

Who Is God?

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD (CONTINUED)*

* *Attribute = a characteristic of someone or something*

In our previous session we began discussion of God's attributes such as His omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability (never changes), etc. We continue:

1. God's holiness

Isaiah 6:1-5

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. [2] Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. [3] And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. [4] And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

[5] Then said I, 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.

This classic Biblical passage immediately relieves us of such juvenile concepts such as "the man upstairs" or "my buddy, God." Isaiah was stunned at the revelation of God "as He truly is" and cried out in horror of himself, "Woe is me! for I am undone....!"

The lure of the world's mores has bleached out our understanding of God's holiness. We are accustomed to earth's moral depravity and shrug it off. We pretty much consider unrighteousness (which God hates) as the natural way of living. This low standard of living (by God's standards) causes us to be blinded by what God considers holiness.

Tozer: *Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He IS that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, all His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy. God is holy and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. Whatever is holy is healthy; evil is a moral sickness that must end ultimately in death. "Holy" is a word derived from the Anglo-Saxon HALIG - meaning WELL or WHOLE.*

The Knowledge of the Holy / A. W. Tozer / Christian Publications / pgs 112-113

1 “How then shall we live?” is often our cry. We cannot attain God’s holiness so what can
2 we do to please Him? In humble faith we fall at His feet, thanking Him for His mercy,
3 and pleading to be covered by the precious blood of Christ. Jesus’ righteousness is
4 thereby imputed to us and so God sees us perfect in His Son. And on our spiritual
5 journey, God disciplines (sometimes chastens) us so we live rightly before Him.

6
7 Why must there be a “new birth?” John 3:1-3 **There was a man of the Pharisees,**
8 **named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: [2] The same came to Jesus by night, and**
9 **said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man**
10 **can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. [3] Jesus answered**
11 **and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he**
12 **cannot see the kingdom of God. But....why?**

13
14 When Adam was created, he had the spirit of God within him. Genesis 2:7 **And the**
15 **Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the**
16 **breath of life; and man became a living soul.** “The breath of life” was the very life of
17 God, the Spirit of the Divine. But, God warned, Genesis 2:16-17 **And the Lord God**
18 **commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17]**
19 **But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the**
20 **day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.** At the urging of Eve, Adam ate the
21 forbidden fruit. Did he indeed die? Not physically - SPIRITUALLY! The Spirit of the
22 Creator God died within him. Adam became the great ancestor of the human race - a
23 race, by inheritance then, devoid of God’s Spirit. That sacred Spirit would have to be
24 BORN WITHIN HIM at conversion through Christ.

25 26 **WHAT MODERN “THEOLOGIANS” ARE MISSING IN THEIR TEACHING**

27
28 1) God is not my buddy or pal; He is God; and there is a canyon between Him and us.
29 It can be bridged only by the CROSS and Him Who died on it! All our “good works” in
30 life is pathetic in the effort to cross that canyon.

31
32 2) No human being can approach God on the basis of “how good we are” or our good
33 works; we can reach Him only because of Jesus! We do not possess the sinless to have
34 an approach to Him. But Jesus gives us that access: Romans 5:2 **By whom also we**
35 **have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the**
36 **glory of God.** Hebrews 10:19-20 **Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter**
37 **into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, [20] By a new and living way, which he hath**
38 **consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;**

39
40 3) We do not have the right to approach God flippantly. Hebrews 12:28-29
41 **Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace,**

1 **whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: [29] For our**
2 **God is a consuming fire.** When we comprehend the awesome holiness of God that
3 awareness revolutionizes our approach to Him.
4

5 **2. God Is Sovereign**

6
7 God can do anything He chooses, to any person, anytime, anywhere - so long as what He
8 chooses is consistent with His divine nature. Yes, He is Almighty, but His might is held
9 within the framework of Who He is. It is by this attribute of God that He rules all that
10 He has designed and brought forth. Furthermore, He is free to do whatever He wills
11 without any interference. Then....how can you and I exercise “free will?” Here is a
12 simple illustration:
13

14 **The Ant In The Bowl**

15
16 (Taken from J. I. Packer - Canadian Bible Scholar, now in his 90's) *If a man were to put*
17 *an ant in a bowl, the “sovereignty” of the man over the ant is not in doubt. The ant may*
18 *try to crawl out, and the man may not want this to happen. But the man is not forced to*
19 *crush the ant, drown it, or pick it up. The man, for reasons of his own, may choose to let*
20 *the ant crawl away, but the man is still in control. There is a difference between*
21 *ALLOWING the ant to leave the bowl and helplessly watching as it escapes. The scoffer*
22 *at God’s sovereignty implies that if the man is not actively holding the ant inside the*
23 *bowl, then he must be unable to keep it in there at all. There is at least a vague parallel*
24 *in this illustration to God’s sovereignty over mankind. God has the ability to do*
25 *anything, to take any action, to stop us in our proverbial track for any reason of His own.*
26 *He is unrestricted in His supremacy. But His permissive will comes into play here.*
27

28 Never think for a moment that God can not stop you “cold.” But His sovereignty allow
29 Him His free will. So - stay in the bowl or leave it; your choice! But whether in it or
30 crawling out of it, you are still in God’s ultimate control.
31

32 **WWII**

33
34 For years I have studied World War II. It is my opinion (I stress the word - opinion) that
35 something happened in the Heavens sometime around 1940. Hitler had made one
36 uncanny decision after another, usually against his staff’s counsel, and was militarily right
37 - although morally hellish. That is, until 1941. From ‘40 on, it seems that every
38 decision he made was wrong: the attack on Russia, the mutual defense pact with Japan
39 (which brought the U.S. into the conflict), his seeming-friendship with Mussolini, his
40 deadly death camps, especially against the Jews - and the list goes on and on. All of
41 those decisions backfired on him and all the Axis powers - Germany, Japan and Italy. It



Mussolini (left) and Hitler (right) enjoying their short-term victories. In several years, both would be dead, Mussolini by assassination and Hitler by pistol suicide. As one writer penned, "God just got tired of them!"

is my opinion that the prayers of millions and millions of peace-loving, democracy-longing people provoked a global change that brought about the end of the war. How this was affected by the sovereignty of God, only eternity will reveal. But....one has to wonder....doesn't one????

Every human being has the ability to choose - to choose either God through His Son Jesus, or to rebel against divine authority. Yes, our choice! But the consequences of our choice will be felt forever in eternity.

3. God is good!

Jesus really narrowed the field when He challenged the young ruler in Mark 10:18: **There is none good but one, that is, God.**

We sometimes sing in our services, "God is good – all the time!" What are those qualities that comprise His goodness? His love ..His benevolence (the manners in which He shows His love..His mercy..and His grace. Let's take a look briefly at each of these attributes of our loving Heavenly Father:

1 The Love of God

2
3 For decades, congregations around the world have joyfully sung:

4 *Could we with ink the ocean fill*
5 *And were the skies of parchment made;*
6 *Were every stalk on earth a quill*
7 *And every man a scribe by trade –*
8 *To write the love of God above*
9 *Would drain the ocean dry;*
10 *Nor could the scroll contain the whole*
11 *Though stretched from sky to sky!*

12
13 Scoffers deny divine love, emphatically teaching that God - if there truly is one - is
14 impassive and cold, uncaring about humanity. Not so! As witness Billy Graham:

15
16 *The Bible is a revelation of the fact that God is love. Many people misunderstand the
attribute of God's nature which is love. 'God is love' does not mean that everything is
sweet, beautiful, and happy, and that God's love could not possibly allow punishment for
sin.*

*When we preach justice, it is justice tempered with love. When we preach
righteousness,
it is righteousness found on love. When we preach atonement, it is atonement planned
by love, given by love, finished by love, necessitated because of love. When we preach
the resurrection of Christ, we are preaching the miracle of love. When we preach the
return of Christ, we are preaching the fulfillment of love.*

*No matter what sin you have committed, or how terrible, dirty, or shameful it may be,
God loves you. This love of God is immeasurable, unmistakable and unending!*
– Billy Graham

17
18 What do scriptures teach about God's love?

19
20 John 3:16

21 **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever**
22 **believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

23
24 Romans 5:8

25 **But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners,**
26 **Christ died for us.**

1 Galatians 2:20

2 **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:**
3 **and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who**
4 **loved me, and gave himself for me.**

5
6 1 John 4:9-11

7 **In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only**
8 **begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. [10] Herein is love, not**
9 **that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for**
10 **our sins. [11] Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.**

11
12 We could fill page after page with scriptures detailing the love of God to us! But God
13 also loves righteousness; Psalm 11:7 **For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness;**
14 **his countenance doth behold the upright.**

15 16 4. God is benevolent.

17
18 His love is manifested by the affection He truly has toward all His creation, but especially
19 to the human race. In Job we read that He shows His favor to that which He has made:
20 The Psalmist adds: Psalm 145:9 **The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are**
21 **over all his works. [15] The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their**
22 **meat in due season. [16] Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every**
23 **living thing.** But even the sinful enjoy His bounty, even though it may be inadvertent at
24 times: Matthew 5:45 **That ye may be the children of your Father which is in**
25 **heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain**
26 **on the just and on the unjust.**

27
28 But He can hate something added to His perfect creation that is sinful: Proverbs 6:16-20
29 **These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: [17] A**
30 **proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, [18] An heart that**
31 **deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, [19] A false**
32 **witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.** Leviticus
33 and Deuteronomy have many passages that detail those things God hates. He hates sin,
34 yet loves the sinner. Still He will judge by the “books” on Judgment Day: Rev. 20:11-12
35 **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth**
36 **and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. [12] And I saw**
37 **the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and**
38 **another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of**
39 **those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**

40 41 5. The Mercy of God

1 What is mercy? In learning more about God we conclude that mercy is certainly one of
2 His attributes which spawn infinite compassion from Him demonstrated in our favor. I
3 want you to have this exquisite quote from A. W. Tozer in his effort to describe God's
4 mercy:

5
6 *When through the blood of the everlasting covenant we children of the shadows reach
at last our home in the light, we shall have a thousand strings to our harps, but the
sweetest may well be the one tuned to sound forth most perfectly the mercy of God.*

*For what right will we have to be there? Did we not by our sins take part in that
unholy rebellion which rashly sought to dethrone the glorious King of creation? And
did we not in times past walk according the course of this world, according to the evil
prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience?
And did we not all once live in the lusts of our flesh? And were we not by nature the
children of wrath, even as others? But we who were one time enemies and alienated
in our minds through wicked works shall then see God face to face and His name shall
be in our foreheads. We who earned banishment shall enjoy communion; we who
deserve the pains of hell shall know the bliss of heaven. And all through the tender
mercy of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us.*

7 THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY / TOZER / CHRISTIAN PUBL / PAGE 96

8
9 "When all Thy mercies, O my God, my rising soul surveys,
10 Transported with the view, I'm lost in wonder, love and praise."

11 Joseph Addison

12
13 So - when did God decide to show mercy to us? Was there a beginning to it? No,
14 because God has always been (without beginning or end) so His mercy has always been.

15
16 Consider the multitudes who wander through life truly believing that their sin is beyond
17 the mercy of God, that He holds an eternal grudge and will never forgive. In my 17 years
18 of preaching on *Revivaltime*, I received over 1.2 million letters from around the world.
19 The #1 question asked? *Have I committed the unpardonable sin?* No, a thousand times
20 no. If you are still living, breathing, God's eternal mercy is available to you upon your
21 honest request. The Bible closes with this final word, an invitation from the Father
22 Himself: Rev. 22:17 **And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that
23 heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him
24 take the water of life freely.** The great John Wesley cried out, "*My God is reconciled;
25 His pardoning voice I hear. He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear!*"

26
27 Such is the overwhelming mercy of God!

HOW MUCH DOES GOD TRULY KNOW?

As we began this study on “Who Is God,” we touched on the omniscience of God - His “all-knowingness.” Where did He learn all that stuff? How do new thoughts suddenly dawn in His divine brain? We human beings know some things by life’s lessons such as “don’t touch a hot stove.” In school we learn grammar, geography, history, mathematics, and so forth. But God knows all things by one simultaneous intuition.

And He knows everything - and has known everything - forever. Isaiah 46:9 **Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me...** Daniel chapter 2 alone should be enough to convince anyone of the foreknowledge of God. In that chapter, God revealed to Daniel, the prophet, all the coming Gentile world kingdoms - in order! It’s a stunning revelation in which Daniel prophesied: Babylon followed by Persia followed by Greece, followed by Rome, followed by the complexity of nations which would follow. None of these things “occurred” to God. He has always known them. He knows the past, the present and the future. Acts 15:18 **Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.**

Now here’s the stunner: Before creation, there was no such thing as time. And when God destroys the world and all else He designed and created, time will once again cease and eternity (where there just simply is no such thing as passage of time) will “be.” God was not created. He always was and always will be. I love the line in the old hymn, “Oh Thou Who changest not, abide in me!” What a prayer! What a concept.

C.S. Lewis helps us here with his illustration: Take a sheet of paper that extends “forever” if that were possible. Then on that paper draw a short line - maybe an inch or so. We see time begin and end on that infinite expanse of paper. That gives us some concept time beginning and ending in God.

As His existence is infinite, so is His knowledge. That is encouraging to me as I pray. I never have to “bring God up to speed,” as we say. He already knows.

Jesus knows all about our trouble; He will give til the day is done.

There’s not a friend like our precious Jesus; no, not one! No, not one!

Our study next Wednesday takes us to one of the most gripping issues confronting the student of the Bible: THE TRINITY, God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So....do we have three Gods, or just One?