

The Attributes of God (Part 2)

Rocky Wyatt | October 1, 2017

Communicable Attributes

Spirituality and Invisibility

God's spirituality means that God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence.

Grudem



Spirituality and Invisibility

John 4:24

God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Exodus 20:4

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

God's invisibility means that God's total essence, all of his spiritual being, will never be able to be seen by us, yet God still shows himself to us through visible, created things.

Grudem



Spirituality and Invisibility

John 1:18

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 6:46

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

1 Timothy 1:17

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.



Spirituality and Invisibility

Exodus 33:11

Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Exodus 33:20

But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"



Spirituality and Invisibility

Anthropomorphisms

The figure of speech by which Scripture attributes human parts, actions, affections, and emotions to God. When the Bible attributes human characteristics to God, it speaks metaphorically to enable us to understand an otherwise abstract truth.

Cairns

Theophanies

A manifestation of God; frequently employed to denote a preincarnation appearance of Christ and therefore often called a Christophany.

Cairns



Spirituality and Invisibility - Theophanies

Genesis 32:28–30

He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."



Intellectual or Mental Attributes

- God's Knowledge - Omniscience
- God's Wisdom
- God's Truthfulness and Faithfulness



Knowledge

...indicates that in a unique way God knows himself and all things possible and actual.

Tyndale Bible Dictionary

The knowledge of God may be defined as that perfection of God whereby He, in an entirely unique manner, knows Himself and all things possible and actual in one eternal and most simple act.

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Knowledge

God knows all things and all true propositions (omniscience), always has and always will know all things, and cannot learn more or forget anything he knows.

Reymond



Knowledge

He necessarily knows himself exhaustively, and he necessarily knows his creation exhaustively—and both instantaneously, simultaneously, and everlastingly. His knowledge of himself and of all other things is absolutely comprehensive and eternally “intuited,” that is, he has never learned anything because he has always known everything. He “never receives from some other source or from his own inventive genius an idea he never previously had” (Clark). God’s knowledge is coextensive with all that is...



Knowledge

...All created things fall within the compass of God's knowledge, indeed, are what they are by virtue of God's prior knowledge (his prescience) and determinate counsel (his eternal plan).

Reymond



Knowledge

1 John 3:20

in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

Job 37:16

Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,

Psalms 94:11

The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath.



Knowledge

The definition of God's knowledge given above also specifies that God knows "all things possible."

Grudem



Knowledge

1 Samuel 23:11–13

Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, I beseech you, tell your servant." And the LORD said, "He will come down." Then said David, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will surrender you." Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition.



God's Knowledge and Human Free Will

Now all of this is very troublesome for some people, chiefly because of the implications God's knowledge of the future has for the "freedom of indifference" (freedom from all necessity) that they desire to ascribe to men. They quite correctly observe that if God knows all things, then it would seem that he must infallibly know the future. If he infallibly knows the future, then he must infallibly know all of the future acts of men...



God's Knowledge and Human Free Will

...If he infallibly knows all of the future acts of men, then these acts must be certain of occurrence. But if their acts are certain of occurrence, then men are not free to choose and to act as they want. Accordingly, they conclude that divine omniscience is incompatible with human freedom.

Reymond



God's Knowledge and Human Free Will

In sum, created forces cannot be independent forces and independent forces cannot be created forces. ... if there were one square inch of this entire universe not under his sovereign governance, God is neither absolutely sovereign nor omniscient since that one square inch would have equal claim to its own sovereignty to do as it willed, with the authority even to set up a sign saying to God, "Keep out!" This theological construction allows billions upon billions of these sovereign human "inches" to exist throughout God's universe, all denying by their own sovereign right his sovereignty over them...



God's Knowledge and Human Free Will

...This construction cannot be squared with the biblical passages that teach that God did in fact foreordain whatever comes to pass, knows all things infallibly, and providentially governs all his creatures and all their actions to bring about his own holy ends (see, e.g., Acts 2:23; Rom. 9:16; Eph. 1:11; Phil. 2:13).

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Wisdom

God's wisdom means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals. *Grudem*

God's wisdom is His intelligence as manifested in the adaptation of means to ends. It points to the fact that He always strives for the best possible ends, and chooses the best means for the realization of His purposes. H. B. Smith defines the divine wisdom as "that attribute of God whereby He produces the best possible results with the best possible means." We may be a little more specific and call it that perfection of God whereby He applies His knowledge to the attainment of His ends in a way which glorifies Him most.

Berkhof



Wisdom

Romans 16:27

to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Job 9:4

Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm?

Job 12:13

With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding.

Psalms 104:24

O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; The earth is full of Your possessions.



Veracity or Truthfulness

God's truthfulness means that he is the true God, and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.

Grudem



Veracity or Truthfulness

He is the truth first of all in a metaphysical sense, that is, in Him the idea of the Godhead is perfectly realized; He is all that He as God should be, and as such is distinguished from all so-called gods, which are called vanity and lies, Ps. 96:5; 97:7; 115:4–8; Isa. 44:9, 10.

He is also the truth in an ethical sense, and as such reveals Himself as He really is, so that His revelation is absolutely reliable, Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18.

Finally, He is also the truth in a logical sense, and in virtue of this He knows things as they really are, and has so constituted the mind of man that the latter can know, not merely the appearance, but also the reality, of things.

Berkhof



Veracity or Truthfulness

...he is ethically reliable, that is, there always has been, is now, and always will be a precise equivalency between what he thinks and what he says—what he says inerrantly reflects what he thinks and what he thinks is infallibly reflected in what he says: his Word is truth and therefore it is reliable. Consequently, he declares things and relationships to be as they actually are; he cannot lie (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2). He will not go back on his declared purpose.

Reymond



Veracity or Truthfulness

1 John 5:20

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

2 Timothy 2:13

If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

1 John 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.



Veracity or Truthfulness

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.



Moral Attributes

- Goodness
- Love
- Mercy
- Grace
- Patience
- Holiness
- Peace (Order)
- Righteousness
- Justice
- Jealousy
- Wrath



Goodness

The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.

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God has always been and always will be infinitely good ..., the Catechism teaches, ascribing thereby to him that perfection of the divine nature which prompts him to deal bountifully and kindly with all his creatures. If it is God's attribute of majestic holiness that emphasizes his transcendence over his creation, it is God's attribute of goodness that underscores his condescendence toward his creation.

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Goodness

Psalm 145:9

The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.

Mark 10:18

And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

1 Chronicles 16:34

O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 34:8

O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!



Love

God's love means that God eternally gives of himself to others.

Grudem

The love between the Father and the Son also presumably characterizes their relationship with the Holy Spirit, even though it is not explicitly mentioned. This eternal love of the Father for the Son, the Son for the Father, and of both for the Holy Spirit makes heaven a world of love and joy because each person of the Trinity seeks to bring joy and happiness to the other two.

Grudem



Love

John 3:35

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

John 14:31

but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

John 17:24

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.



Love

Exodus 34:6–7

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.



Love

1 John 4:8–10

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.



Mercy

...there is a general mercy of God, which is extended not only to all men, believers and unbelievers alike, but also to the entire creation: 'His tender mercies are over all His works' (Psa 145:9). God has pity on the brute creation in their need, and supplies them with suitable provision.

Pink, The Attributes of God, p. 78

If the grace of God contemplates man as guilty before God, and therefore in need of forgiveness, the mercy of God contemplates him as one who is bearing the consequences of sin, who is in a pitiable condition, and who therefore needs divine help.

Berkhof



Mercy

Matthew 5:45

so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,



Mercy

1 Peter 1:3

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



Grace

God's grace means God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

Grudem

The Bible generally uses the word to denote the unmerited goodness or love of God to those who have forfeited it, and are by nature under a sentence of condemnation.

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Grace

Ephesians 1:6–8

to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight...

Ephesians 2:7–9

so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.



Patience

God's patience means God's goodness in withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.

Grudem

Personally, we would define the divine patience as the power of control which God exercises over Himself, causing Him to bear with the wicked and forbear so long in punishing them.

Pink



Patience

Exodus 34:6

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

Psalms 86:15

But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.

Romans 2:4

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?



Holiness

...depicts the moral purity and excellence of God.

Tyndale

In its original sense it denotes that He is absolutely distinct from all His creatures, and is exalted above them in infinite majesty. So understood, the holiness of God is one of His transcendental attributes, and is sometimes spoken of as His central and supreme perfection...



Holiness

...It does not seem proper to speak of one attribute of God as being more central and fundamental than another; but if this were permissible, the Scriptural emphasis on the holiness of God would seem to justify its selection.

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This ethical holiness of God may be defined as that perfection of God, in virtue of which He eternally wills and maintains His own moral excellence, abhors sin, and demands purity in his moral creatures.

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Holiness

Exodus 15:11

Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?

1 Samuel 2:2

There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.

Isaiah 8:13

It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread.



Holiness

Isaiah 57:15

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.



Peace

God's peace means that in God's being and in his actions he is separate from all confusion and disorder, yet he is continually active in innumerable well-ordered, fully controlled, simultaneous actions.

Grudem

1 Corinthians 14:33

for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.



Righteousness - Justice

There is first of all a rectoral justice of God. This justice, as the very name implies, is the rectitude which God manifests as the Ruler of both the good and the evil. In virtue of it He has instituted a moral government in the world, and imposed a just law upon man, with promises of reward for the obedient, and threats of punishment for the transgressor.

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Righteousness - Justice

Closely connected with the rectoral is the distributive justice of God. This term usually serves to designate God's rectitude in the execution of the law, and relates to the distribution of rewards and punishments, Isa. 3:10, 11; Rom. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:17. It is of two kinds:



Righteousness - Justice

1. Remunerative justice, which manifests itself in the distribution of rewards to both men and angels, Deut. 7:9, 12, 13; 2 Chron. 6:15; Ps. 58:11; Micah 7:20; Matt. 25:21, 34; Rom. 2:7; Heb. 11:26. It is really an expression of the divine love, dealing out its bounties, not on the basis of strict merit, for the creature can establish no absolute merit before the Creator, but according to promise and agreement, Luke 17:10; 1 Cor. 4:7. God's rewards are gracious and spring from a covenant relation which He has established.



Righteousness - Justice

2. Retributive justice, which relates to the infliction of penalties. It is an expression of the divine wrath. While in a sinless world there would be no place for its exercise, it necessarily holds a very prominent place in a world full of sin.

Berkhof



Righteousness - Justice

Genesis 18:25

Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?

Deuteronomy 10:17

For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.

Deuteronomy 32:4

The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.



Jealousy

God's jealousy means that God continually seeks to protect his own honor.

Grudem

2 Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

Exodus 20:5

You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,



Wrath

Exodus 32:9–10

The LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. “Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.”

Romans 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

1 Thessalonians 1:10

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.



God's Glory

...it is important to underscore the truth that when we speak of God's "infinite, eternal, unchangeable" being, etc., we are speaking of those attributes that comprise what the Scriptures intend when they speak of God's glory. That is to say, God's glory is the sum total of all of his attributes as well as any one of his attributes. For the creature to deny to him any one of his attributes is to attack the very glory of God and to deny him that without which he would no longer be God. Or to ascribe to him any attribute which he himself does not expressly claim to have, which ascription can only cancel out some attribute which he does claim to have, is again to represent him as something less than he is and thus is to attack his glory. For this reason it is imperative to listen carefully to God's description of himself in Scripture.

Reymond



God's Glory

Acts 7:2

And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,

Psalms 19:1

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.



Application

Ephesians 5:1–2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

