

# What God Is

## The Attributes of God

**G**od's attributes are the qualities, features, or characteristics of His person, often called His "perfections." And with God, that word can properly be used in its fullest sense. He alone is truly perfect (Matthew 5:48b, Psalm 18:30, Deuteronomy 32:4).

The first three attributes usually considered may be stated like this: God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His person. These are set apart because they determine the character of every other attribute. All the wonderful aspects of God's character are true to an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable degree!

### **Infinity, Eternity, Immutability**

That God is infinite means that in every aspect of His being, He is free from all limitation. Psalm 147:5 says, "His understanding is infinite." That God is eternal means that God always was and always will be—He is infinite in respect to time. He is the One who "was, and is, and is to come" (Revelation 4:8). That God is unchangeable means that as the great "I Am," He

always will be what He always was. He says, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Malachi 3:6).

Now think of just some of the implications of these truths. If you are a true believer, and are in Christ, God's love for you is infinite love. The wisdom directing your path is infinite wisdom. The power by which He promises to keep you and deliver you and answer your prayers is likewise infinite. And since He is eternal, there will never be a day when He is not there to do you good. Since He is unchangeable, you need never fear that He will somehow change His demeanor towards you, that He will prove moody and temperamental and turn on you in the end. Ours is an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable salvation.

### **Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence**

Next, let us consider three attributes that begin with the prefix *omni*, which means "all." God is omnipotent, omniscient, and

omnipresent—all-powerful, all-knowing, and all- or everywhere-present.

God's *omnipotence*, is not primarily strength, but ability. The verb form of the word translated "power" in the New Testament means "to be able to." This is an important distinction for it emphasizes that God has infinite power in every realm. In Luke 1:37 we read, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." He can control thoughts, actions, circumstances, elements of nature, and above all, the hearts and minds of men. What a comfort in prayer! God has abundant power in every realm of your need. You cannot bring any request to your heavenly Father that is outside His ability to answer! "The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

The *omniscience* of God boggles our little minds. It means that He "knoweth all things" (1 John 3:20). Christ says even the

hairs of our heads are all numbered (Luke 12:7). His purpose in telling us that is to assure us that He knows and cares for us. As God said to Moses concerning the Israelites in bondage, "I know their sorrows" (Exodus 3:7).

God's *omnipresence* is likewise impossible to fathom. No one and nothing can escape God's presence. Thus God is present to see all that goes on in this world. Stephen Charnock said about this attribute, "Men will commit that in the presence of God, which they would be afraid or ashamed to do before the eye of men." But it is wonderful for believers to know that where God is, there are all His attributes to encourage and empower us and to give us victory over sin and self.

## Holiness

Another of the attributes that must inspire awe is God's holiness. The basic meaning of the word is "separation." God is separate not only from all sin and impurity (Habakkuk 1:13, I John 1:5), but also from all He has created. In other words God is not only infinitely pure, but infinitely higher and more glorious than all He has made (Isaiah 55:8-9). What reverence this should stir in our hearts! God is not "the man upstairs." He is the infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and almighty God.

## Justice

Likewise God's justice should cause men to tremble. His infinite justice means that inflexibly, perfectly, without exception, and to the smallest degree, he will deal in absolute justice with all His creatures (Psalm 89:14; Genesis 18:25; Romans 2:6). There appears to be much injustice in the world, but ultimately no one gets away with anything. All scales will be balanced in the end. And for true believers what a comfort it is to know that the judge Himself (see John 5:22) laid aside His robe for us and took on Himself the terrifying punishment we deserved.

## Wisdom

Infinite wisdom is another amazing attribute. It means simply that God always does the very best thing in the very best way (Romans 16:27; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 25). How wonderful to know that this is the wisdom directing the course of our lives!

## Goodness

One of the largest attributes to consider is the goodness of God (Exodus 34:6-7; Nehemiah 9:17). It encompasses many marvelous aspects of God's nature including His love, grace, mercy, kindness, and

faithfulness. 1 John 4:8 says simply, "God is love," and the infinite nature of that love assures us that at all times and in everything He works in our lives, God is loving us.

God's *grace* is His infinite favor and bounty poured out on us who deserve nothing but His wrath (Ephesians 2:1-8). God's *mercy* is that attribute by which He beholds the misery of His people due to sin and is moved to deliver them from it (Micah 7:18). Truly, God is good to us (Psalm 73:1)!

## Sovereignty

Crowning all these attributes is the sovereignty of God. This is God's world and He is in control of it: "Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psalm 135:6; see Daniel 4:35). He "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1:11), and His will is to work all things for the glory of His name and for the good of His redeemed people.

The study of God's attributes is a wonderful study, or as Moses put it, there is no God like our God and no people like God's people (Deuteronomy 33:26-29). ■

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