**Maranatha Bible Church 2020**

**Equipping Hour: Systematic Theology**

**Week 5: Attributes of God Part 3**

**God’s Incommunicable attributes Continued**:

1. **The Omnipresence / Immensity of God** 
   1. God’s omnipresence is best defined as “God is presence in the totality of his being at every place in space.”[[1]](#footnote-1) There is no place in the known or unknown universe that God does not exist.
   2. His Immensity is similar, “God transcends the physical dimensions of the created universe; God does not take up space.”[[2]](#footnote-2)
      1. We could say that omnipresence deals with the location of God while immensity deals with the measurements of God.
      2. “God is fully present in every place, but he is also sustaining space by his immensity.”[[3]](#footnote-3)
   3. Jeremiah 23:23-24 “Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off? "Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "***Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?***" declares the LORD.”
   4. 1 Kings 8:27 “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? ***Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You***, how much less this house which I have built!”
   5. Proverbs 5:21 “For the ways of a man ***are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths***.”
   6. These speak to God not being limited or bound to a location; in fact we read that God transcends even space. There is no place that someone can hide from the Lord. Our ways are always before the Lord, He is always watching where we are going and what we are doing.
   7. It is because God created space that He is not limited by it (**Gen. 1:1**).
      1. Deuteronomy 10:14 “Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.”
   8. God not only created the space, but He also sustains it very being.
      1. Colossians 1:17 “He is before all things, and ***in Him all things hold together***.”
      2. Hebrews 1:3 “And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and ***upholds all things by the word of His power***. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
   9. **Two truths to remember**:
      1. God is distinct from space but He is not separate from it.
      2. God is present everything in His creation but is distinct from it.
   10. God is present **at** every place **in** space.
       1. Psalm 139:7-11 “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night.”
       2. “God is present everywhere, because he is the source of everything and of every person on the earth, and because he is the controller of nature and history. ***And he has controlled history in such a way that he is inevitably present to all***.”[[4]](#footnote-4)
       3. We should not think of God as partly in one place and then partly in another. The totality of His being is in every place at all times. There is never a time when God is not fully somewhere in total space.
   11. God does not have size or spatial dimensions.
       1. John 4:24 “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
          1. God is spirit.
          2. He is not physically present in space.
          3. God is not present *as* each point or *in* each point in space (that would be pantheism) but is present *at* each point *in* space.[[5]](#footnote-5)
   12. Though God is everywhere, His presence at a location in space ***is manifested differently at different times***.
       1. **The presence of God in fellowship and blessing:**
          1. Exodus 33:14-15 “And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.”
          2. Psalm 16:11 “You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.”
          3. Psalm 51:11 “Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”.
          4. Jude 1:24 “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy…”
          5. Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”
             1. This is in the context of church discipline. God’s affirmation to us that He is working in the church.
       2. **The presence of God in judgment:** 
          1. Genesis 3:22-24 “Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.
             1. Notice that it was God who drove Adam and Eve out. He did not sent an angel nor just allow them to wander out, He Himself did the work.
          2. Genesis 4:14 “Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”
             1. God sent Cain out into the wilderness as punishment. It was his punishment (and judgment from God) for killing his brother.
          3. Genesis 7:16 “Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him.”
             1. God closed the door on the ark in judgment of the whole world. It was His decision to save those on the ark and allow those off the ark to drown in judgment.
          4. Numbers 14:42-43 “Do not go up, or you will be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD. And the LORD will not be with you.”
             1. When the Israelites when their own way, the presence of the Lord (not His actual presence but relationally) was not with them.
          5. Psalm 11:5 “The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates.”
             1. God hating someone means that His relationship with them is not there.
          6. Psalm 66:18 “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”
          7. John 9:31 “We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.”
             1. Those who are not born again, actively sinning against God and not fearing Him, they are far from God. He is not working in their lives on their behalf.
          8. Revelation 14:10 “…he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone ***in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.***”
2. **The Omnipotence of God** 
   1. “God’s omnipotence describes his ability to do anything *consistent with his nature*.”[[6]](#footnote-6)
   2. “The omnipotence of God is that by which He brings to pass everything He wills.”[[7]](#footnote-7)
   3. It is important to note that God cannot do anything, but He does anything that He wants to do. God is not bound by anything other than His own nature. If something is not according to His nature, then He neither desires to do it nor can or will He do it.
      1. Psalm 24:8 “Who is the King of glory? ***The LORD strong and mighty***, The LORD mighty in battle.”
      2. Psalm 115:3 “But our God is in the heavens; ***He does whatever He pleases.”***
      3. Matthew 19:26 “And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but ***with God all things are possible***.”
      4. Ephesians 3:20 “Now to ***Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond*** all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us…”
      5. Revelation 4:11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; f***or You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created***.”
         1. If God wants to do something, He is able to do it.
   4. As I previously said, He is not able to go against His nature. There are five verses to remember that speak to what God is not able to do:
      1. 1John 1:5 “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and ***in Him there is no darkness at all***.”
         1. God is not able to sin; in Him there is no darkness. If there is no evil inside something or someone, then no evil can come out. This is why we do not have to teach children to sin, we all sin because we are born with darkness in us.
      2. Habakkuk 1:13 “Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And ***You cannot look on wickedness with favor***. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?”
         1. God is not able to approve evil. Some of your Bibles will says *Your eyes are too pure to look upon evil.* The NASB pulls out the real meaning of the Hebrew word, to approve. If God were to look upon evil approvingly, He would be denying His own holiness. He must judge it righteously in order to maintain His character.
      3. Titus 1:2 “…in the hope of eternal life, which God, ***who cannot lie***, promised long ages ago…”
         1. God cannot lie, what He says He will do…He must do.
      4. James 1:13 “Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”
         1. God is not a tempter, He does not try and entice people to do evil. Since God has no evil in Him, He cannot tempt people to do evil.
         2. But, remember, God will test us to see our hearts (or better put, that we would see our hearts) and to see if we truly serve and desire Him.
         3. If we end up sinning because of our testing, that is from our own volition. God always provides for us a way out (**1 Cor. 10:13**).
      5. 2 Timothy 2:13 “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for ***He cannot deny Himself***.”
         1. In the context of this passage, Paul is talking about salvation and judgment. If God were to deny us, the faithful believers, He would be going against His very nature. On the contrary, if He were to allow unsaved people into heaven, He would be denying His justice.
         2. Therefore, God cannot act on something that is against His character, thus denying Himself in the process.

1. **The Eternality of God**
   1. “This means not only that God is unlimited but that he is illimitable. In this respect, God is unlike anything we experience.”[[8]](#footnote-8)
   2. “The infinity of God in relation to time, in which He has no beginning, no end, and no succession of moments in his own being.”[[9]](#footnote-9)
   3. “God is not limited by the passage of time; he does not age, forget, or grow impatient as he participates in the outworking of his plan for redemptive history.”[[10]](#footnote-10)
   4. Does God exist in the moments of time that we experience (linear, moment by moment) or does God exist outside those passing moments?
      1. ***We could say that God acts in the time and space to further His redemptive plan as He interacts with His creation.***
   5. **God is atemporal (timeless)** 
      1. Since God absolutely transcends what He has created, He cannot be confined to a place or any location.
      2. Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
         1. This verse is so important in so many ways to many of the attributes of God. In this instance, dealing with God’s eternality, we see the creation of time here.
         2. *In the beginning* denotes that something started. We say *we started a family* or *I started a new job* or  *when I began running*, etc. All of this means that something was not and then it was, so it had a start time, a beginning.
         3. This is what Genesis 1:1 says about time, the heavens and the earth, ***but not God***.
         4. In fact, what do we learn about time here, it is God who created it.
      3. Therefore, if God was subjected to time, then not only would Genesis 1:1 be wrong, but God would have a master…***namely time***. So then if something can master God, God is not God, but thing that masters Him.
         1. John 1:3 “***All things came into being through Him***, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”
            1. Notice the wording here in John, *apart from Him nothing came into being.* It is hard to grasp because of our own intellectual limitations, but there was a time when it was only God, no physical or metaphysical existed *except* Him.
         2. 2 Peter 3:8 “But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord ***one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day***.”
         3. We cannot think of God being limited by sequential events, like us. God has been known more and more throughout time because He revealed Himself more and more. But that does not mean that He was subjected to time.
   6. Here is what the Bible has to say about the timelessness of God:
      1. Genesis 21:33 “Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, ***the Everlasting God***.”
      2. Psalm 90:1-2 “A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. ***Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God***.”
      3. Isaiah 46:9-10 “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ***declaring the end from the beginning***, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'.”
      4. Romans 16:26 “…but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of ***the eternal God***, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.”
      5. 1 Timothy 1:17 “Now to the ***King eternal, immortal***, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”
   7. What can we learn from these? God has no beginning or end. Before anything was created, God was there. God not only knows but *declares* the beginning from the end. He not only knows how it is going to go, but He is dictating how it is going to get there.
      1. This is an important point that I do not want you to miss. We often times think of God simply knowing what is going to happen. If that were the case, then God would not be all powerful and involved, He would just be a bystander or spectator.
      2. But, God knows what is coming because *He is causing it to come.*
   8. This leads to the fact that God is immanently involved in our world and in accordance with his sovereign plan He chooses to act within our world, within time.
      1. Romans 5:6 “For while we were still helpless, ***at the right time*** Christ died for the ungodly.”
      2. Galatians 4:4-5 “But ***when the fullness of the time came***, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”
      3. Act 17:30-31 “Therefore ***having overlooked the times of ignorance***, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, ***because He has fixed a day in which He will judge*** the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”
         1. God is present in every moment of time but not bound by it. He knew when He was going to send Jesus before the world was ever formed. He knew when He was going to end it all, before it ever began.
         2. God created everything with the idea that it is going to move through time. There is nothing on this earth that is not subjected to time in one way or another.
      4. As John Frame puts it “He works in creation in a temporally successive pattern. He really exists in time, but he also transcends time in such a way as to exist outside of it. he is both inside and outside of the temporal box – a box that can neither confine him or keep him out.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

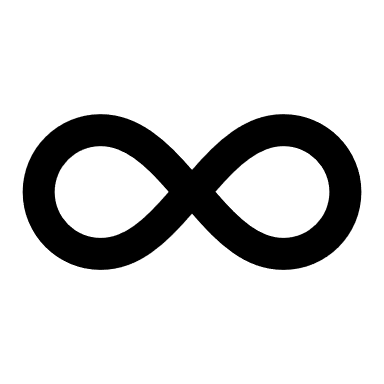
GOD

Final Judgment

Life of Christ

2020

Creation



* 1. **Why should this matter to the Christian?** 
     1. God is not subject to the same laws of nature that we are. He is not getting older, weaker or losing His memory or bodily functions. He is as strong as He has ever been and ever will be.
        1. 1 Peter 1:3-5 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain ***an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God*** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
           1. Look at what Peter is saying here…God, who is not subjected to time or decay, is protecting our inheritance, which also is not subjected to time or decay, in heaven for us right now.
     2. One day, God will create the new heavens and earth and they will be like Him, lasting for all of eternity. All who belong to Christ through faith will become eternal as well, sharing in the eternality of God.
        1. 1 John 3:2 “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”
     3. Since God is outside of time and causes our circumstances to come upon us, we know that He has allowed whatever has come.
        1. No matter what you have, no matter the hardship that has come upon you, God is in full control.
        2. Ephesians 1:11 “…also we have obtained an inheritance, ***having been predestined according to His purpose*** who works all things after the counsel of His will…”
           1. We are predestined after the purpose of God…not our own purpose.

**God’s Communicable Attributes**

1. God’s communicable attributes are too many to number and many theologians have different ideas about what actually constitutes a communicable attribute.
   1. “Those distinguished as communicable, of which some faint, but infinitely defective resemblances, may be found among his creatures, - as **knowledge**, **wisdom**, **power**, **holiness**, **justice**, **goodness** and **truth**…”[[12]](#footnote-12)
   2. God’s communicable attributes are divided into 5 major categories:[[13]](#footnote-13)
      1. **Attributes Describing God’s Being**
         1. Spirituality
         2. Invisibility
      2. **Mental Attributes**
         1. Knowledge
         2. Wisdom
         3. Truthfulness
      3. **Moral Attributes**
         1. Goodness
         2. Love
         3. Mercy (Grace, Patience)
         4. Holiness
         5. Peace (Order)
         6. Righteousness (or Justice)
         7. Jealousy
         8. Wrath
      4. **Attributes of Purpose**
         1. Will
         2. Freedom
         3. Power (or Sovereignty)
      5. **Summary Attributes** 
         1. Perfection
         2. Blessedness
         3. Beauty
         4. Glory
   3. Grudem goes on to say that based upon Ephesians 5:1 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.” we are to imitate each of these in our own lives. Not to the degree that God does perfectly, but there should be some semblance of them.
   4. As you can see, Brown has 7 and Grudem has 20 communicable attributes. We will go through some of these, certainly not all, even as some overlap.
2. Next week we are going to go through some of God’s communicable attributes. We will end next week by looking at what is called *the problem with evil.* 
   1. After reading about the goodness and love of an almighty and all powerful God, why is there still evil in the world?

1. Andrew Snider, The Masters Seminary, TH605 Theology I Class Notes, pp. 81-82 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. John MacArthur pp. 173-174 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. John Frame, *The Doctrines of God*, p. 581 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Andrew Snider, The Masters Seminary, TH605 Theology I Class Notes, pp. 81-82 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. John MacArthur p. 177 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. M. Lloyd Jones p. 66 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Millard Erickson p. 243 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Dr. Matt Waymeyer [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Andrew Snider, The Masters Seminary, TH605 Theology I Class Notes, pp. 83 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. John Frame *The Doctrine of God* p. 556 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. John Brown of Haddington, *Systematic Theology A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1817, p. 101-102 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Wayne Grudem p. 186 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)