever created. We would like to study the independence of God in three ways.

God Is Independent For He Is Self-Existent

Revelation 1:8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." A most difficult thing for us to understand about God is that He doesn't need anything to exist. There are requirements for our existence, but not for God. We must have air to breathe and food to eat. We must have shelter from the environment, and clothing for our bodies. But God needs none of these things. God is the beginning of all things, and without Him nothing exists. Ps. 90:2, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." God is eternity. Without God there is no eternity at all. God has never willed Himself to life like we will ourselves to live. God lives because it is His nature, we die because it is our nature.

God Is Independent For He Is Self-Sufficient

Nothing in heaven, the earth, or under the earth is able to add anything to God. We can give Him all the glory we are able, yet all of this will not add anything to God. Notice the Seraphims in Isaiah 6:1-3. These are created beings that are so holy they burn with their own holiness. They do nothing except fly through the air crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." In Revelation 4:6-8, the Bible gives the record of the four living creatures before the throne of God that "...rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Ps. 19:1 says that the heavens declare the glory of God. In Luke 19:40, Christ made the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The people were rejoicing and making a lot of noise in their worship. The Pharisees desired Jesus to rebuke His disciples. but Jesus said, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." I Cor. 10:31 declares that all our eating and drinking should be done for the glory of God. But none of these things add to the

glory of God in any way, shape or form. After the created beings, all human beings, and all God's creation glorify God, He is exactly the same as He was before any glory was given to Him. If our giving glory would add anything to Him, this would mean there was something missing about Him in the first place. Remember, God was complete before the creation, and He will be complete after men give Him praise.

God Is Independent For He Is Happy Or Blessed

I Tim. 1:11, "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God..." I Tim. 6:15, "...who is the blessed and only Potentate..." The word "blessed" means "happy". These scriptures are talking about God's feelings about Himself, not about us.

Sin doesn't destroy God's happiness about Himself, but it reveals His displeasure and wrath toward us. Eccl. 5:4 says that God has no pleasure in fools, but this doesn't destroy his happiness about Himself. Ezk. 33:11 states that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but He doesn't lose His happiness about His own condition because of their rebellion and death. Gen. 6:6, God was grieved at the sin of the world, but He had no regrets about the way He had created the world.

Righteousness receives the approval of God, but does not add to His happiness. Job. 22:3, "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?" We must understand that God is completely happy before we ever did anything that could be called righteous. We do not add anything to Him because that would mean there was something lacking in God.

God is happy, or blessed, because He is righteous. God doesn't depend on the righteousness of somebody or something else to give Him happiness. God is at peace with Himself. He has complete control of Himself and all things. He is completely holy. He has no sin, therefore no grief because of His sin. (He does grieve over our sins.) Ps. 17:15, "...I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." The place of total, complete satisfaction is before God. We shall look upon Him, see Him as He is and be totally at peace.

THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

Immutability comes from two Latin words. "In" meaning "not" and "mutabilis" meaning "changeable". Thus immutability means "un-change-able-ness".

The Fact Of God's Immutability

1. There is no change in God's age. Ps. 102:27, "But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Heb. 1:12 has the exact same words, mainly because Hebrews quotes Psalms. Psalms 102 compares the longevity of mankind with the longevity of God.

2. There is no change in God's strength. Isaiah 40:28, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?"

3. There is no change in God's power. Romans 1:20, "...even his eternal power and Godhead..." See my Attributes of God, chapter 9.

4. There is no change in God's knowledge. Acts 15:18, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." See my Attributes of God, chapter 7.

5. There is no change in God's love. Jer. 31:3, "...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love..." See my Attributes of God, chapter 14.

6. God doesn't change at all. James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (This file is my Attributes of God, chapter 6)

God is the same as he always has been. There hasn't been any improvement in God, for He was perfect to begin with. There hasn't been any diminishing in God for He is perfect. He will never be any less or more than He is right now, for any change would indicate He wasn't exactly perfect to begin with. There is no such thing as more perfect, or most perfect. God is perfect, He cannot be more perfect. Perfect means without fault of any kind.

Objections To God's Immutability

1. God changed at the creation of the world.
 - a. We know God didn't change when He created the world, He only changed the way He reveals Himself. For example, the sun shines just as brightly on a cloudy day as it does on a sunny day. The sun doesn't change its brightness just because we can't see it. God didn't change when He created the world, he just removed the clouds so we could see Him.
 - b. Another example: compare the day of salvation, II Cor. 6:2, and the day of judgment, Rom. 2:5. God is presently revealed as a God of love who has died for the sins of the lost, but there is coming a day when He will be revealed as the righteous judge of all the world. This is two views of the same God, one

- as a saviour and one as a judge.
2. The incarnation of Christ changed God. A lot of people believe that Jesus Christ had His beginning when He was conceived in the womb of Mary. But this is not so.
 - a. Micah 5:2 declares that the ruler to be born in Bethlehem was from old, from everlasting.
 - b. Heb. 13:8 declares that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.
 - c. John 8:58 says that Jesus was God before Abraham was alive.
 - d. John 17:24 states that God the Father loved Jesus before the foundation of the world.
 - e. Rev. 22:13 says that Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.
 - f. The incarnation of Christ did not begin the Trinity in the Godhead. The trinity was already there, as seen by the angels visiting Lot, Gen. 19. The trinity was revealed when Christ was born in Bethlehem.
 3. God repents. It is true that God repents. But God's repenting doesn't change Him, it changes the way He reveals Himself to man. Notice these three examples of God repenting.
 - a. Gen. 6:6, God repenting in the days of Noah.
 - b. I Sam. 15:11,35, God repenting that He had made Saul King of Israel.
 - c. Ps. 106:45, God repenting according to the multitude of His mercies.
 - d. The word repent means to sigh or breathe strongly, to turn to away from one thing toward another, as in turning from sin to holiness, or to turn from holiness to sin. There are times when God sighs because of the sins of His people. But God never sighs for any of *His* actions. God does repent, but He doesn't repent like a man. A man will be sorry for his sinfulness and turn from that sinfulness toward righteousness. God will be sorry for the sins of His people and change the way He deals with them.
 - e. Notice these two scriptures.
 1. Num. 23:19, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent..."
 2. I Samuel 15:29, "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."
 4. Prayer changes God. Many people believe their prayers change God, but this is not so. Prayer changes us.
 - a. The Holy Spirit will never take a prayer to God unless that prayer is in the will of God, Rom. 8:26.
 - b. With this thought in mind, consider Ex. 32:7-14. Moses prays that God will not destroy Israel. He reminds God of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God repents of the evil He had thought to do to Israel. Did Moses change God's mind? NO! It was not God's directive will to destroy Israel. It was God will that Moses pray for them. This scene takes place in language borrowed from human language and passion, so we can more fully understand

how we ought to pray. It is not God's plan to destroy the elect in hell, but it is God's plan for us to pray for them and witness to them.

THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

Omniscience is from two Latin words. "Omni" is from the Latin word "omnis" meaning "everywhere" or "all", and science is from the Latin word "scientia" meaning "knowledge". Thus omniscience means all knowledge.

Let Us Compare God's Knowledge to Man's Knowledge

1. Ps. 147:5 says that God's knowledge is infinite or limitless. His knowledge is universal, reaching to all things, to all persons and to all events. There is nothing God does not know or understand. If there were anything He did not understand, then He would not be God. He would be no better off than we are. I Cor. 8:2, "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." The knowledge of man is incomplete. He spends His life learning, yet dies in ignorance of many things.

2. Job 12:12-25 is a direct comparison of man's knowledge and God's knowledge. Job says God has wisdom and strength, He counsels the counselors, He confuses the wise of this world, He discovers deep things out of darkness, and bringeth to light the shadow of death, He knows how to rebuke the proud and exalt the lowly. Man can do none of these things, for his knowledge is not like the knowledge of God.

How Does God Know?

Rom. 11:34,35, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" God knows everything naturally. He never went to school. John 7:15, "The Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Jesus knew without learning, for He was (and is) God.

What Does God Know?

We certainly won't list all the things God knows for our list would be incomplete. We will notice just three categories of things God knows.

1. God knows all about Himself. He is the only one who knows Himself. We will never completely understand God, even in eternity.
2. God knows all about the creation. See Job chapters 38, 39, 40, and 41. God asks Job what he knows about the beginning of this world, the sun, the stars, death, life, and animals. God knows all about these things, for He created them. Man will spend his lifetime studying nature, yet die without fully understanding many of its elements.
3. God knows about mankind.
 - a. God sees the actions of men that other men see. In I Kings 21, God saw the affliction of Naboth when Ahab and Jezebel conspired against him for his land. Other people knew this was going on, but were powerless to stop it.

God not only saw, He worked justice on their crime.

- b. God sees the actions of men that other men do not see. In Genesis 4:10, Cain killed Abel. This murder was hidden from men, but God saw and demanded punishment upon Cain. In Joshua 7:1, Achan stole a Babylonish garment, silver and gold. This crime was hidden from Joshua and Israel. But God saw. Today, men may think they are hiding their sins from God if they commit these things in the dark or with people who will not tell. But God doesn't need to be told. He already knows, for nothing is hidden from Him.
- c. God even sees the thoughts of men. In Gen. 6:5, God saw "...that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." God not only saw what men were doing, He looked past their actions, to the desire of their heart. Ps. 44:21, "...for He knoweth the secrets of the heart." In Deut. 33:21, God through Moses tells Israel, "...I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware." In Heb. 4:13, "...but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Conclusion

Is it important for us to believe in an all knowing God? Yes it is. Read Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." Israel went into captivity because they didn't have a proper knowledge of God. Matt. 25:24,25, the man with one talent didn't really understand God and lost all he had. If we build out of wood, hay, and stubble, we will be saved, yet so as by fire. Our souls will be saved, but our lives will be lost. Is this not warning enough?

On the positive side, a knowledge of God will give us much assurance. We can know we have eternal life, I John 3:14; 5:13. We can know all things work for the good of those that love God who are called according to His purpose, Rom. 8:28. We can know God hears and answers our prayers, Rom. 8:26. We can know our redeemer liveth, Job 19:25. We can know He will raise us from the dead, I Thess. 4:13-18. We can know He has given us an eternal home, II Cor. 5:1. We can know we will be like Him one day, I John 3:2.

Understanding that God knows all about us will help us during times of joy and in times of despair. It is an encouragement to us that God knows the beginning from the end. We will find ourselves trusting Him more and more because He is the all knowing God.

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The last lesson was on Omniscience (knowledge of God.) That lesson had to do with the fact that God knows everything that is happening. This lesson is on the foreknowledge of God. This has to do with the fact that God knows everything that will happen before it happens.

Definition of Foreknowledge

We will quote C. D. Cole, *Definitions of Doctrines*, Volume I. page 40, "The word foreknowledge has two meanings. When used of an event, it is an attribute, when used of persons, it is an act of God, an act remaining and operating within the divine nature. It is the difference between God's nature and God's activities; between what He is, and what He does. Foreknowledge, when considered as an attribute, is a branch of the Divine omniscience; and when considered as an act it is a branch of the doctrine of the Divine decrees." There is hardly a way to talk of God's foreknowledge separate from His activities. They are inseparably linked together.

Let Us Compare God's Foreknowledge With man's Foreknowledge

1. Man has foreknowledge of his soon coming death. I Kings 2:2, David said, "I go the way of all the earth..." David, like all men, knew that death was coming to him. He didn't know when, or how, but he knew it was coming. Isn't this so with you? You know death is coming. There is no way to avoid its grasp. We can do nothing to stop our death.

2. Man has foreknowledge about the soon destruction of this world. II Peter 3:17, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." We all know and believe that the world is soon coming to an end. We know the world and all its elements will be burned up in fervent heat. We do not know when this will happen, but we know it is going to happen soon. We can do nothing to stop the destruction of the world.

It may have come as a surprise to you to know that we have a certain amount of foreknowledge. But our foreknowledge is not like the foreknowledge of God. Our foreknowledge contains no element of control. We know certain things are going to happen but we have no control over them. We can only accept them as they come. God is not like that. His foreknowledge contains the ability to control the outcome.

Now Let Us Look At God's Foreknowledge In Three Ways

1. God's foreknowledge as applied to Israel. Rom. 11:2, "God has not cast away His people which He fore knew" This indicates more than knowing beforehand, but a

keeping in the power of God that Israel might not be cast away. God knew all about Israel's future when He called Abraham to be the Father of the Jews. One day, God will again bless Israel, giving them more glory than they have ever had before.

2. God's foreknowledge as applied to Christ. Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that Christ was delivered into the hands of wicked men for the sins of the world. Please notice: God did not determine the wickedness of man. The Bible says, "ye have taken". God did not determine that these men would sin. They did that of their own free will.
3. God's foreknowledge as applied to believers.
 1. Ps. 14:2 tells us that God looked from heaven to see if there was anybody that understood and was seeking him. Verse 3, "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." This fits with Eph. 2:1-3 which states that all are dead in trespasses and sin, following the desires of the flesh and mind; and are by nature the children of wrath, even as others. God saw all people going away from Him into sin.
 2. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 3. Rom. 10:13-16, God sent a preacher to preach the blessed gospel of eternal life to all who would believe.
 4. Eph. 1:13, Men heard the gospel and were saved, not because of their goodness, but because of the goodness of God.

Conclusion

The foreknowledge of God should not be a hindrance in our lives, or in our service to God. It should help us to trust in God more and more. We are not trusting in one who is unable to help. God knows the end from the beginning and is able to control circumstances to keep Satan from us and our loved ones.

THE POWER OF GOD

It is impossible to adequately describe the power of God. We can measure and describe all power on this earth, but we cannot measure or describe the power of God. Everything on earth is limited in power, but there is no limit to the power of God. There is absolutely nothing God cannot do.

The Nature Of God's Power

1. His power is absolute. Job 23:13, "...and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." The only limit to God's power is self-imposed, based on what he desires. There is absolutely nothing God cannot do if it suits His purpose. Eph. 3:20 says God is "...able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think..." What marvelous power! God can do things that are so wonderful we can't even *think* of them! Matt. 19:26, "...With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

2. His power is unchanging. Rom. 1:20 states that God has "eternal power." This means that God has not increased or decreased in power. His power is not like the power of mankind. A person can gain power as he exercises, or lose power as he fails to exercise. But God is not like this. His power remains exactly the same at all times. He cannot gain power, for He already has all the power there is. He cannot lose power, for this would mean there was something wrong with Him. Isaiah 40:28 declares, "God fainteth not, neither is weary."

The Manifestations of God's Power

1. God's power is manifested in the material world. Job 26:7 states that God hung the earth upon nothing. This is a marvelous thing indeed. Everything a man builds must be supported by something. In fact, everything a man builds must be supported by something *God* has already made! For example, man might build an enormous skyscraper, but that skyscraper is build on ground created by God and out of material originally created by God. Man might build huge earth moving equipment, but that equipment is build out of the very material it will be moving! God has created the world out of absolutely nothing, and hung it upon absolutely nothing. Man goes into outer space and looks back at the earth and behold, it *is* hung upon nothing! God has created light, and darkness. He has created a thing called "time" that we use to measure our lives. He has created the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the sea and all things thereon. God binds water in the thick clouds and the clouds are not rent under the weight of the waters, Job 26:8. But most marvelous of all is that God created life. Gen. 2:7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This is truly a miracle. Jeremiah was surely right when he declared, "...there is nothing too hard for thee." Jer. 32:17.

In describing the material manifestations of God's power, we must say with Job, "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the

thunder of his power who can understand?" Job 26:14.

2. God's power is manifested in the spiritual world. Luke 1:35 records the amazing incarnation, not "**re**incarnation", of Jesus Christ. God was made in the form of sinful man, yet without sin, Phil. 2:7,8. He was conceived in the womb of a virgin, born in a Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, Luke 2:7. In process of time, He gave his life for sinners. But the story doesn't end with the death of Christ on the cross, for He rose from the dead! Jesus said concerning his life; "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again..." John 10:18.

From this time forth, God began to call preachers to preach the blessed gospel to a lost and dying world, for it is through the gospel that the power of God is revealed. Rom. 1:16. I Cor. 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." The Holy Spirit has made preachers' words effective, drawing sinners to Christ who forgives them.

This world has been made a better place because of the many people who have been saved by the power of God. They hate sinfulness and strive to live the way God wants them to. This is a force for good that is unstoppable. There are those who will say there is nothing to the gospel or the power of God. But the lives of saved people is an unanswerable argument in favor of the power of God.

The Purpose Of God's Material and Spiritual Creation

All things are created for the pleasure of God, not for the pleasure of man. In Rev. 4:11, the 24 elders worship God saying, "Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Col. 1:16,17, "...all things were created by him, and for him:..."

Objections To The Absolute Power Of God

Many people believe that God has "absolute power" in everything except those things concerning mankind. Many believe God has shown His power in the creation of this world, and the establishing of the laws of science that govern our world and give it stability. But they believe God is powerless when it comes to the salvation of souls, and in dealing with the human will. They use phrases such as: (1) The banners of God's army half outside the little fortress of our hearts inviting us to surrender; His mighty love and grace and power wait for our decision. (2) We are bidden to make a choice. No man can choose for us. God Almighty cannot choose for you and me. I can put God who made me, and who gives me the breath I breathe at arms length and say, "I will not"; or I can turn to Him, through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit and receive His salvation. (3) Omnipotence itself is powerless in the presence of stubbornness. Even a child can raise its hand and shake its tiny fist in the face of God Almighty, and God Almighty can do nothing. (4) God votes for you, and the

Devil votes against you, and you cast the deciding vote.

These four major objections to the absolute power of God are full of fallacies. We will discuss them one at a time.

Objection # 1. This objection ignores the fact of Total Depravity. All are total sinners and are not seeking God to begin with. It is **because** God makes the first move toward the sinner that the sinner beholds his sinfulness and desires salvation. A sinner left to himself will never turn to Christ.

Objection # 2. It is absolutely preposterous to speak of God Almighty who we can resist. If God is Almighty, He cannot be resisted.

Objection # 3. It is a contradiction of terms to say that Omnipotence, which means all powerful, is powerless. Prov. 21:1 states that God turns the king any way He so desires. Therefore, we know He can control a child.

Objection # 4. Biblical election is not God voting for us, Satan voting against us and us casting the deciding vote. Election is God choosing us to Himself, John 15:16. Satan had nothing to do with this election, for it took place before Satan was revealed as the fallen angel. We did not cast the deciding vote for the election took place before the foundation of the world.

Some people believe God elected His children according to his foreknowledge. That is, He elected those to salvation that He fore knew would believe. As an objection to this believe, I think it is very important to read Psalms 14:1-3. In this passage, God actually looked down upon the children of men to see if there were any that would seek Him. He found none! Absolutely none! **All** were without understanding, having done abominable works, **all** were corrupt, and **all** were altogether filthy! It is at this point that God elects His children to salvation. It is here that God bestows mercy on the undeserving, that He gives grace (undeserved favor) on His filthy, hell deserving creatures. He saves His elect, not because they deserve to be saved, or because they have work to be saved. He saves them because He **chooses** to save them.

Conclusion

God's power is the confidence of the Christian. We do not trust in our wisdom, strength, or power to work out the problems of our lives. We turn to Almighty God for we know He has created this entire, complex universe by His power, He has saved us by His power, and He keeps us by His power. Therefore He will willingly use that same power to control the circumstances of our life.

THE GRACE OF GOD

A proper study of the grace of God will involve much more than this small study on the Attributes of God permits. Every blessing we receive from God, every part of our lives is touched by the free exercise of God's grace toward us. May the reader study the grace of God in such a way that his study is never ended.

Definition Of Grace

The word "grace" comes from the Greek word "charis" meaning "the manner or act of one being acceptable in the eyes of another". I personally like to say that grace is "unmerited, undeserved favor".

Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, by Kenneth S. Wuest defines grace as "...especially denoting God's grace and favor towards mankind or to any individual, which as a free act, excludes merit, and is not hindered by guilt, but forgives sin; it thus stands out in contrast with egra (works), and nomos (law)."

Alexander Whyte defines grace. "Grace and love are essentially the same, only grace is love manifesting itself and operating under certain conditions, and adapting itself to certain circumstances. As, for example, love has no limit or law such as grace has. Love may exist between equals, or it may rise to those above us, or flow down to those in any way beneath us. But grace, from its nature, has only one direction it can take. Grace always flows down. Grace is love indeed, but it is love to creatures humbling itself. A king's love to his equals, or to his royal house is love; but his love to his subjects is called grace. And thus, it is that God's love to sinners is always called grace."

A Comparison of Grace

With works: Eph. 2:8,9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Rom. 11:5,6, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." It is impossible to mix works and grace for salvation or service. God either enables us to be saved and serve Him, or we don't need His grace for salvation and service.

With the law: John 1:17, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It is impossible to mix law and grace. Moses is the voice of the law, Christ is the voice of grace. Law demands, grace gives. Law condemns, grace forgives. Law separates from God, grace brings man to God. Law condemns the best man, grace saved the worse sinner. Law says, "do and live", grace says, "believe and live". Law demands righteousness, grace redeems from the curse. Law brings sin, which reigns unto death, grace reigns unto eternal life. Sin damns by the

law, Christ redeems from the curse of the law. Hell comes because of sin, grace pays for our sin.

How Does Grace Save? A Negative View

1. Grace does not enable us to keep the law. If grace enabled us to keep the law, our past sins would not be taken care of. If we could keep the law, Christ would be left out and the "word" would become the Holy Spirit and the Saviour.

2. Grace does not overlook our sins or sinfulness. Our sins and sinfulness must be paid for. Some have a god with only one attribute, love. But God also has an attribute of justice. Christ paid for our sins on the cross. If grace could simply overlook sins, Christ died in vain.

3. Grace does not give us works to do for salvation. Church attendance, Bible reading, praying, tithing, singing, baptism and the Lord's Supper can never save a soul. These are things the saved will **want** to do, but they are not necessary to salvation.

Grace is not given to us because of some good deed we have done. For example, some believe that certain works enable the unbeliever to come into the presence of God so they can receive salvation. Some of these works are: praying, attending church services, helping your neighbors, being baptized, and obeying the laws of the land. Total depravity comes into play here, because there is nothing a lost person can do to gain favor with God. Psalms 14 and Psalms 53 are almost identical psalms, both declaring that God looked into the future and saw what He already knew, there was not one good person. There was no good person because all had Adam's nature of sin. All were, and are, and will continue to be, disobedient to His commandments.

A lost person doesn't heed the preaching of the gospel, which is foolishness to him, I Corinthians 1:21. He can sit under the excellent gospel story, and it will mean absolutely nothing to him because it is foolishness. He just doesn't believe he needs it because he believes he isn't quite as bad as the preacher makes him out to be. Eph. 2:1-3 declares that we were quickened when we were dead in trespasses and sin. These verses do not say we were quickened *after* we stopped being dead in trespasses in sins. We didn't do some good deed that brought us into favor with God because we were dead in trespasses and sins, and *couldn't* do any good works!

How Does Grace Save? A Positive View

Grace is expressed to us in two major ways: (1) grace for the lost so they may be saved, and (2) grace for the saved so they may live an acceptable life before God.

1. Grace for salvation. Certain men from Jerusalem came to Antioch teaching that salvation is not by grace alone. They taught that a person couldn't be saved unless they were circumcised (performed some kind of work). In the discussion by the apostles and elders, Peter said, "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Acts 15:11. Christ paid our sin debt on the cross, therefore, there is nothing for us to do. If there were anything the lost had

to do, they couldn't do it because they are dead in trespasses and sins. This makes salvation completely of grace.

2. Grace for living. Phil. 2:12,13, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." These verses are the perfect solution to grace and works. It is by the grace of God that we are enabled to work out our salvation. If God wasn't working in us to do His will and good pleasure, we would do our will and good pleasure.

Salvation Of The Complete Man

I Thess. 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This passage reveals that man is trichotomous; that is, he has three parts. God saves more than just the spirit of man, He also saved the soul and body.

1. Salvation is by the grace of God.
 - a. The spirit (past tense) is saved by the grace of God. Rom. 3:25 shows us that Christ paid "...for the remission of sins that are past..." Job says in 14:17 that his sins are sealed up in a bag until the one comes that is able to pay his sin debt. Jesus came to the earth, taking the form of a man, yet without sin. He paid our sin debt on the cross, bearing our sins in His own body, I Peter 2:24.
 - b. The soul (present tense) is saved by the grace of God. The soul, in our discussion, is human feelings and emotions. Whenever our spirits are saved from hell, we are left with our sinful nature which we battle the remainder of our lives, Rom. 7:15-25. The Bible says in Phil. 2:12,13 that we must work out our own salvation, for it is God which works in us. This working out of our salvation is not done by the power of the flesh, but we learn to live by the faith of Jesus Christ, Gal. 2:19,20. This daily looking into the Word of God and applying it to our lives will cause us to be slowly and continually changed into the image of God, II Cor. 3:18.
 - c. The body (future tense) is saved by the grace of God. The salvation of the body we are speaking of occurs at the resurrection. Our corruptible, mortal body shall put on incorruption and immorally by the grace of God, I Cor. 15:52-56. This is the meaning of Rom. 5:9, "we shall be saved from wrath through Him."
2. Justification is by the grace of God. Justification is a legal term meaning that a person stands before the judge without any legal guilt at all. Our justification means that we stand before God, the righteous judge, as completely innocent as far as the law is concerned.
 - a. Our spirits (past tense) are justified by the grace of God. The justification of

- our spirits is by faith, Rom. 5:1. Abraham was justified by faith when he believed the promise of God concerning a saviour that would come to redeem not only Israel, but the entire human race from sin, Gen. 15:6, Rom. 4:3. Joshua 2:10,11, Rahab believed when she heard of the power of God toward Israel. Her faith produced Godly actions which led to the saving of herself and her household. The ungodly faith of demons, James 2:19, does not produce Godly works, but trembling in the presence of God.
- b. Our souls (present tense) are justified by the grace of God. As just mentioned, there is a definite connection between true faith and true works. The true faith of Abraham resulted in true works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar as God commanded, James 2:21. Rahab's true faith caused her to receive the messengers, protect them and send them out another way, James 2:25. Our true faith will produce true works which show to the world the inward work of God. If there are no works, faith is dead.
 - c. Our bodies (future tense) are justified by the grace of God. I Cor. 15:52-58 shows that one day we will stand before God in bodies that are sinless. I John 3:2 says that in the resurrection the saved will be like Jesus.
3. Sanctification is by the grace of God. The word "sanctification" does not mean to get better and better. It means "to be set aside". Anything or anybody could be set aside for any purpose, good or bad.
- a. Our spirits (past tense) are sanctified by the grace of God. Eph. 1:4. It is by the grace of God that He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. God has set us aside especially for Himself. We are bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Our souls (present tense) are sanctified by the grace of God. I Thess. 4:3,4. It is God's will that we be sanctified, that we may know how to possess our bodies, abstaining from fornication or any other sin.
 - c. Our bodies (future tense) are sanctified by the grace of God. God has determined that we will have perfect bodies, even though they are now completely immersed with sin. Our bodies are groaning, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body", Rom. 8:23. There is coming a day when our bodies will be changed from sinfulness to righteousness.

Conclusion

Everything we have is by the grace of God. Our life is by grace, our salvation is by grace, our living is by grace, our death is by grace, our resurrection is by grace, and our rewards are by grace.

THE MERCY OF GOD

Mercy Defined

Mercy is what is given to a guilty party when they acknowledge their guilt and ask forgiveness. Mercy is never given until guilt is admitted.

Mercy is forbearance from inflicting harm, especially, as punishment, under provocation; compassionate treatment of an offender or adversary.

Robert Haldane defines mercy as that "adorable perfection in God by which He (a) pities and (b) relieves the miserable".

A Comparison Of Mercy

With Pride. A person who is filled with pride will not admit to God, or anybody else, that they need to be forgiven. The prideful person will harden their heart and stubbornly deny their sinfulness. Therefore, they will receive no mercy from God at all.

With Justice. Luke 18:9-14 gives the parable of the publican and the Pharisee. The Pharisee was filled with pride as he stood in the temple. He prayed to himself, thanking himself that he was not a sinner like other men. He named his many "good" deeds, desiring God to look upon him as being worthy to enter heaven. The publican, on the other hand, would not venture close to the temple, but stood afar off. His sinfulness weighed so heavily on him that he could not lift his eyes to heaven but looked down in shame. He did not tell God of his good deeds, for he had none. He asked God for mercy, because he was a sinner. Jesus said the publican went to his house justified (made innocent before God) while the Pharisee went on his merry way to hell. In Ps. 51, David prays for the mercy of God to blot out his transgressions, to wash him from sin, for he acknowledged his transgressions.

With Grace. There is a difference in grace and mercy. Grace is bestowed on mankind without any action on man's part. Mercy is given only when man admits his wickedness and asks God to forgive him. It is possible for grace to be given when mercy is not given. For example, it was grace that kept the angels from sinning, not mercy.

With Love. True love and mercy cannot be separated. John 3:16 tells of God's true love to fallen man. This true love caused God to give His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth might be saved. Grace and mercy are always downward, as from a king to his subjects. Love can be upward, equal, or downward, as from a servant to a king, a servant to a servant, or a king to a servant.

Mercy In The Old Testament

When Adam and his wife disobeyed God, it was mercy that "drove out the man and placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life", Gen. 3:24. God could have let

Adam and Eve eat of the tree of life and live forever in a sin cursed body, but His mercy spared them.

The mercy of God was bestowed upon Abraham when God called him from Ur of the Chaldees and promised to make a great nation of his seed. As a token of this promise, God later caused Moses to build a tabernacle with two rooms. The most sacred of these rooms was called the Holy of Holiest. Within this room was placed the Ark of the Covenant wherein was "the golden pot that had manna and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the Covenant", Heb. 9:4. To look upon these three items was to look on the justice of God. therefore God placed a Mercy Seat on top of the Ark of the covenant. On top of the Mercy Seat and overlooking it were the cherubims which revealed God's overlooking the affairs of man. This is where God talked to Moses, Num. 7:89. When the High Priest came into the Holy of Holiest once a year, he sprinkled blood on the mercy seat, signifying that Jesus would shed his blood for the sins of the world, Lev. 16. In I Samuel 6:19, the Philistines looked into the Ark of the Covenant by removing the mercy seat. 50,070 of them died because they looked on the justice of God without mercy. People will die and spend an eternity in hell because they ask for the justice of God and not the mercy of God.

Mercy In The New Testament

Probably the greatest example of mercy in the New Testament is the salvation of the people that crucified Christ. In John 17:29, Jesus prayed not only for those disciples that believed, but also for those who would believe through their preaching. When Jesus was crucified, His first words were, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", Luke 23:34. In Acts 2:22,23, Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost to the very people who "by wicked hands have crucified and slain" the son of God. These people were pricked in their hearts, Acts 2:37, repented of their wickedness and found salvation a free gift from God.

Paul said he "was before a blasphemmer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; I Tim. 1:13. This is true of us. We did not deserve the mercy of God, but were living like Satan. Jesus reached down to us in mercy and saved our unworthy soul.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Faithfulness Of God Defined

Faithfulness is an action of God toward us whereby He proves His promises to us. God's faithfulness is not God living up to a standard of conduct, except that He first established that standard. The faithfulness of men is found in Heb. 1:1. This is men proving that they believe the promises of God even when there is no physical evidence of those promises. Men must live up to the standard of conduct that God has established in order to be counted faithful by God.

God Is Faithful Before The Flood

In Genesis 2:16,17, God gave one law to Adam. He is not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. If Adam breaks that law he will die. In Genesis 3:1-6, the Bible tells of Adam and his wife eating the forbidden fruit. Was God faithful to keep his promise? Yes. Adam and his wife died spiritually on the day they ate the forbidden fruit and Adam died physically at the age of 930 years.

In Genesis 3:15, God gave Adam and his wife a promise of a saviour to come who will destroy Satan. This saviour would give them eternal life, both spiritually and physically. Adam believed the promise of God and named his wife "Eve" for she was the mother of all living, Gen. 3:20. Was God faithful to keep His promise? Yes. Four thousand years after God gave His promise, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was born of a virgin in the small town of Bethlehem.

In Genesis 6:1-8, God saw that man had fallen into great disobedience and rebellion. God made a promise that He would destroy every living thing on the earth, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God told Noah to build an ark for the saving of his household. Was God faithful to keep His promise? Yes. It took Noah about 100 years to build the ark. There is no doubt in my mind that many people scoffed and mocked as Noah build this huge box because a world wide flood was coming. But one day, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. It rained for 40 day and 40 nights, until the entire world was covered with water.

God Is Faithful To Israel

In Genesis 12:1-3, God promised Abraham that he will become a great nation, and through him all nations of the world will be blessed. The promise is confirmed in Genesis 15. But after ten years, Abraham and Sarai grow discouraged. Sarai is beyond the age of bearing children and Abraham is 84 years old. They decide the promised child should come through Sarai's maid, Hagar. Abraham goes in unto Hagar and the child Ishmael is born. Is this the promised seed? No, it is the child of the flesh. Was God faithful to keep His promise to Abraham? Yes. When Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90, the promised child was born.

God Is Faithful To His Church

In Matt. 28:19,20, Jesus promises that His kind of church will remain faithful until the end of the world. We are living near the ending of the world. Do you see a lot of people being faithful? In all truthfulness, we must say there most people are not interested in God's Word or will. This is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Matt. 24:42-51 tells of saved people that will be unfaithful to God. In Luke 18:8, Jesus asks, "...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" II Tim. 3:1-7, a sign of the end times is a great falling away from God's truth. In the light of all these things, will God be faithful to keep His promise to His church? Yes!

God Is Faithful To His Children

I Cor. 1:9, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." The basis of our salvation security is knowing that God will keep us eternally.

I Thess. 5:24, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." God is faithful to keep us holy unto Himself.

II Thess. 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." The world is full of evil and its inhabitants love evil. It is because of the promises of God that much of this evil is kept from us.

I Cor. 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." We can overcome temptations because God is faithful.

II Tim. 2:13, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." God is faithful to keep all His promises, even if we don't believe He will.

Conclusion

Rev. 1:5, Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of kings.

Rev. 19:11, Jesus is called "Faithful and True."

THE WISDOM OF GOD

Wisdom means to give good judgment. Wisdom and knowledge are different. Knowledge is the accumulation of facts. Wisdom is the practical application of those facts. A person can have much knowledge and still not know what to do with that knowledge. A person that has wisdom will have knowledge and will know what to do with that knowledge. Therefore wisdom is the practical application of knowledge.

There is a difference in "common sense" and "spiritual wisdom". Common sense is that natural wisdom of man that teaches him to get in out of the rain. A lost man can have common sense. Spiritual wisdom is that supernatural wisdom given by God that teaches man how to avoid eternal destruction in hell and how to live in such a manner as to avoid punishment for sin.

Comparison Of God's Wisdom and Man's Wisdom

I Cor. 1:17-31. The natural wisdom of man results in bitter envying and strife. James 3;14,15. This natural wisdom will cause a rejection of the gospel as men foolishly seek signs and wonders. The wise of this world stumble over the simplicity of the gospel as they rush headlong into an eternal hell.

Isaiah 55:8,9. God's wisdom is higher than man's wisdom because God always directs the events of man toward a prosperous eternity. Man's wisdom directs events toward a material, temporary prosperity, which very seldom benefits anyone, and is often the ruin of those involved.

God's Wisdom Is "Natural"

God doesn't learn to be wise. He is wise "naturally". Man will spend many years in school finally graduating. He then enters the "School of Experience", his most valuable training. This school continues all his life and when he dies, he has just scratched the surface of real wisdom.

The wisdom of God in creation is revealed in such a way that man must be "willingly ignorant" of His creative genius. The fact that life exists on this planet is a miracle. God covered the earth with a protective layer so the temperature and moisture would be just right. The earth has very few large craters, like the moon, because this protective layer keeps space rubbish from falling on us.

God has shown great wisdom in making the human body. We have five senses that allow us to make contact with the physical world. We have a digestive system that allows us to gain strength by ingesting food, a defense system that allows us to fight disease, a circulatory system that allows the tiniest cells of our body to have life. David said, "...I am fearfully and wonderfully made..." Ps. 139:14.

The wisdom of God in providence. "Providence" refers to God's supply and care by forethought. God, by wisdom, supervises the affairs of men. The book of Esther

is probably the greatest illustration of providence in the Bible. In this book, God so arranged the affairs of men to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. We serve the same God as Esther and Mordecai. God is still able to control the circumstances of our lives so the innocent are protected and the guilty are punished.

The wisdom of God in redemption. Eph. 1:8, "Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." Jonathan Edwards said, "Who would have thought of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and that one should sustain the rights of the Godhead; and another should be the Mediator; and another should make the application of redemption? Who would have thought of a way for answering the law, the law that threatened eternal death, without the sinner suffering eternal death? And who would have thought of any such thing as a Divine Person suffering the wrath of God? And if they had, who would have contrived a way how He should suffer, since the Divine nature cannot suffer?"

How Do We Get Wisdom?

James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived because he asked God for wisdom. Isn't this what we ought to do?

I Cor. 12:8. The Holy Spirit will give us wisdom, for He will teach us everything about Jesus Christ, John 14:26.

How will the Holy Spirit give us wisdom? II Tim. 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." The Holy Spirit will never teach apart from the Word of God. II Tim. 3:15, it is the Holy Scriptures that are able to make one wise unto salvation. Job 28:28, the Scriptures teach that the fear of the Lord is wisdom. Matt. 7:24, the Scriptures teach us to build our lives on the Rock of Jesus Christ, not on the sinking sand. Are you living by the wisdom of God, or according to your own wisdom? "the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the proof of wisdom is in the living."

THE LOVE OF GOD

Definition Of Love

There are four words in the Greek language for "love". *Stergein* is a love that comes from one's own nature. It is a natural love one has for those he feels obligated to love; such as parents, fellow workers, so forth. *Eran* is a love that has its basis in passion. It is not necessarily erotic, but is a completely absorbing passion of the mind. *Philein* is a love best described as friendship, or liking. *Agapan* is a self-sacrificing, giving love. This is the greatest love there is. It is the kind of love that caused Jesus to die on the cross for our sinfulness.

Now read I John 4:8,16 "...God is love..." These verses do not mean that God merely loves, but that God is love.

Characteristics of God's Love

His love is eternal. Jeremiah 31:3, "...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love..." This verse teaches that there never was a time (or even before time began) that God didn't love Israel. It is error to believe that God "started" to love. God is an eternal, unchanging God. His love toward us has never changed, either to increase or decrease. He loved us before the foundation of the world. He has not begun to love us because of any work we have done. Therefore, He will not stop loving us because of any work we have done. He will chasten us for sin, but will not stop loving us.

God's love is uninfluenced for He has a pure love. Deut. 7:7,8 declares God didn't love Israel because they were greater or better morally than other nations. He loved them because He loved them. The Lord didn't love us because we were greater or morally better than other people. II Tim. 1:9, We have received a holy calling, not because of our good works, but because of God's own purpose and grace.

The only reason we love God is because He first loved us and gave Himself for us. John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved", is a good example of this. God's love seemed a remarkable thing to him. John's motivation for loving God is God's love for him, not his love for God. Compare with Rev. 2:4, when the church at Ephesus lost their love for God, they stopped serving Him.

God's love is sovereign. Rom. 6:12-21, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated". Nobody can tell God who He ought to love and who he ought to hate. God is sovereign, therefore He chooses whom He will love and whom He will hate. If God's love were regulated by anything except His will, then God would be under a law. God is the supreme lawmaker, not one that merely keeps laws that are already established.

God's love is effectual, able to accomplish His desire. Compare the love of King Darius and the love of God for Daniel, Daniel 6. Both God and Darius are kings,

both love Daniel, both have power to make laws, both are sovereign (Darius in a limited sense). King Darius was tricked into making a law that condemned Daniel to the lion's den. He loved Daniel, but was powerless to stop the law from being carried out. God also loved Daniel, but He had power to carry out the law and shut the lions mouths, and get glory from the evil law, and punish the evil men that tricked King Darius!!

God's love is infinite (unlimited). Eph. 2:4,5, God loved us even when we were sinners. John 15:13, There is no greater love than a person would lay down his life for his friend. Rom. 5:8, Some might die for a good man, but Jesus died for us when we were sinners. (In reality, the one who died would of necessity be a better person than the one he was dying for.)

Compare Our Love To God's Love

We love others because they love us, or do something for us. We love our families because they're a part of us, an extension of ourselves. This is not the kind of love God loved us with. Eph. 2:4,5, God loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.

Matt. 5:43-48, Jesus tells us to love our enemies. This is the true love of God, not the love of a natural man. God's love for His enemies is not compromising with their sinfulness. God doesn't put up with sin anymore than He expects us to. God loved us so much that He not only died for us when we were sinners, but after we are saved, He chastens us to cause us to get closer and closer to Him, Heb. 12:6, Rev. 3:19. If we have a real God sent love, it will cause us to stand for the things of God, even if we must stand against those we love.

Most of the time today, men feel that if you stand against them, or if you disagree with them in any way, then you dislike them. This is error. God loves you, yet many times stands in our way and corrects us when we are wrong.

God stood against us when we were lost. He didn't put up with sin on our part, and actually kept revealing our sin to us. So it is after salvation. God still loves us, yet continually shows us our sinfulness, not our righteousness. Rev. 3:19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent."

THE WRATH OF GOD

A. W. Pink in his book, *The Attributes of God*, defines wrath as: (1) eternal detestation of all unrighteousness, (2) displeasure and indignation of Divine equity against evil, (3) holiness of God stirred into activity against evil, (4) the moving cause of that just sentence which He passes upon evil doers.

I define the wrath of God as another of His divine perfections which reveal his love for righteousness.

The Wrath Of God Examined

1. God's wrath is longsuffering.
 1. Eccl. 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Many people believe that if they sin today, they will be punished today. But this is not the way God works. Gal. 6:7, "...whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We don't know when he shall reap, but he shall reap.
 2. I Peter 3:20 tells us that "...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
 3. In Genesis 18, God revealed His plans to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. He listened patiently as Abraham sought mercy on those wicked cities, agreeing not to destroy them if there were ten righteous souls living there. But ten righteous souls could not be found.
 4. God is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, II Peter 3:9. God sends preachers to declare the blessed gospel of Christ and forgiveness of sins to a lost and dying world, Rom. 10:13-17. He has withheld his righteous wrath from those who reject His free gift so they will have no answer when the day of judgment comes.
2. God's wrath is sure. At this present time, the wrath of God against wickedness is not evident. The wicked seem to receive more blessings than God's children, Ps. 73, Job 21:7-26. But one day, God will judge all sin. Then everybody will know that God is a God of wrath.
 1. I Kings 21:17-26, Elijah told Ahab that the dogs would lick up his blood and eat the body of Jezebel. This judgment didn't come the very next day. It was two years before the death of Ahab (I Kings 22:34-40) and fifteen years before the death of Jezebel (II Kings 9:30-37).
 2. God did wait a hundred years while Noah build the ark and preached about the coming judgment of God. Genesis 7:11,12 reveals that the world wide flood did come, just like God said it would.
 3. God did wait until Lot and his wife and two daughters were out of Sodom. Genesis 19:24,25 says that God rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and

Gomorrah.

3. God's wrath is eternal, Rev. 20;10,14,15. When the lost are cast into the Lake of Fire, they suffer the wrath of God forever.

The Wrath Of God Rejected

Many people can't understand how God can be both a God of love and a God of wrath. These people accept Deut. 32:4, "He is the Rock...", but reject Deut 32:41, "...I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me."

1. Some compare the anger of a "mad" man to the wrath of God. They think God "loses His temper" and loses control of His actions. But the wrath of God is not like that. God is able to be angry, but sin not, Eph. 4:26. Any time God pours out His wrath upon sin, He is always justified in what He does. He never punishes the innocent, or puts more punishment upon the guilty than they deserve.
2. Anger is considered to be a "blemish" on the character of God. But if God didn't get angry at sin, He would either approve of sin or be indifferent to it. How would it be possible for God to delight in that which is pure and good, and be indifferent to that which is impure and evil?

Conclusion

Wm. Gurnall wrote in 1660, "When I consider how the goodness of God is abused by the greatest part of mankind, I cannot but be of his mind that said, The greatest miracle in the world is God's patience and bounty to an ungrateful world. If a prince hath an enemy got into one of his towns, he doth not send them in provision, but lays chose siege to the place, and doth what he can to starve them. But the great God, that could wink all His enemies into destruction, bears with them, and is at daily cost to maintain them. Well may He command us to bless them that curse us, who Himself does good to the evil and unthankful. But think not, sinners, that you shall escape thus; God's mill goes slow, but grinds small; the more admirable His patience and bounty now is, the more dreadful and insupportable will that fury be which ariseth out of His abused goodness. Nothing smoother than the sea, yet when stirred into a tempest, nothing rageth more. Nothing so sweet as the patience and goodness of God, and nothing so terrible as His wrath when it takes fire."

THE WILL OF GOD

Definition Of The Will Of God

There are two parts to the will of God. First, there is the will of God that we call "Will of Purpose". This will include those things God will do. Second, there is the "Will of Command". This includes those things God commands man to do. Man has the free choice of obeying, and receiving rewards; or disobeying, and receiving judgment.

The Will Of Purpose

Psalms 115:3, "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Psalms 136:6, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

Isaiah 46:11, "...yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

Daniel 4:35, Nebuchadnezzar said God does "according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

Matt. 6:10, "Thy kingdom come. They will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The above verses show that God is able to do whatsoever He pleases to do. He doesn't have to ask anyone for permission or help.

God didn't ask permission or help when He created the angels or the living creatures or the seraphims or the heavens or the earth or man. He simply did as it pleased Him. God didn't ask approval when He destroyed the world with water in the days of Noah, or when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham. God didn't ask approval to send Jesus to die for our sinfulness. God hasn't asked us if He can come again. He simply tells us He is coming when He gets ready. God didn't ask us if we wanted to be born. He simply arranged the circumstances of our birth, determining beforehand who our parents would be, the place of our birth, our physical body, our mind, and everything else about us.

The question often comes up right about here: "If everything happens because God has willed it, did God will sin?" We answer that God has not willed sin, He has allowed sin. He knew all about sin and its results when He created this world. He had a plan to forgive sin and reveal His power and glory to those who would otherwise never know. It is God that supplies evil men with life and all the strength they give to sin through the whole course of their life. But it is not God that supplies them with the will to sin. This will comes from Satan and the sinners own sinful nature. In Ex. 4:21, God told Moses that He would harden Pharaoh's heart in order to show His great signs and wonders to Israel and all the world. In Ex. 8:15, it was Pharaoh that hardened his own heart. God simply backed away, allowing Pharaoh to

follow his own sinful nature. In Matt. 13:14,15, it is the unbelievers who harden their own heart.

Will Of Command

The will of command is sometimes called the "revealed will", "perspective will", "directive will", "will of desire", "will of pleasure", or "will of approbation". All these different names mean the same thing; we are responsible for the things God has revealed to us. Deut. 29:29, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

God's will of command is revealed to us in two ways. First, the broad principles and basic truths are revealed through the Bible. Second, the Holy Spirit makes a particular application of those Bible truths to the individual.

Balancing The Will Of Purpose And The Will Of Command

There is nothing so important as to maintain a proper balance between the will of purpose and the will of command. We have nothing whatsoever to do with the will of purpose. That's God's business. God has given us plenty of business to take care of when He gives us His will of command. If we spend our time trying to find out God's will of command, we find that God has completely fulfilled His will of purpose. If we spend our time trying to figure out God's will of purpose, we won't fulfill God's will of command, and our lives will be wasted.

Examples of a proper balance.

1. In salvation. We must believe that salvation is in the hands of Almighty God. He saves whomsoever He will, not whom we will. At the same time, Acts 17:30, all men everywhere are commanded to repent. Matt. 29:19,20, God has given the Great Commission to His church to carry the gospel message to all the world, baptizing the believers and teaching them all things in the Word of God.
2. In Service. We must believe that God is able to do without us. At the same time, we ought to be busy sowing the gospel seed, watering the seed planted by others, and reaping the harvest raised by somebody else.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Definition Of Sovereignty

The word "sovereignty", like the word "trinity", isn't found in the Bible, but the principle certainly is. Sovereignty means, "above or superior to all others; chief, greatest; supreme. One who exercises power, a supreme ruler, the person having the highest authority.

Sovereignty In Creation

1. This present world. Job 12:9, everybody knows that the Lord created the heavens and the earth for His own good pleasure. Prov. 16:4, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself..." Neh. 9:6, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein..." Heb. 11:3, we understand by faith that God created the worlds.
2. The future world. Rev. 21:1, there is coming a day when God will destroy the present creation, and will create a new heaven and a new earth, which will be sinless.

Sovereignty In Administration

Everything on this earth is controlled by God. How does God control?

1. Direct control. These are things that God does all by himself. God controls the "time clock" of this world, bring to pass everything in its proper order. He created the heavens and the earth by speaking them into existence. The flood of Noah's day came right on schedule, just like Abraham was born at the right time. Jesus was born of a virgin right on schedule, and the church was organized on schedule. The tribulation and the second coming will happen according to the set time. The new heaven and the new earth will be right on schedule.
2. Indirect control. These are things that God allows man to have a part in. God does these things as a result of faithfulness, or to teach faithfulness.

In Daniel 6:22, God allowed wicked men to cast Daniel into the den of lions, but God closed the mouth of the lions so they wouldn't eat him. God allowed this event to show the faithfulness of Daniel and the power of God during trying circumstances. When King Darius cast Daniel's accusers into the den of lions, the judgment of God upon wickedness is revealed.

In Luke 22:31-34, Jesus told Peter of Satan's desire to sift him as wheat. Peter was sure he was strong enough to resist Satan's attack. But before the cock crowed, Peter had denied Jesus three times. God allowed this to teach Peter and us not to trust ourselves, but to trust God.

Other examples of God using wickedness to teach lessons of faithfulness would

be God using Nebuchadnezzar (606 B. C.) to destroy Israel, and God using Titus (A. D. 70) to invade and destroy Jerusalem.

WHAT Does God control! Everything

1. God controls the climate. We are in the habit of saying, "It" rains, but this is not so. Matt. 5:45 says that God sends rain on the just and the unjust. Acts 14:17 proclaims that God sends the rain, and the fruitful seasons. Daniel 2:21 says that God not only changes the seasons, he sets up kings, and gives wisdom and knowledge.
2. God controls all tribulation. Tribulation is not meant to harm us, but to cause us to draw near to the one who can take care of the impossible problem. In Psalms 31:15, David had trouble. He didn't try to solve the problem himself, but called on God, who could help him. In John 9:1-3, the disciples came upon a man who was born blind. They asked Jesus who had sinned that the man was born blind. Jesus replied that nobody had sinned, the man was born blind that the works of God might be revealed in him. When Jesus healed this man, it revealed that Jesus was of God. Jesus doesn't heal today like He did when He walked on this earth, but when sickness comes, He is still able to guide us and give us comfort as we accept His will for our lives.
3. God controls our death. God turned every possession of Job over to Satan, Job 2:6, but Satan couldn't touch his life. So it is with us, Satan wants us dead, but God keeps us alive.

Sovereignty In Salvation

Eph. 1:5-11 declares that God saves according to His own good pleasure. Many people believe that God controls creation, but they refuse to believe that God also controls salvation. This is no infringement on "free will".

John 3:3, a person must be "born again" to see the kingdom of God. Jesus compares the spiritual birth to the natural birth. A person doesn't chose his parents, his nature, the color of his hair, the color of his skin, his place of birth, his time of birth or his way of birth. The same is true for the spiritual birth. The circumstances are left to God. The lost person must realize they have nothing whatsoever to do with their salvation, it is completely in the hands of God. As long as the sinner depends on himself for any part of salvation, he will not be saved. But when the sinner gives up, Jesus is there to save him.

THE PATIENCE OF GOD

Definition Of Patience

Psalms 86:15, "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." Stephen Charnock describes mercy, "Men that are great in the world are quick in passion, and are not so ready to forgive an injury, or bear with an offender, as one of a meaner rank. It is a want of power over that man's self that makes him do unbecoming things upon a provocation. A prince that can bridle his passions is a king over himself as well as over his subjects. God is slow to anger because He is great in power. He has no less power over Himself than over His creatures." The patience of God is toward Himself, the mercy of God is toward the sinner.

Example Of God's Patience

In Genesis 2:16,17, God gave Adam one command, "...do not eat of the forbidden tree". In Genesis 3, Adam disobeyed by eating the forbidden fruit. God could have killed both Adam and his wife immediately if He had not been able to bear this insult to His majesty. But God's patience (self-control) allowed Him to take their insult and give them a promise of a saviour that would cleanse them of unrighteousness. But that saviour didn't come right away. It was 4,000 years before Christ came. All during this time, God suffered sinful men to call Him a liar, and for His own people to turn from worshipping Him to worshipping false gods. Paul describes the final outcome of this 4,000 years of waiting in Rom. 3:25,26, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." God showed his righteousness to all when He was able to bear the insult of sin for 4,000 years while sinful men rebuked Him and made fun of Him and declared that a redeemer would not come.

In Noah's day, sin increased because the saved married the lost. This didn't happen all at once, but started in Genesis 4:17 when a woman chose to follow Cain instead of God, moving away from the place where God was worshipped. During the next 1400-1500 years many saved people followed her example until finally God could no longer bear their sinfulness. Then, God spoke to Noah, commanding him to build an ark for the saving of his household. Even then, God waited another 120 years before pouring His righteous wrath on these disobedient sinners.

God's patience is revealed by His dealings with Israel. Time after time, Israel rebelled against God's leadership, but He continually revealed his power by forgiving and blessing them. Abraham failed to believe the promises of God, going in unto Hagar; Israel failed to believe the promises of God at the Red Sea; Israel worshipped the golden calf while Moses was on Mt. Sinai, getting the law; Israel refused to

conquer the promised land like God said. A lesser God would have given up, but not the all patient God. He dealt with Israel's rebellion and unbelief, carefully loving and watching over them. One day soon, God will dwell in the midst of Israel, causing all nations to recognize her as His people.

Conclusion

God's patience may let him "put off" judging sin, but He will never let sin go without judgment. He may not judge it immediately, or when we think He ought to, but the day of judgment is coming. In Numbers 16:1, God waited two days before destroying Korah and the 250 princes of Israel that rebelled against the leadership of Moses. But God's patience allowed Him to destroy an entire generation of Israel over a 40 year period while they wandered in the wilderness. In Acts 5:1-11, God killed Ananias and Sapphira immediately upon their lying to God. But don't forget that Alexander (II Tim. 4:14) fought Paul and the gospel and God apparently didn't punish him at all. Bob Ingersol gave God five minutes to strike him dead. When the five minutes were up, Mr. Ingersol declared that God was unable to kill him. What he forgot is that God is not limited to man's time table. God might take the abuse of Mr. Ingersol, but we can believe that the day is coming when God will bring all this foolish talk into judgment. He takes the abuse poured on Him by natural man, but He will not always wait to punish them. There is coming a day of judgment on all sin. Eccl. 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Men think that the longsuffering of God is His weakness, but it is His strength. There was once a man who worked on Sunday, expecting God to punish him then and there for his disobedience. When God didn't punish him, he thought he had gotten away with his sin. But God doesn't always punish sin immediately. When He punishes sin is up to Him. It is up to us to know that He will punish all sin.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

Exodus 15:11

Definition Of Holiness

Holiness means to be separate or set apart, it does not mean "being good". If holiness means "being good" or "being better than somebody else", then we have a system something like the Mormons. They generally believe there is a standard of righteousness which men and God must meet. They believe the only real difference between man and Jesus is that He is further along in His development than we are. They are, of course, wrong. We must remember that God *is* the standard of holiness. Therefore, to be holy is to be set aside or separate.

God's Holiness Revealed

In creation. After God created the heavens and the earth He looked at His creation and said that it was very good, Gen. 1:31. I believe God created this universe and system of things so separate from sin that it would last for all eternity. But, of course, sin came in and now all things will come to an end.

Isaiah 6:3, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." God has created the Seraphims to give Him continual glory. These Seraphims are so holy they actually burn in their own holiness. They do not praise themselves, but continually praise God. In Numbers 21:8, the words "fiery serpents" is exactly the same word as Seraphims. In verse 6, the word "fiery" is the same word as Seraphims and the word "serpent" is the word for snake.

Rev. 4:8, "...and they rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." God has created the four living creatures which are continually before His throne for the sole purpose of giving Him praise. These four living creatures represent the holiness of Jesus. One of the creatures is like a lion, the king of the jungle. Jesus, in the book of Matthew, is shown to be the King of this world. Another creature is like a calf or servant. Jesus is shown in the book of Mark to be a servant. The third creature is like a man, Jesus is shown in His manly form in the book of Luke. The fourth creature is like a flying eagle or high and unreachable. The book of John reveals that man is unable to reach Jesus without the grace of God.

In His people. In the past kingdom of Israel, the High Priest wore a golden plate (a golden crown, which was upon the mitre) which read, "Holiness To The Lord". This golden plate was in full view of all who looked at him, as it was placed on the front of the mitre (a form of cap). The High Priest wore this always that Israel might be accepted before the Lord. Leviticus 8.

In the future kingdom, the bells of the horse shall have the words "Holiness To The Lord". "Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts..." Zechariah 14:20,21.

What Does It Mean To Be Saved?

Eph. 1:3-10, The Bible states that God loved sinners before He created the world and arranged a plan to redeem them from their sinfulness and to give them His holiness.

God sent his only begotten son into the world through the virgin birth. Therefore, Christ was made *like* sinful man, but *without* the nature of man. Christ was able to bear all the temptations and suffering of mankind without sinning.

Psalms 22:1,2, Christ freely took upon Himself all our sinfulness and paid our hell on the cross of Calvary, not because He was trying to meet some standard of holiness, but because He was by this means giving us His holiness.

This is what salvation is all about. Jesus has "imputed" our unrighteousness upon Himself and "imputed" His holiness to us. We have no need to go about trying to establish our own holiness. We already *have* the holiness of God, because ***He is the standard of holiness.***

Lost people are the exact opposite of God. God is completely holy and lost people are completely unholy. No body really understand how perfect and complete and holy God is. Therefore they (lost and saved alike) try to please God by works of the flesh.

What The Holiness Of God Means To Me

In Christ, I can have an unattainable holiness. When we consider the human race, we find we have been created in the image and likeness of God. Yet because of false pride, Adam disobeyed God's only command and cast the entire human race into sin and destruction. Since God is completely holy, He cannot stand to look upon our sinfulness. He would be completely righteous to turn His back on all of us and forget us as we suffer eternally in a burning hell. But because God has mercy on the guilty, He has turned toward us and offered a plan whereby we might be saved.

II Cor. 6:17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

I Peter 1:14,15 also declares that we are to be holy because God is holy.

Don't wait until you can be perfect, or until you believe you are able to remain true to God, to start being true to Him or to be like Him. God always accepts sinners just like they are, then daily makes them to be like He wants them to be.

THE SILENCE OF GOD

Psalms 50:3-6, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself."

God is silent just before revealing Himself

1. Genesis 6. Just before God destroyed the world with water, He was a silent God. God spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and he even spoke to Cain after he killed Abel. There is no record of God speaking to man for some 1500 years, the time between Cain and Noah. God stopped speaking to mankind because they continually disobeyed Him. They wouldn't listen to Him or his preachers, so He destroyed them in a world wide flood. When God did speak to mankind again, He spoke to Noah concerning the coming judgment.
2. Right after the world wide flood, God again began speaking to mankind. He spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God spoke to Moses and Aaron and the nation of Israel. God continued speaking to Israel through His prophets, but there came a time when Israel didn't want to hear what God said therefore God stopped speaking to them through His prophets. Now read Micah 3:5-8. Just before Jesus came into the world, God again became a silent God. This period of time is called the "400 silent years", and marks the space between the Old and New Testaments. When the silence of heaven was broken, Jesus Christ was born.
3. God is now a silent God. He became a silent God when He ascended back into heaven after His resurrection. From that point, until now, His saints have looked, longed for, and prayed for His return. I believe it won't be long before He comes in the clouds, revealing Himself as redeemer and judge.

The Result of God's Silence

1. God's silence in the days of Noah led men to believe they would not be judged for their sinfulness. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, declared God's coming judgment for 120 years without a single convert. Just when men thought they had gotten away with their wickedness, they were destroyed in a world wide flood.
2. When Jesus Christ came after 400 silent years, He fulfilled every prophecy concerning His coming. Yet men failed to believe because Christ didn't come like they thought He would. In John 2:23-25, Jesus did miracles and many believed on Him, but He didn't commit Himself to them, for He knew what was in them. Those people that followed Jesus because of His miracles forsook Him when He began to teach the Word, John 6:66. The people didn't believe even though Jesus

did many miracles before them, John 12:37.

3. Today, God is silent, and men say there is no God. People today do just exactly like they have always done. If God speaks, they fail to believe. If God is silent, they forget God and go on their merry way to hell.

The silence of God Ended

I Thess. 4:16, "The Lord Himself shall descend from haven with a shout..." This shout will break God's 2,000 year silence. The shout will be: "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Ps 50:5. These scriptures are talking about the "rapture", or the end of the "times of the Gentiles".

Next comes the Great Tribulation, Daniel's 70th week. The Lord will certainly not be silent during this time, but men won't hear Him. In Rev. 6:16, men cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on them to hid them from the face of Christ and from His wrath. When he vials are poured out on the earth at the close of the tribulation period, men will not turn to God, but will blaspheme His holy name.

After the seven year tribulation, Jesus will stand upon the Mount of Olives, but He will not be received as the savior of the world. Men will stand upon their feet as the armies of this world attempt to fight God, Zech 14:12. They will lose, of course. After Satan is bound in the bottomless pit, Christ will rule this world for 1,000 years with a rod of iron. There will be perfect peace because Christ will send plagues upon all nations that rebel against Him.

At the end of the millennium, Satan will be loosed from the bottomless pit and will go forth to deceive the nations of the earth, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. Satan and all his armies will be destroyed by the fire from God. Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire. The lost will be resurrected to stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment. They will be judged from the Bible they denied and then cast into the Lake of Fire to suffer eternally, Rev. 20:7-15.

Conclusion

1. People won't believe until the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to the truth. Matt. 16:17, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven."
2. Today, as in times past, God is a silent God. He does not speak audibly as in days gone by, but speaks to us through the Bible. The Bible says there will be scoffers in the last days, who walk after their own lust and say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Let us not be ignorant, as these worldly believers are. Let us remember that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years. He is coming again. And He is coming at a time when the world is not expecting or looking for Him. He will come when the world is seeking peace, but finding none. When God is a silent God, look up: for our redemption draweth nigh.

CONCLUSION

It is our prayer that this short study on the attributes of God has helped you to understand a little more clearly who God is and what He expects of us.

Why Is It Necessary To Make A Study Like This?

1. A "Christian" is a saved person who is "Christ-like". (I am well aware of the fact that today the term "Christian" has come to mean a person who is saved, even if that person is not living a "Christian life". But this new definition doesn't change what the Bible says at all.) Many people enter into "Christian" living without ever studying who they are trying to be like. Thus they fail miserably in their efforts at being a "Christian".
2. An ignorance of who God is and what He expects will cause us to fail. Matt. 25:14-30 gives the Parable of the Talents. In this parable, Jesus gives one servant five talents, a second servant two talents and a third servant one talent. (This talent means balance, or weight, hence a coin or sum of money. It does not mean a natural ability as the word "talent" has come to mean.) The servants with five and two talents doubled their talents and received the praise of the master. The servant that received one talent hid it in the earth and gave as an excuse, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: low, there thou hast that is thine." Now, consider how ignorance of who God is and what He expected caused this servant to lose rewards.

Is God really a hard God? Surely we know He's not for he saw that Adam would cast the entire human race into sin and prepared a way of salvation before the foundations of the world. If He were a hard God, He would have given us what we deserved and cast us all into a burning hell, forever turning His back on us. Instead, He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might have everlasting life. If God were a hard God, he would not put up with out doubts and flirting with sin. But He is faithful to forgive us and then supply us with necessities and luxuries while we live.

Does God really reap where He has not sown and gathered where He has not strawed? No! Would you consider a farmer honest if he went to his neighbors field and reaped his crop instead of reaping in his sown field? If this thing were going on, I'm sure the authorities would do something about it. We must remember that all of creation belongs to God. There is no field He does not own. This unfaithful servant, through his human reasoning, thought God required some things He shouldn't, thus he failed.

This unfaithful servant failed because he didn't really understand who God is and what He expected. Will this happen to me and you? Will we bury the wealth God

has given us in the earth and do nothing to increase the Kingdom of God?

This Study Is Incomplete

One other thing I would like to add: These twenty articles on the Attributes of God are not complete. They are only a starting place. Each of these articles could be expanded indefinitely, for there is no end of describing God. I only wrote on twenty of God's attributes. There are many more characteristics of God that must be studied in order to get a comprehensive look at God. Other attributes of god that will give a good study are: (1) the "age" of God, (2) the sight of God, (3) the hearing of God, (4) the hair of God, (5) the feet of God, (6) the finger of God, (7) the voice of God, and (8) the clothing of God. And the list goes on and on. It is a never ending study that grows and grows until we fall at His feet saying, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Isaiah 6:5.

The Blessing Of The Study

Your perception of life will slowly begin to change. You see, when you begin to read your bible and study who God is and what He expects, your thoughts will change. You will begin to think less and less about the trials and troubles of this life and more and more about God and what He can do. Your periods of depression and discouragement will be shortened as you rise above the petty cares of this world. You will find your heart safely resting in green pastures while God leads you beside the still waters. Then it won't be long before you will begin to be troubled about others who are living without hope in a troubled world. Satan will fight your efforts to reach them with the blessed hope of Christ until you finally say with the apostle Paul, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II Tim. 4:6-8.