

# The Attributes of God

Theology I  
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# What Are Attributes?

- Qualities of the entire Godhead - not just one Person of the Trinity
- Permanent - will not change over time
- Intrinsic - cannot be gained nor lost
- Inseparable from God's being and existence

# Inscrutability

- There is a sense in which God will never be known by any created being
- God is infinite, and an infinite amount of time would be required by a finite being to even get close to understanding God
- God's attributes are infinite - even though we can share some of God's attributes, e.g. love, - our expression of that attribute is only a mere fraction of God's

# Balance of Attributes

- God's attributes exist in perfect balance with each other
  - God would not make a rock too big to lift since it would violate His attribute of wisdom
  - God cannot sin because He IS the definition of right and wrong
  - God cannot lie since it would violate his attribute of Truthfulness and Faithfulness
  - God cannot forgive sin without a satisfactory payment as it would violate His attributes of Justice and Righteousness

# Categorizations

- **Moral vs. Natural**
  - Moral - deals with the concept of right and wrong
  - Natural - non-moral superlatives, e.g. omnipotence
- **Relative vs. Absolute**
  - Relative - manifested in His relationship to creation
  - Absolute - qualities which exist apart from creation
- **Communicable vs. Incommunicable**
  - Communicable - shared with other beings, e.g. love
  - Incommunicable - no counterpart exists for created beings, e.g. omnipotence

# Spirituality

- God is Spirit - John 4:24
  - No physicality
  - No spatial limitations
  - Not destructible like ordinary matter
  - Timeless and ageless
  - Invisible
  - Cannot be reduced to an image

# Personality

- Self-conscious - Exodus 3:14
- Relational - Genesis 3
- Intelligent - Isaiah 55
- Has a will - 2 Peter 3:18
- Has emotions
- Manifested in God's many names
  - Elohim
  - Jehovah

# Personality: Names of God

- Elohim - refers to God's power and might in relation to His creation
  - Used 2,570 times in the Bible
  - Four compound names exist using Elohim
    - El-Shaddai - the God who Provides - Genesis 17:1
    - El-Elyon - God Almighty - Genesis 14:17-20
    - El-Roi - the God who Sees - Genesis 16:13
    - El-Olam - the Everlasting God - Isaiah 40:28-31



# Personality: Names of God

- Jehovah - refers to God in His special relationship with humanity
  - Most common name - occurs 6,823 times
  - Has as its root form the meaning “Self-Existent One” - the “I AM” of Exodus
  - Often referred to as the tetragrammaton - referring to the four Hebrew letters that make up the name - “Y H W H”
  - Can be pronounced Jehovah or Yahweh
  - Highly revered by orthodox Jews - they won't even pronounce it out loud

# Personality: Names of God

- Nine compound names exist using Jehovah
  - Jehovah-Jireh - the Lord Provides - Genesis 22:13-14
  - Jehovah-Nissi - the Lord my Banner - Exodus 17:15
  - Jehovah-Shalom - the Lord is Peace - Judges 6:24
  - Jehovah-Sabaoth - the Lord of Hosts - Isaiah 6:1-3
  - Jehovah-Maccaddeschem - the Lord thy Sanctifier - Exodus 31:13
  - Jehovah-Rohi - the Lord my Shepherd - Psalm 23
  - Jehovah-Tsidkenu - the Lord our Righteousness - Jeremiah 23:6
  - Jehovah-Shammah - the Lord who is Present - Ezekiel 48:35
  - Jehovah-Rapha - the Lord our Healer - Exodus 15:26

# Infinity

- Limitless and unlimitable - 1 Kings 8:22-27, Jeremiah 23:24
- Exists outside the boundaries of space and time
- Implies a sense in which God can never be fully known by a finite being

# Infinity: Omnipresence

- God is everywhere, at the same time, in equal measure - Jeremiah 23:23, Psalms 139
- Although God is equally everywhere, there is a sense in which His presence is not manifest equally everywhere - for example, in heaven we see the manifest Shekinah glory on the throne whereas on earth it is veiled

# Infinity: Omnitemporal

- God is equally present at every time - He knows the future equally as well as the past - Psalm 90, Isaiah 40-48, Revelation 1:8
- Implied in this concept is the notion of omniscience - since the past, present, and future are equally clear to God he knows all events equally well

# Infinity: Omniscience

- God knows everything, in infinite detail, with no effort - Psalm 147:5, Proverbs 15:3, Matthew 10:29, Hebrews 4:13
- God's knowledge is boundless
- God knows what could have happened but did not as well as what will happen

# Infinity: Wisdom

- God knows ALL the facts and makes all decisions with full knowledge of them and in light of what is ultimately best - Romans 11:33, 1 Corinthians 2:7, 1 Timothy 1:17
- God makes no mistakes in His dealings with mankind and His purposes in history

# Infinity: Omnipotence

- God can do anything that is in harmony with His other attributes - Genesis 18:10-14, Jeremiah 32:15-17, Matthew 19:26
- God's power is unlimited
- God's purposes are never frustrated as He has the power to bring about His will



# Infinity: Sovereignty

- God is sovereign over nature
- God is sovereign over history
- God is sovereign over salvation
- God is sovereign over creation
- God's will is never frustrated as His sovereignty is connected to His omnipotence

# Infinity: Sovereignty

- The problem of evil - Theodicy
  - God allowed evil to exist in the universe in order to reveal many of His attributes that would never be known if evil had not existed
  - God WILL deal with evil - someday all wrongs will be righted
  - God's timetable is not ours
  - Human history, when compared to eternity, is a mere blip on the screen

# Infinity: Aseity

- Refers to God's self-existence - He depends on no other being for His existence
  - Expressed best in God's name as given to Moses in Exodus 3:13-14 - I AM
- God is independent in His:
  - Thoughts - Romans 11:33-34
  - Will - Romans 9:9, Ephesians 1:5
  - Power - Psalms 115:3
  - Counsel - Psalms 33:10-11

# Infinity: Eternality

- God is absolutely free from the boundaries of time - He was, is, and is to be - Deuteronomy 33:27, Psalms 102:11-12, John 8:56-57
- His eternality is bi-directional - He existed from eternity past - and will exist to eternity future
- In contrast, all men had a beginning - God always was - the eternal I AM

# Infinity: Self-Sufficiency

- God does not need anything or anyone to complete Himself - He is completely free from any outside requirements for happiness or fulfillment - Psalm 50:10-12
- God did not need to create the creation - but He did for His own purposes and pleasures - Revelation 4:11, Ephesians 1

# Immutability

- God does not change - Psalm 102:26-27, Psalm 33:11, Malachi 3:6
  - God is not becoming - He is not learning new things as history progresses nor is He forgetting past events
  - God's will and purposes do not change
  - God's decrees will never change
  - God cannot lie

# Holiness

- Refers to God's utter "otherness"
- Has as a root concept God's total disconnection from creation - God and creation are completely separate
- Most often mentioned attribute of God in the Scriptures
- Is pictured by the Seraphim protecting creation from God in heaven - Isaiah 6

# Holiness

- When used in a moral context - refers to God's total moral perfection and complete separation from sin - James 1:13, Job 34:12
  - God does not do something because it is right - rather it is right because God does it
  - God is the universal "ruler" for determining right and wrong



# Justice

- Defined as God acting in perfect conformity with His own law and character
- Demands that sin be paid for by the sinner or an acceptable substitute
- God is the definition of Just
  - God does not do something because it is just - rather something is just because God does it
- God's justice is totally impartial and fair
- The ultimate realization of God's justice will be seen in the Eternal State - Heaven or Hell

# Truth

- God is Truth - Titus 1:2, John 17:17, 19
- God cannot lie - Hebrews 6:18
- God will not deceive or lead anyone astray
- The truthfulness of God does not mean that God says everything - He may withhold information, but He will never lie
- God demands truthfulness for all who name His Name

# Faithfulness

- God's faithfulness is closely connected with his Truthfulness
- God will never let any of his children down - He never has in 6,000 years of human history - He never will - Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 36:5, Psalm 89:1-2, Lamentations 3:22-23
- Intersects with the believer's eternal security - the believer can never become "unsaved" because God's faithfulness will prevent it - God's very character is at stake

# Love

- Refers to God's self-sacrificial love
  - God's love is not dependent on the response of the one being loved
  - God's love is based on a decision - not a "giddy feeling" in His stomach
  - Is not an emotion - but rather a choice
- Two concepts
  - Unselfish concern for another's welfare
  - Seeks the highest good for the one loved

# Love

- Most thought of, and most misunderstood of all God's attributes
- God's love was best expressed in His gift - the life of his Son for us - John 3:16, 1 John 4:8ff, Romans 5:8

# Love: Goodness

- Refers to Gods benevolence towards mankind - Psalm 107:8, 23:6, Romans 2:4
- Is given to both sinner and saint alike
- Is closely connected with the concept of common grace

# Love: Mercy

- Refers to God's pity for the wretched state of the sinner - Psalm 103:8-17, Hebrews 8:8, 12, Jonah 4:2
- It is God's mercy that moves Him to seek a solution to man's sin problem
- God's mercy, however, does not last forever - there is a day when mercy ends and judgment begins

# Love: Grace

- Refers to God's unmerited favor towards man in providing a means of redemption and forgiveness - Psalm 116:5, Titus 2:11, Ephesians 2:8-9
- Grace is:
  - Unmerited - nothing exists intrinsically in man that would cause God to exhibit grace towards him - Titus 3:5
  - Unearned - nothing man can do can ever earn God's grace - Titus 3:5



# Love: Grace

- Grace is
  - Unpayable - nothing man can do can ever repay God for His grace
  - Unending - God's grace towards the believer is unending and eternal - it can never be undone
  - Irresistable - God's grace cannot be spurned by those to whom He has chosen to be gracious towards
  - Unfathomable - God alone knows why He shows grace to the sinner - Romans 9, Ephesians 1

# Love: Persistent

- Refers to God's persistent pursuit of the sinner in order to display His love and forgiveness - Romans 2:4, 1 Peter 3:20, 2 Peter 3:15
- Closely connected with God's patience in not immediately exacting the proper and right punishment for sin

# Wrath

- Refers to God's automatic and intrinsic response to sin - Romans 1:18ff.
- Comes from the Greek word "thumos" - which literally means "to blow one's stack"
- God's wrath will be fully realized in the condemnation of the wicked to the Lake of Fire

# Wrath

- Has two components
  - Temporal - evidenced by the “bad things” that happen to people
    - Disease
    - Disaster
    - Death
  - Eternal - evidenced by the Lake of Fire

# Immanence

- Refers to God's immediate and personal involvement in creation - specifically in His relationship with men
- God is not the “absentee Landlord” of Deism
- God is not the apathetic creator of Islam and other pagan religions

# Transcendence

- Embodies the concept that God is infinitely beyond His creation
- When creation is subtracted from the universe - God is still there - He is transcendent over creation and all existence



# Attributes of God