

Theology Proper

The Attributes of God's Greatness (part 2) – Lesson 7

- **Lesson overview: Attributes of God's Greatness** – Eternality, Immutability, Aseity, Infinity, Perfection, Incomprehensibility

I. _____ of God

A. Meaning:

1. God exists _____. God's existence extends endlessly backward and forward.
2. If God exists endlessly, then He never came into existence nor was He ever caused to come into existence, since He is endlessly self-existent.
3. Eternity is infinite duration without any beginning, end, or limit—an ever-abiding _____.
4. **William Evans, Theologian/Author said:**
 - *A deaf and dumb man in one of the institutions in Paris, was asked to write upon the slate his idea of God's eternity, and he wrote the following forcible lines. "It is duration without beginning or end; existence without bounds or dimensions; present without past or future. His eternity is youth without infancy or old age, life without birth or death, to-day without yesterday or to-morrow."* (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, December 27, 1863, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 9)

B. Scripture

1. **The first time the title of God's eternity was used is in Genesis 21:33**
 - a. **Genesis 21:33** — *And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.*
 - b. Abraham calls God (Hebrew El Olam) "*The everlasting God*" or "*The God of Eternity*".
 - 1) This name speaks of God's eternal duration, control, power, and presence. Abraham is journeying as a stranger in a strange land, but it is based upon the eternal covenant made to him by the everlasting God.
 - 2) To Abraham God was the One who inhabited eternity because He was God who was in control, sovereign, and had the authority. What God said would happen in Abraham's life did happen, and Abraham concluded, "You are the God who inhabits eternity".
2. **God's eternity is evidence of His deity.**
 - **Psalm 90:2** — *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, **even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.***
3. **God's eternity speaks of His complete self-sufficiency, He isn't dependent, rather all things are dependent upon Him; He is eternal therefore He is Creator. And He does not get worn out.**
 - a. **Isaiah 40:28** – *"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God (El Olam), the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, **fainteth not, neither is weary?** there is no searching of his understanding."*

- b. Entropy affects all things except God.
4. **God's eternity is grounds that He alone is Holy.**
- **Isaiah 57:15** — *For thus saith the high and lofty One **that inhabiteth eternity**, whose name is _____; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*
5. **God declares His eternity as a foundation to declare the absence of any other gods.**
- **Isaiah 44:6** — *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; **I am the first, and I am the last**; and beside me there is no _____.*
6. **Jesus is eternal.**
- a. **Prophecies of Christ speak to His eternity.**
- **Micah 5:2** — *“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from _____.”*
- b. **Jesus said He pre-existed.**
- 1) _____ — *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, _____.*
 - 2) **John 17:5** — *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the _____ was. (John 6:61-62)*
- c. **John the Baptist' said Jesus pre-existed.**
- 1) John the Baptist was _____ months older than Jesus physically, they were cousins (Luke 1:34-36).
 - 2) **John 1:15, 30** — *“John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was _____ me. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.*
7. **Jesus declares His eternity as evidence of His deity.**
- **Revelation 1:8** — *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*
8. **Jesus declares His eternity as a basis for having authority over the Churches (Revelation 1:11, 2:8).**
- **Revelation 1:11** — *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*
9. **Jesus declared His eternity as grounds of having victory and authority over _____ and _____.**
- **Revelation 1:17-18** — *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: **18**; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*
10. **Jesus declares His eternity as grounds for having authority to bring _____.**

- **Revelation 22:11–13** — *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12; And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

11. Jesus taught His eternality was grounds for giving _____.

- a. **Revelation 21:6** — *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*
- b. Only He who “is” eternal can “give” eternality. Jesus alone is the giver of eternal life because He alone is eternal life.
 - 1) **John 6:27** - Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
 - 2) **John 10:27–28** — *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28; And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

12. The importance of Christ's pre-existence

- **3 ramifications if Christ did not pre-exist:**

- a. If Christ came into existence at His birth, then there is no eternal _____ that exists.
- b. If Christ came into existence at His birth, He is not _____ because God is eternal. An attack on Christ's pre-existence is a direct assault against Christ's deity.
- c. If Christ came into existence at His birth, then He _____, because He claimed He existed prior to His physical birth. An attack on Christ's pre-existence is a direct assault against Christ's integrity and holiness.

C. Result: God has never, nor will ever cease to exist. Therefore, every promise He has made and every word He has spoken, He will personally be there to make sure it is carried out.

II. _____ of God (pg. 12-13d-GDB)

A. Meaning: God is unchangeable and thus unchanging. God's attributes and nature will never _____. God never stops possessing any of His divine attributes, to do so would result in longer being _____. There can never be any change in the Deity for better or worse; God remains eternally immutable.

B. Scripture:

1. _____ — *For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*
2. **James 1:17** — *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*
3. **Hebrews 13:8** — *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*
4. **Numbers 23:19** — *God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

C. Result:

1. If God could change, if self-existence became dependent existence; if eternity became time, then God would no longer be God. God's immutability assures us that none of God's perfections will change.
2. The immutability of God gives comfort and assurance to the believer that God's promises will not fail (Mal. 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:13).
3. Also, God's attitude toward sin will never change, and He cannot be coerced or manipulated to compromise or change in any way.
4. **Question:** If God is unchanging, how can it be said that He repents?
 - a. **Genesis 6:6** — *And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*
 - b. **Jonah 3:10** — *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.*
5. **Answer:** God's "_____ " (Who He is) does not change, but His _____ and _____ toward men can change. Many times, the word "repent" in the Bible is speaking of being sorrowful or grieved which does not carry any idea of changing.
 - a. The repentant attitude in God doesn't involve any real change in his character or purpose. He always hates sin and always pities and loves the sinner. That is true before and after the sinner repents. God's repentance is not a change in His character, but in His dealings with man. He changes as they change from ungodliness to godliness and from disobedience unto obedience. (As was true of God's dealings with the Ninevites).
 - b. When a man bicycling against the wind turns about and goes with the wind instead of going against it, the wind seems to change, although it is blowing just as it was before."
 - c. It can be said of all people that before we were saved the "wrath of God abided upon us" (John 3:36); but after we received salvation, God's dealings with us changed, from wrath to reconciliation, from enemies to friends, from sons of the devil to sons of God, from eternal punishment to eternal joy in the presence of God.

III. The _____ of God

- A. **Meaning:** *"God is independent of all things. He is perfectly self-sufficient, not depending on anything outside Himself for anything, and is therefore the eternal, foundational being, the source of life and sustenance for all other beings."* (Biblical Doctrine, pg.168).
 1. The aseity of God means that God is independent in the fullest sense, He is eternally self-existent. He is the originator of all things and the sustainer of all things.
 2. God is in Himself the source of His own existence. We exist dependent upon things outside of ourselves such as air, water, food, etc. God needs nothing outside Himself to exist.
- B. **Scripture:**
 1. **John 5:26** — *For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*
 2. **Exodus 3:14** — *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (Ex.6:3)*

3. Jesus Christ shares in the aseity of God, He also defined Himself as the “I AM” (John 8:58, 4:24, 14:6, Revelation 1:8, 11, 17-18, 2:8).

C. Results:

1. Since God is “life” and the source of all things living, all existing things come from God and are also _____ upon God for existence.
 - a. **Acts 17:25** – *“Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;”*
 - b. **Psalm 36:9** – *“For with thee is the fountain of life.”*
 - c. **Job 12:10** – *“In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.”*
 - d. **Colossians 1:16-17, John 1:3-4, Genesis 2:7, Daniel 5:23**
2. God is totally autonomous and does as He wills. Nothing can ever thwart the plans of God who will fulfill all of His promises. All God has ever decreed will come to pass.
 - a. **Isaiah 46:10** — *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*
 - b. **Psalm 115:3** — *But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*
 - c. **Daniel 4:35** — *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*
 - d. **Ephesians 1:5** — *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*
3. Because of God’s aseity, we can fully depend upon Him as the eternal independent God who loves us and will fulfill all His purposes in justifying, sanctifying, and one day glorifying the believer.
 - **Romans 8:28-30** — *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29; For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30; Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
4. We can come to God who will never be unable to meet our needs.
 - a. **Psalm 23:1** — *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*
 - b. **Philippians 4:19** — *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*
 - c. **Psalm 34:9** — *O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.*
 - d. **Matthew 6:33** — *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
 - e. **Romans 8:32** — *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

IV.

- A. Meaning:** God’s nature and essence are without any outside limits or boundaries. God transcends all limits of space and time.

1. Why do we say that God has no “outside” limits? Because God is the only one who can limit Himself. He can have “self-imposed” limits, but nothing outside of Him can limit Him.
2. God’s infinity is also true of all His attributes, God is infinite in holiness, righteousness, love, wisdom, knowledge. etc.
 - a. **Francis Chafer** – *“The fact of the infinity of God relates itself to all attributes in that they are what they are to an infinite degree, or without termination. God transcends all limitations which time or space impose. He cannot be imprisoned either in time or in space. In like manner, He knows all things perfectly. He is able to bring things to pass, even to create as He wills apart from means or material, and always in measureless perfection. In every moral quality, he is complete to infinity. . . he exists eternally by no cause whatsoever outside Himself. He alone is the sufficient cause of all that is. This is infinity in its outmost demonstration”* (Systematic Theology, 8 vols. 1948. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993, p. 215-216)
 - b. **Gotquestions.org** - *“Another helpful point is that infinity, as regarding God, is not a property a being can have in some attributes, but not others. One is either entirely infinite, or he is not infinite at all. Consider, for example, divine attributes like omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. It’s not possible for a being to be “omnipotent” unless that being is also “omniscient.” How can one have the power to do all things if they don’t also know all things? How can a being be omniscient and not be omnipresent—to know all things happening in reality, but not know some things in that same reality? Authors who create comic book superheroes run into the problem of “selective infinity” all the time. If you’re strong enough to lift a building, you have to be durable enough to support a building. If you’re fast enough to outrun a bullet, you have to be able to think fast enough to not smash into walls. Those attributes can’t exist independently of each other. On a larger scale, this is how “infinity” works with God. To have any one infinite attribute means, by necessity, all of your attributes must be infinite.”* (What are the implications of God being infinite, unlimited, and unmeasurable? | GotQuestions.org)
3. Infinity can belong to only one Being, and therefore cannot be shared with the universe. The universe is not infinite.
4. Infinity must not be construed to mean that God is identified with all things; this is pantheism.
5. In regard to time, God’s infinitude is referred to as His eternality, in regard to space it is referred to as His omnipresence.

B. Scripture:

1. **Psalm 147:5** — *Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*
2. **Psalm 40:5** — *Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*
3. **1 Kings 8:27** — *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*

V.

A. Meaning: God is complete within Himself. He is all that God ought to be and falls short in nothing.

- *“The perfection of God speaks not only of His moral perfection-that is, that He is perfectly holy, just, and good-but also that God is the sum total of all conceivable perfections.”* (Biblical Doctrine, pg.178)

B. Scripture

1. **Matthew 5:48** – *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*
2. **Deuteronomy 32:4** — *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*
3. **2 Samuel 22:31** — *As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.*
4. **James 1:17** – *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”*

C. Difficulties

1. If perfection is a divine attribute, why are mortal creatures sometimes described as “perfect” in the Bible? Examples:
 - a. _____ - **Job 1:1** – *“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright,..”*
 - b. _____ – **Genesis 6:9** – *“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”*
 - c. _____ - **Psalms 101:2** – *“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”*
2. Why are believers commanded to be “perfect” as our Father in heaven is perfect? Is it possible to attain to such absolute perfection in this life?
3. **Answer to these questions:**
 - a. Many times, when “perfection” is ascribed to an individual, the reference is to innocence concerning specific sins or attitudes which are part of the context. For instance, Job was “perfect” in the sense that he was not guilty of the sins of which his friends accused him. Job himself acknowledged that under divine scrutiny he would not be found perfect (9:20). But he insisted he was innocent of the specific charges laid against him.
 - b. Other times, “perfection” is claimed to distinguish the believer with wicked men about him. For instance, David’s claim to walk with a “perfect heart” seems to be a deliberate contrast to the wickedness around him. He often acknowledged his sins, and yet he claims here a purity of purpose which can well be characterized as a “perfect heart”.
 - c. Finally, the command to “be perfect” must be understood as an _____; to strive for anything less than perfection would be a standard less than the image of Jesus Christ. One day we will be completely conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-30). This will happen at “glorification”, but while we are in this earthly body we strive nonetheless to be conformed to that image of a “perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”. God commands us to be perfect, a

reality we cannot fully become, but a reality that we strive after, nonetheless.

VI.

A. Meaning: *God cannot be completely known by a finite mind.*

1. In an analogous way of viewing this, God is like the ocean and our minds like an eight-ounce cup. You can know some things of God, but you don't have the capacity to know all of God.
2. Though God cannot be fully known, it is not to say we cannot know truths concerning God. A finite mind can know God, certainly and truly. However, it is to say that no finite mind can know all the truth there is to know concerning God. God does not need to be known exhaustively in order to be known certainly and truly. (You can know your spouse, but you don't know her exhaustively and fully-how much truer is this of God.)

B. Scripture

1. **Romans 11:33** – *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”*
2. **Psalms 145:3** – *“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.”*
3. **Isaiah 40:28**
4. **Job 5:9; 9:10 11:7-9**

• Weekly Assignments:

- Study for test over lesson 7
- Read: “Biblical Doctrine” (MacArthur/Mayhue) pages 211-217