

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Summary and Review of the Attributes of God

Lesson #16

In this lesson we will seek to remind ourselves of the many attributes of God that we have studied in this series. We must ever keep in mind that God is all of His attributes all the time. He is composed and defined by all His attributes. It may be difficult for us to think of all the attributes of God working simultaneously yet, even if we cannot conceive of such a thing, we must at least acknowledge that God is one and His attributes are all perfect, infinite, and ever functioning together. Take away one attribute of God and God ceases to be God. Alter one part of God's unchanging being and you no longer have God.

We must remember the words of Jesus in John 17:3 *"And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."* It is also necessary to remember David's dying words to his son Solomon and apply them to our own lives. David says in I Chron. 28:9, *"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever."* The practical reasons for this studying God's attributes are found in the two important texts above we teach us in part that:

- Eternal life is knowing God.
- There is only one true God.
- Knowing God and serving Him with our whole heart and mind is why we exist.
- The Lord knows our hearts and thoughts.
- The Lord has made himself known to man through His Word and Creation.
- There are eternal consequences for not knowing God and rejecting Him.

I. ETERNITY OF GOD

A. Louis Berkhof says God's eternity is, "That perfection of God whereby He is elevated above all temporal limits and all succession of moments, and possesses the whole of His existence in one indivisible present."¹

B. Thomas Watson says,

¹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 60.

“If you were to take all the earth, all the sky, and all the space of the universe and convert it into sand, and if every year you removed one tenth of a grain of sand away, the years it would take to remove all the sand away would be less than a moment in eternity.”²

- C. Psa. 90:2 – “Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

- A. God's faithfulness is His perfect reliability. His Word is the track, His providence the engine, His faithfulness is the train which always arrives on time.

- B. Louis Berkhof speaking of God's perfect reliability says,

“It is generally called His *faithfulness*, in virtue of which He is ever mindful of His covenant and fulfills all the promises which He has made to His people. This faithfulness of God is of the utmost practical significance to the people of God. It is the ground of their confidence, the foundation of their hope, and the cause of their rejoicing. It saves them from the despair to which their own unfaithfulness might easily lead, gives them courage to carry on in spite of their failures, and fills their hearts with joyful anticipations, even when they are deeply conscious of the fact that they have forfeited all the blessings of God.”³

- C. Lam. 3:22-23 – “The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

- D. A. W. Pink says,

“When God smites us with the rod of chastisement, it is *faithfulness* which wields it. To acknowledge this means that we humble ourselves before Him, own that we fully deserve His correction, and instead of murmuring, thank Him for it. God never afflicts without reason. . . God is not only faithful not withstanding afflictions, but faithful in sending them.”⁴

² Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 63.

³ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pgs. 70.

⁴ A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 55.

III. THE GOODNESS OF GOD

- A. Thomas Manton speaking of God's goodness says,

"He is originally good, good of Himself, which nothing else is; for all creatures are good only by participation and communication from God. He is essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself: the creature's good is a super-added quality, in God it is His essence. He is infinitely good; the creature's good is but a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of good. He is eternally and immutably good, for He cannot be less good than He is; as there can be no addition made to Him, so no subtraction from Him."⁵

- B. Thomas Watson addressing the goodness of God says,

"The goodness of God works for good to the godly. God's goodness is a means to make us good. *"The goodness of God Leadeth to repentance" (Rom. 2:4)*. The goodness of God is a spiritual sunbeam to melt the heart into tears. Oh, says the soul, has God been so good to me? Has he reprieved me so long from hell, and shall I grieve His Spirit anymore? Shall I sin against goodness? The goodness of God works for good, as it ushers in all blessings. The favors we receive are the silver streams which flow from the fountain of God's goodness."⁶

- C. J. I. Packer notes,

"God is good to all in some ways and to some in all ways."⁷

- D. Nah. 1:7 – "The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him."

- E. Charles Spurgeon encourages us saying,

"Let the goodness of God excite us to a sacred jealousy, and to a holy revenge against those iniquities which are hateful in his sight. Go forth to battle with

⁵ Thomas Manton as quoted by A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 57.

⁶ Thomas Watson, *All things for Good*, pg. 15.

⁷ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pg. 147.

Amalek, in his strength, and utterly destroy the accursed crew: let not one of them escape.”⁸

IV. THE GRACE OF GOD

A. A. W. Tozer defines grace saying,

“Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving. It is a self-existent principle inherent in the divine nature and appears to us as a self-caused propensity to pity the wretched, spare the guilty, welcome the outcast, and bring into favor those who were before under just disapprobation.”⁹

B. A. W. Pink speaking of grace says,

“Grace and works will no more unite than an acid and an alkali. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). The absolute favor of God can no more consist with human merit than oil and water will fuse into one.”¹⁰

C. G. S. Bishop gives this amazing description of God’s grace,

“Grace is a provision for men who are so fallen that they cannot lift the axe of justice, so corrupt that they cannot change their own natures, so averse to God that they cannot turn to Him, so blind that they cannot see Him, so deaf that they cannot hear Him, and so dead that He Himself must open their graves and lift them into resurrection.”¹¹

D. John 1:16 – “For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace.”

*Return, O wanderer, now return,
And seek thy Father's face;
Those new desires which in thee burn
Were kindled by His grace.*

⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [Morning and Evening: Daily Readings](#) (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896).

⁹ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 93.

¹⁰ A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 66.

¹¹ G. S. Bishop, quoted in A. W. Pinks, *Attributes of God*, pg. 70-71.

*Return, O wanderer, now return,
And wipe the falling tear:
Thy Father calls, -- no longer mourn;
'Tis love invites thee near.*
William Benco Collyer

V. THE HOLINESS OF GOD

A. Millard Erickson speaking of the holiness of God says,

“There are two basic aspects to God's Holiness. The first is His uniqueness. . . He is totally separate from all of creation. . . The other aspect of God's holiness is His Absolute purity or goodness. This means He is untouched or unstained by evil in the world.”¹²

B. Thomas Watson said of God's holiness,

“God is not only a pattern of holiness, but is a principle of holiness: His spring feeds our cisterns, He drops His holy oil of grace upon us.”¹³

C. A. W. Tozer noted,

“Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. Quite literally a new channel must be cut through the desert of our minds to allow the sweet waters of truth that will heal our great sickness to flow in. We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible, and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.”¹⁴

D. I Sam. 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.”

¹² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, pg. 284-285.

¹³ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 83.

¹⁴ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 104.

E. Thomas Watson says,

“Happiness is nothing else but the quintessence of holiness; holiness is glory militant, and happiness holiness triumphant.”¹⁵

*How dread are Thine eternal years,
everlasting Lord!
By prostrate spirits day and night
Incessantly adored!*

*How beautiful, how beautiful
the sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
And awful purity!*

*Oh how I fear Thee, living God!
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears.*

Frederick W. Faber

VI. THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

A. Louis Berkhof says of God’s immutability,

“It is that perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change, not only in His Being, but also in His perfections, and in His purposes and promises.”¹⁶

B. A. W. Pink defines God’s immutability saying,

“By nature we tend toward nothingness, since we came from nothing. Nothing stays our annihilation but the will and sustaining power of God. None can sustain himself a single moment. We are entirely dependent on the Creator for every breath we draw. We gladly own with the Psalmist, Thou “holdest our soul in life” (Psa. 66:9). The realization of this ought to make us lie down under a sense of our own nothingness in the presence of Him “in Whom we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).¹⁷

¹⁵ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 87.

¹⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 58.

¹⁷ A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 39.

- C. Thomas Watson rightly notes,
*"Expect to meet with changes in everything but God."*¹⁸
- D. James 1:17 – "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."
- E. A. W. Tozer says,
"All that God is he has always been, and all that he has been and is He will ever be."¹⁹

And

"In all our efforts to find God, to please Him, to commune with Him, we should remember that all change must be on our part. "I am the Lord, I change not."²⁰

*Fountain of being! Source of Good!
Immutable Thou dost remain!
Nor can the shadow of a change
Obscure the glories of Thy reign.*

*Earth may with all her powers dissolve,
If such the great Creator will;
But Thou forever art the same,
I AM is Thy Memorial Still.*
From Walkers Collection

VII. THE KNOWABILITY OF GOD

- A. The knowability of God is God's revelation of Himself to man. The knowability of God is often not considered an attribute of God but one of the works of God. God, in eternity past because He is self-existent, was known only by himself. Apart from His self-knowledge, God can only be known when He creates other beings and grants them knowledge of himself. When He does this, He then is to some degree, "knowable." It is usually considered under the topic of revelation but because of its importance to the attributes of God we will study it here.

B. Innate knowledge:

¹⁸ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 68

¹⁹ A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 50.

²⁰ A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 54.

Rom. 2:14-16 – “For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”

C. Acquired knowledge:

Hos. 6:3 -- “So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth.”

D. General Revelation:

Psa. 19:1-2 – “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.”

E. Direct revelation:

Josh. 20:1 – “And Jehovah spoke to Joshua, saying, . . .”

F. Jesus Christ, the Word of God to Man:

Heb. 1:1-2 – “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”

G. Scripture:

Psa. 119:160 – “The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.”

H. A. W. Tozer speaking of our ability to know God said,
“Knowledge of such a Being [God] cannot be gained by study alone. It comes by a wisdom the natural man knows nothing of, neither can know, because it is spiritually discerned. To know God is at once the easiest and the most difficult thing in the world. It is easy because the knowledge of the holy God is a free gift to men who are open to receive it. But this knowledge is difficult because there

are conditions to be met and the obstinate nature of fallen man does not take kindly to them.”²¹

VIII. THE LOVE OF GOD

A. J. I. Packer defines God’s love with these words,

“God's love is an exercise of His goodness towards individual sinners whereby, having identified Himself with their welfare, He has given His son to be their Savior, and now brings them to know and enjoy Him in a covenant relation.”²²

B. Stephen Charnock describes God’s love saying,

“He stands not upon His dominion so much with us, when he finds us conscientious in paying the duty we owe to Him; He rules as a Father, by love as well as by authority; he enters into a peculiar communion with poor earthly worms, plants His Word, invites us by his benefits, admits us into his presence, is more desirous to bestow His smiles than we to receive them, and acts in such a manner as if he were willing to resign His scepter into the hands of any that were possessed with more love and kindness to us than himself: this is the comfort of believers.”²³

C. I John 4:9-11 – “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. 10 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. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

D. J. I. Packer also says,

“God was happy without man before man was made; He would have continued happy had He simply destroyed man after man had sinned; but as it is He has set His love upon particular sinners, and this means that, by His own free voluntary choice, He will not know perfect and unmixed happiness again till He has brought every one of them to heaven. He has in effect resolved that henceforth for all eternity His happiness shall be conditional upon ours. Thus God saves, not only for His glory, but also for His gladness. This goes far to explain why it is that there is joy (God's own joy) in the presence of the angels when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10), and why there will be 'exceeding joy' when God sets us faultless at the last day in His own holy presence (Jude 24). The

21 A.W Tozer *The Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 115

22 J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pg. 111.

23 Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, vol. 2, pg. 450.

thought passes understanding and almost beggars belief, but there is no doubt that, according to Scripture, such is the love of God.”²⁴

IX. THE MERCY OF GOD

A. Louis Berkhof speaking of God’s mercy says,

“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. It may be defined as the goodness or love of God shown to those who are in misery or distress, irrespective of their deserts. In His mercy God reveals Himself as a compassionate God, who pities those who are in misery and is ever ready to relieve their distress.”²⁵

B. Thomas Watson says of God’s mercy,

“God pours the golden oil of mercy into empty vessels.”²⁶

And

“If God should show mercy to such only as are worthy, he would show none at all.”²⁷

C. Exod. 34:6-7 – “And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.”²⁸

*“When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I’m lost,
In wonder, love, and praise.”*

Joseph Addison

²⁴ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pg. 113.

²⁵ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 72.

²⁶ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg 97.

²⁷ *Ibid.* pg. 96.

²⁸ Thomas Watson observes that this verse has six expressions to describe God’s mercy but only one expression to describe justice. *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 93.

X. THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

- A. Stephen Charnock defines God's omnipotence with these words,

"The power of God is that ability and strength, whereby He can bring to pass whatsoever he pleases; whatsoever His infinite wisdom can direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of His will can resolve."²⁹

- B. Thomas Watson illustrates God's omnipotence saying,

"To create requires infinite power. All the world cannot make a fly. God's power in creating is evident: because He needs no instruments to work with; He can work without tools; because He needs no matter to work upon; He creates matter, and then works upon it; and because He works without labor; 'He spake, and it was done.' (Psa. 33:9)"³⁰

- C. Stephen Charnock illustrates God's omnipotence,

"This is but a small landscape of some of his works of power; the outsides and the extremities of it; more glorious things are within His palaces: though those things argue a stupendous power of the Creator, in His works of creation and providence, yet they are nothing to what may be declared of His power. And what may be declared is nothing to what may be conceived; and what may be conceived, is nothing to what is above the conceptions of any creature. These are but little curbs and fragments of that Infinite Power, which is in His nature, like a drop in comparison to the mighty ocean; a hiss or whisper in comparison to a mighty voice of thunder."³¹

- D. Jer. 32:17 – "Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You."

- E. Because God is all powerful, He can do whatever it takes to protect you (Rom. 8:31-39), preserve you (I Pet. 1:5), provide for you (Matt. 6:25-31), and help you when you are weak (II Cor. 12:9).

29 Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, vol. 2, pg. 13.

30 Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 78.

31 Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, vol. 2, pg. 9.

XI. THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

- A. A. W. Pink defines God's omniscience saying,

"He knows everything: everything possible, everything actual; all events and all creatures, of the past, the present, and the future. He is perfectly acquainted with every detail in the life of every being in heaven, in earth, and in hell. . . Nothing escapes His notice, nothing can be hidden from Him, nothing is forgotten by Him. . . His knowledge is perfect. He never errs, never changes, never overlooks anything."³²

- B. A. W. Tozer speaking of God's omniscience says,

"God perfectly knows Himself and, being the source and author of all things, it follows that He knows all that can be known. And this He knows instantly and with fullness of perfection that includes every possible item of knowledge concerning everything that exists or could have existed anywhere in the universe at any time in the past or that may exist in the centuries or ages yet unborn.

God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feelings, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones, all dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell."³³

- C. Job 37:14-16 -- "Listen to this, O Job, Stand and consider the wonders of God. 15 "Do you know how God establishes them, And makes the lightning of His cloud to shine? 16 "Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge."

- D. Thomas Watson makes this argument concerning God's omniscience,

"Would men go after strange flesh if they believed God was a spectator of their wickedness, and would make them to penance in hell for it? Would they defraud in their dealings and use false weights, if they thought God saw them, and for making their weights lighter would make their damnation heavier?"³⁴

And

³² A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 17.

³³ A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 56.

³⁴ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 58.

“No talebearer can inform on us, no enemy can make an accusation stick; no forgotten skeleton can come tumbling out of some hidden closet to abash us and expose our past; no unsuspected weakness in our characters can come to light to turn God away from us, since He knew us utterly before we knew Him and called us to Himself in the full knowledge of everything that was against us.”³⁵

XII. THE SOVEREIGNTY, PROVIDENCE, AND WILL OF GOD

A. A. W. Pink defines God’s sovereignty saying,

“The sovereignty of God may be defined as the exercise of his supremacy. Being infinitely elevated above the highest creature, He is the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth. Subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent; God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases. None can thwart Him, none can hinder Him. . . Divine sovereignty means that God is God in fact, as well as name, that He is on the Throne of the universe, directing all things, working all things "after the counsel of His own will.”³⁶

B. God is the archer. He is sovereign over the bow. He has the power and wisdom to do what he wishes with the bow. The bow is God's will. The archer can point the bow in any direction He wants. In the archer's quiver is a multitude of arrows which are the many facets or situations which accomplish His decree. God, by his sovereignty, directs the bow, His will, to launch the arrows, the individual situations of His will, at the target which is His decree. When the arrows are launched they encounter wind, turbulence, gravity etc. These things are the free movements of God's creation. They are man's will concurring with God's will and often they are contrary to God's will. But the archer is able to guide the arrow to the bull's eye, his perfect will or decree, in every case.

C. Thomas Watson explains God’s providence with these words,

“The providences of God are sometimes dark, and our eyes dim, and we can hardly tell what to make of them; but when we cannot unriddle providence, let us believe that it will work together for the good of the elect. Rom. 8:28 says, And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” The wheels in a clock seem to move contrary one to another, but they help forward the motion of the clock, and make the chimes ring: so the providence of God seems to be cross wheels; but for all that, they shall carry on the good of the elect.”³⁷

³⁵ *Ibid.* pg. 57.

³⁶ A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 32.

³⁷ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 125.

- D. A. W. Tozer provokes us to thought concerning God's sovereignty,
- “Were there even one datum of knowledge, however small, unknown to God, His rule would break down at that point. To be Lord over all creation, He must possess all knowledge. And were God lacking one infinitesimal modicum of power, that lack would end His reign and undo His kingdom; that one stray atom of power would belong to someone else and God would be a limited ruler and hence not sovereign.”³⁸
- E. Thomas Watson speaking of providence says,
- “We are beholden to wicked men, who against their wills do us good.”³⁹
- F. Jonathan Edwards argues God's sovereign decree saying,
- “Whether God has decreed all things that ever come to pass or not, all that own the being of a God, own that He knows all things beforehand. Now, it is self-evident that if He knows all things beforehand, He either does approve of them or does not approve of them; that is, He either is willing they should be, or He is not willing that they should be. But to will that they should be is to decree them.”⁴⁰
- G. Psa. 135:6 – “Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.”
- H. Thomas Watson explains the hard things of God's providence,
- “Perhaps the hearts of the godly were lifted up with riches, or with success; now God comes with a humbling providence to afflict them and fleece them. Better is the loss that makes them humble than the success that makes them proud. . . If the godly were not sometimes afflicted, and suffered an eclipse in their outward comforts, how could their graces be seen, especially their faith and patience? If it were always sunshine we should see no stars; so if we should have always prosperity, it would be hard to see the acting of men's faith. Thus you see God's providences are wise and regular, though to us they seem very strange and crooked.”⁴¹

38 A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 108.

39 The early church father Augustine, quoted by Thomas Watson in his work, *A Body of Divinity*.

40 Jonathan Edwards as quoted by A. W. Pink in his work, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 16.

41 Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 121.

XIII. THE TRANSCENDENCE & IMMANENCE OF GOD

A. Millard Erickson explains both transcendence and immanence,

[Transcendence and immanence] . . . “refer to God's relationship to the created world. We do not have in mind here God's specific actions with respect to the universe, but rather his status in relationship to it, that is the degree to which he is present and active within the universe (immanence) as opposed to being absent and removed from it (transcendence). . . Immanence and transcendence should not be regarded as attributes of God. Rather, these concepts cut across the various attributes of God's greatness and goodness. . . .in general, transcendence and immanence should be regarded as indications of how God, in all of his attributes, relates to the world.”⁴²

B. Jer. 23:23-24 Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah.

*How shall polluted morals dare
To sing Thy glory or Thy grace?
Beneath Thy feet we lie afar,
And see but shadows of Thy face.*
Isaac Watts

*Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!*

*Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before Thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no luster of our own.*
Oliver Wendell Holmes

XIV. THE UNITY OF GOD

A. Louis Berkhof speaking of the unity of God says,

42 Millard J. Erickson *Christian Theology*, pgs. 301-302.

“The unity of God (sometimes referred to as the solitariness of God) means that he is numerically one and that as such He is unique. It implies that there is but one Divine Being, that from the nature of the case there can be but one, and that all other beings exist of and through and unto him.”⁴³

- B. Deut. 6:4⁴⁴ -- “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!”
- C. Isa. 43:10 -- “You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.”
- D. Thomas Watson warns,

“Men make many gods. The apostle names the wicked man's trinity, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," I John 2:16: the lust of the flesh is pleasure; the lust of the eye, money; the pride of life, honor. Oh take heed of this! Whatever you deify beside God will prove a bramble, and a fire will come out of it and devour you. (Judges 9:15)”⁴⁵

XV. THE WISDOM OF GOD

- A. A. W. Tozer speaking of God's wisdom says,

“Wisdom, among other things is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means. It sees the end from the beginning, so there can be no need to guess or conjecture. Wisdom sees everything in focus, each in proper relation to all, and is thus able to work toward predestined goals with flawless precision.”⁴⁶

And Tozer says,

“When Christian theology declares that God is wise, it means vastly more than it says or can say, for it tries to make a comparatively weak word bear an incomprehensible plenitude of meaning that threatens to tear it apart and crush it under the sheer weight of the idea. "His understanding is infinite," says the

43 Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 61.

44 In this passage the emphasis is not on the numerical unity of God, but rather the fact that Jehovah or Yahweh ("I AM" see Exod. 3:14) is the only God that is entitled to bear the name Jehovah or Yahweh. Berkhof, *Syst.*, pg. 62.

45 Thomas Watson *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 107.

46 A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 60.

psalmist. It is nothing less than infinitude that theology is here laboring to express."⁴⁷

B. Thomas Watson showing God's wisdom in salvation said,

"Now, while Mercy was thus debating with itself, what to do for the recovery of fallen man, the Wisdom of God stepped in; and thus the oracle spake:--Let God become a man; let the Second Person of the Trinity be incarnate, and suffer; and so for fitness He shall be man, and for ability He shall be God; thus justice may be satisfied, and man saved. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God, thus to make justice and mercy to kiss each other! Great is this mystery, "God manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:6). What wisdom was this, that Christ should be made sin, yet know no sin; that God should condemn the sin, yet save the sinner! Here is wisdom, to find out the way of salvation."⁴⁸

C. Rom. 11:33 – "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"

D. J. I. Packer pokes at us when he says,

"How long is it since you read right through the Bible? Do you spend as much time with the Bible each day as you do even with the newspaper? What fools some of us are!--and we remain fools all our lives, simply because we will not take the trouble to do what has to be done to receive the wisdom which is God's free gift."⁴⁹

XVI. THE WRATH OF GOD

A. The wrath of God is His eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the displeasure and indignation of Divine equity against evil. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin. It is the moving cause of that just sentence which He passes upon evildoers.

B. After discussing the longsuffering of God, William Gurnall writes:

"But think not, sinners, that you shall escape thus; God's mill goes slow, but grinds small; the more admirable His patience and bounty now is, the more

⁴⁷ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, pg. 59.

⁴⁸ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 73.

⁴⁹ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pg.91.

dreadful and unsupportable will that fury be which ariseth out of His abused goodness. Nothing smoother than the sea, yet when stirred into a tempest, nothing rageth more. Nothing so sweet as the patience and goodness of God, and nothing so terrible as His wrath when it takes fire.”⁵⁰

C. Thomas Watson illustrates the eternity of God’s wrath saying,

“If all the body of the earth and sea were turned into sand, and all the air up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and a little bird should come every thousand years, and fetch away in her bill but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand, what numberless years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetched away! Yet, if at the end of all that time, the sinner might come out of hell, there would be some hope; but that word 'Ever' breaks the heart. 'The smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever.' What a terror is this to the wicked, enough to put them into a cold sweat, to think as long as God is eternal, He lives forever to be avenged upon them!”⁵¹

D. A. W. Pink argues for God’s wrath with these words,

“A study of the concordance will show that there are *more* references in Scriptures to the anger, fury, and wrath of God, than there are to His love and tenderness. Because God is holy He hates all sin, His anger burns against the sinner.”⁵²

E. J. I. Packer says,

“It is a plain fact that the loving Savior himself had more to say about the wrath and judgement of God than any other New Testament figure.”⁵³

F. Nah. 1: 2-8 – “A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies. 3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, And clouds are the dust beneath His feet. 4 He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither; The blossoms of Lebanon wither. 5 Mountains quake because of Him And the hills dissolve;

50 William Gurnall (1660), quoted by A. W. Pink in his *Attributes of God*, pg. 86.

51 Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 63.

52 A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pg. 82.

53 J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pg. 137.

Indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, The world and all the inhabitants in it. 6 Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire And the rocks are broken up by Him. 7 The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him. 8 But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, And will pursue His enemies into darkness.”

G. J. I. Packer says of God’s wrath,

“Nobody stands under the wrath of God save those who have chosen to do so. The essence of God's action in wrath is to *give men what they choose*, in all its implications: nothing more, and equally nothing less. God's readiness to respect human choice to this extent may appear disconcerting and even terrifying, but it is plain that His attitude here is supremely just and poles apart from the wanton and irresponsible infliction of pain which is what we mean by cruelty.”⁵⁴

H. C. H. Spurgeon speaking of the phrase “The wrath to come” in Mt. 3:7 says,

“It is pleasant to pass over a country after a storm has spent itself; to smell the freshness of the herbs after the rain has passed away, and to note the drops while they glisten like purest diamonds in the sunlight. That is the position of a Christian. He is going through a land where the storm has spent itself upon his Savior's head, and if there be a few drops of sorrow falling, they distill from clouds of mercy, and Jesus cheers him by the assurance that they are not for his destruction.

But how terrible is it to witness the approach of a tempest: to note the forewarnings of the storm; to mark the birds of heaven as they droop their wings; to see the cattle as they lay their heads low in terror; to discern the face of the sky as it grows black, and look to the sun which shines not, and the heavens which are angry and frowning! How terrible to await the dread advance of a hurricane -- such as occurs, sometimes, in the tropics -- to wait in terrible apprehension till the wind shall rush forth in fury, tearing up trees from their roots, forcing rocks from their pedestals, and hurling down all the dwelling-places of man!

And yet, sinner, this is your present position. No hot drops have as yet fallen, but a shower of fire is coming. No terrible winds howl around you, but God's tempest is gathering its dread artillery. As yet the water-floods are dammed up by mercy, but the flood-gates shall soon be opened: the thunderbolts of God are yet in his storehouse, but lo! the tempest hastens, and how awful shall that moment be when God, robed in vengeance, shall march forth in fury! Where, where, where,

54 J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pg. 139.

O sinner, wilt thou hide you head, or where will you flee? O that the hand of mercy may now lead you to Christ! He is freely set before you in the gospel: his riven side is the rock of shelter. You know your need of him; believe in him, cast yourself upon him, and then the fury shall be overpast forever.”⁵⁵

John 17:3

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

I Chron. 28:9

“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.