

CHAPTER 1

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Our Lord Jesus in His prayer in John 17 said that this is eternal life – that they may know You (Our Heavenly Father), the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent (John 17:3). Salvation is not just a ticket to heaven but it is an eternity of exploring all the attributes of God and developing a deep relationship and understanding with God. Knowing God is the beginning and the end of all our existence; it is the reason for our creation. As this is only a foundational truth series and not full-fledged theological analysis of God, we would touch on the most important of God's attributes and the doctrine of God for the new believer.

Basic Attributes of God

The first thing we need to do is to establish certain basic concepts of God and understand them perfectly:

1. God is eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27)

This means that concepts of time, beginning and end *do not* apply to God. If there was a beginning and an end, it would imply that there was something anterior to God and greater than God controlling the beginning and the end. Our concept of the eternal God must completely include that understanding that all beginnings and all endings was created by Him; that God is the ultimate source of all time, beginnings and endings. The human habit of thinking of things with a beginning and an end is caused by our physical training of space and time. Imagine that space and time does not exist – that is the true realm of God's dimension.

We will attempt to help you imagine and understand the God-dimension. God is love (1 John 4:8). Attributes of love, joy and peace transcend time and dimensions (1 Corinthians 13). Imagine that love, joy and peace are the true dimensions of reality and that space and time are but subsets of the love-dimension. Space and time were created sub-realities that exist in the love-dimension. The love dimension has no beginning and no end, it purely just exists! When the space and time dimension was created, all living and sentient beings were also created to explore the love-dimension in their own limited and progressive ways. Everything created was an expression of the love-dimension so that the creation can understand and emulate the attributes of the love dimension in their limited

time-space dimension. God is eternal love and He will never stop loving us.

2. God is unchangeable (Hebrews 6:17, 18; James 1:17)

If God is changeable then there will be no stability in the entire universe or His creation and everything would become unstable. It is because *all* of God's creation rests upon Him and His immutability that His creation has laws and stability. It is a fact of human life that all things change. It is the constant throughout the Universe of time and space. All change has to change *from* something and *to* something. Imagine the beginning of all change as the creation of this time-space Universe that we know and the end of all change as ending in the finality synchrony with the God-dimension. God is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega; everything begins in God and ends in God – He is immutable and unchangeable. When you relate to God, remember that you are relating to the Being of all finality, the Unchangeable God.

3. God is unique – there is only One God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6)

If there were several Gods, there would be no unity of plan or power in the entire universe. There is only One God and no other beside Him. Our perception of God as being the Trinity is due to our perception from our time-space dimension. Behind all the façade of time-space manifestations, God is One God. We will examine the Trinity in a separate chapter but for now we need to know that there is *only* One True God who manifests Himself through God the Father, God the Word and God the Holy Spirit. God is One God.

Humans who worship multiple gods and deities have mistakenly worshipped other created beings more powerful than natural man making them into gods. Within the culture and languages of those who worship more than one God is the 'expression' or 'phrase' that describes the 'highest' or the 'origin' or the 'supreme' Being of all their plethora of gods. There is only one true and living God. He might have been known vaguely by other names in various cultures but to the believer He is known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a natural tendency to humanize God. We always think that God is like us, rather we are like Him, made in His image (Genesis 1:27). An image is never a 100% representative of God; it is only a minimisation at the finite human level dimension of what the full

infinite God is like. There is none like Him and no one else besides Him. Even though He has manifested at the human level through Christ (He is so great that Christ has to leave all the glory behind to manifest at our finite level – John 17:5; Philippians 2:5-8), we are not to think of His human manifestation through Christ as all there is to Him. We are exhorted not to think just of the limited Christ who manifested in the flesh but rather of the unlimited Christ who is now full of the glory of the Father (2 Corinthians 5:16; John 17:5, 24).

God is the One and Only Self-Existential Being. God is unique. Our very existence was a gift from His very being and Spirit. He revealed Himself to Moses as ‘I am that I am’ (Exodus 3:14 Hebrew *ehyeh asher ehyeh* – I AM THAT I AM). The Hebrew word *ehyeh* is the first person form of the Hebrew word *hayah* (the Hebrew equivalent of the English word *to be, is/am/are*). *Yahweh* is also derived from *hayah*, but is the third person singular form (English equivalent *He is*). The difference between I AM and Yahweh is not in name but in perspective: first person or third person. It is a description of GOD WHO IS. (I AM the self-existing one or HE IS the self-existing one).

4. God is immaterial and beyond all His creation (Hebrews 11:3; Romans 1:20). God is Spirit (John 4:24).

If God were any part of His material or created universe He Himself would be subject to them; thus He has to be above and beyond His creation and not part of the material of the created universe. Although His life fills and sustains the entire universe, He Himself is above and beyond His creation. If nature or any created things seem to demonstrate powerful forces and demands that we understand its laws of harmony with nature and creation, it is merely because God has created self-sustaining forces within His creation and also assigned His created angels or created spirit-beings to be in charge of them. He, Himself, will always remain above and beyond His creation. His creation draws life and light from Him but He always remain separate from His creation. All His creation merely reveals His attributes by which we can come to know Him more.

5. God is absolute love, goodness, mercy and grace (1 John 4:8; Exodus 34:6; Hebrews 4:16).

God is complete love, perfection, wisdom, goodness, righteousness and everything that we can conceive of all concepts of love, goodness and mercy – for these concepts first originate from the attribute of who God is (1 John 4:8-19; Matthew 5:48; Mark 10:18).

All measurements of love, perfection, goodness, righteousness and mercy are based on comparisons to God who is the true measure of these attributes.

God is light and it is from His light that we can perceive and know all things. Just like we need physical light to see, we need God's light to enable us to have thoughts and sentient existence. God being the origin of our ability to think and know (to be sentient) would always be above our highest thought, our highest concepts, and our highest inspiration. All things exist only in relation to God. Just as our concepts of situational ethics and concepts of right and wrong have to be measured and subject to the absolutes of the Bible principles, our concepts and knowledge can never be beyond the ability of the Giver of our ability to think and know. God is the Absolute of all absolutes. He is the perfection and the personification of our highest concept of perfection, of love, of righteousness, of wisdom and everything else we can conceive of.

How does knowing God as eternal, as unchangeable, as unique, as immaterial and beyond all His creation and as the personification of all our highest concepts and absolutes help us?

God is eternal and we are temporal; in Him we live and move and have our being; without Him, we are nothing, just a vapour of smoke (Acts 17:28; John 15:5; James 2:26; 4:14). We do not look at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

God is unchangeable but we are subject to change; He is our Rock, He is our strength, in Him alone do we trust (2 Samuel 22:1-2). By His immutable person and His immutable Word, we are guaranteed His promises (Hebrews 6:17-18).

God is unique, there is none like Him. There is none who love like God loves, there is none who love like Jesus loves; and we shall love Him and love one another. To love Him with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, all our strength and to love one's neighbour as oneself is *more than all* burnt offerings and sacrifices (Isaiah 46:9-10; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Mark 12:32-33). We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:11, 19).

God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24). Our worship is no longer dependent on time, place, race, culture, creeds and all outwardly forms (John 4:21-23). Our worship is continuously flowing from deep within our hearts and our spirits – deep

calling unto deep (Psalms 42:1, 7). There shall be continual praise and worship from our spirits to God who is Spirit (Exodus 29:42; Psalm 34:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Hebrews 13:15).

God is the Absolute expression and personification of mercy, graciousness, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth; and we should absolutely know that all His thoughts and all His plans for us is only good (Exodus 33:6; Jeremiah 29:11). His thoughts and words seek only blessing and goodness to us (Isaiah 55:8-13). We need to learn to be like a little child before Him and learn once again that God is SO good.

(It might be appropriate to sing or hum the sweet little Sunday school song that 'God is so good' before you move to the next chapter of the doctrines of God ☺).