

## Part 4 - Who is God?

### A Study of His Attributes – Greatness I

---

#### Opening

- Our studies are based around “Secret Church” – David Platt

#### Do you know Him?

 **Psalm 46:10**

***Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.***

#### The Message so Far

What are the dangers of not knowing who God is.  
Can we know God?  
How do we know God?  
God is very into His name.

Idolatry  
Not exhaustively, but truthfully.  
Through His Holy Spirit  
Protecting. Honouring.

#### Names of God?

ELOHIM	God (Power/Creator)
ADONIA	Lord, Master
YAHWEY	He Is The Lord
EL ELYON	God Most High
EL SHADDAI	God Almighty
JEHOVAH JIREH	The Lord Who Provides
JEHOVAH SABAOTH	The Lord Of Hosts
JEHOVAH ROPHE	The Lord Who Heals
JEHOVAH NISSI	The Lord Is My Banner
JEHOVAH MEKADESH	The Lord Who Makes You Holy
JEHOVAH SHALOM	The Lord Is Peace
JEHOVAH TSIDKENU	The Lord Our Righteousness
JEHOVAH SHAMMAH	The Lord Is There
JEHOVAH ROHI	The Lord Is My Shepherd

# Attributes of God

We're going to look at the characteristics of God's nature – the things that reveal what God is like. We're talking about the essence of God – what makes God God.

## Forms of Attributes of God

### Personal

- we're not talking about God in pieces but as a whole
- it's not a bit of love here, and a piece of mercy there, some wrath here
- Starts @ 1 John 1:5 'God is Light; in Him there is no darkness'
- Concludes @ 1 John 4:16 'God is Love'
- Attributes exist together as a whole – always love, good, wrath, mercy, kindness
- They don't change through history – he was wrathful in the OT & loving in the NT

### Practical

- God's attributes help us understand how God acts
- Helps us understand why God does what He does

### Perfect

- His attributes are perfect and don't change
- to say that God was loving here, but not there implies that in one instance he acted perfectly, but not in the other – which is a judgement call we can make when we incorrectly view God and who he is
- He is perfect in the expression of every one of His attributes
- They are all perfect, excellent and complete in every way

### Permanent

- He does not gain attributes
- He doesn't lose attributes
- He is Holy; He was Holy; He will always be Holy
- He is Loving; He was Loving; He will always be Loving

### Praiseworthy

- we praise Him for all His attributes – love, mercy, wrath, justice kindness, wisdom

## 1. God's Glory is His Supreme Passion

What do I mean by that?

- it's important to understand this aspect of God
- it is central to understanding God and who He is.

Isaiah 43:6-7 states "I created you for my glory"

Probably no text in the Bible reveals the passion of God for his own glory more clearly and bluntly as Isaiah 48:9-11 where God says:

 **Isaiah 48:9-11 (NIV)**

***For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to destroy you completely. See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.***

This shows us:

- the centrality of God in his own affections
- the most passionate heart for the glorification of God is ... God himself
- God's ultimate goal is to uphold and display His own glory.



If I asked you 'why does God love you?' You'd probably say 'because I'm loveable!' (and perhaps you are, some perhaps more than others!). But that's not what scripture teaches. God loves you – for His own glory.

If I asked you 'why did Jesus die on the cross?' You'd probably say, 'to pay the price for my sins.' And yes, that's correct in part. But look at what Jesus says in John 12:28 as he's preparing to go to the cross – 'Father, glorify your name.'

Romans 3:21-26 says that 'He did this to demonstrate His justice' to reveal His character. Jesus went to the cross for the glory of His father.

If Jesus' passion was to bring glory to His father, then we to express and live out that same passion today!

## God is a Radically God-Centred God

You need to see this – God lives and works to exalt ... Himself.

Leads to us thinking 'Is God selfish?' – but work the logic through.

To exalt another is to elevate that one above ourselves – so the question is, 'Who else would you have God exalt?'

- As soon as God exalts another, He is no longer God.
- God alone deserves the right to exalt Himself.

We see it all through scripture.

## God Loves Me?

All through Sunday school we drew pictures saying ‘God loves me’ – it would look a bit strange to change that to ‘God loves Himself’ and sending those pictures home – but that’s perfectly correct!

So where does that leave us?

This leads us to the second great truth.

## 2. God’s Glory is Our Supreme Satisfaction

Think about it. If God is perfect and infinitely loving – everything about Him is love, then what’s the most loving thing that God can do for us? It is to share Himself with us. All that is God, all of His love, majesty, beauty, wisdom – shared with you and me.

 **Psalm 16:11**

***In Your presence there is fullness of joy, in Your right hand are pleasures for evermore.***

 **C.S. Lewis**

***“In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.”***

Knowing His glory is our supreme satisfaction!

In today’s church, it’s not popular to say it, but the picture from scripture is that God does not revolve around our happy worlds.

This can be hard to grasp – but when our world is collapsing, when we are touched by tragedy or pain or hardship – here’s where it’s hard to understand - the ultimate end of all things is the glory of God.

And the beauty of this is - that when we are given and surrendered to God in our devotion, affection and love, we will receive the greatest satisfaction to our lives when God is glorified.

We can experience the glory of God every day. We were made to give Him glory. We will know peace when we understand that giving Him glory is the calling upon our lives. It’s what we were made for.

## In Summary

- God's supreme passion is for His Glory
- God's glory is our supreme satisfaction

## Two Categories

We're going to look at good from 2 angles – at his:

- Goodness
- Greatness

We're going to break these 2 categories into 7 parts each – so here we go!

## The Greatest of God

### *Tozer Quote*

***"The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him."***

That's a strong quote! So for some of us, perhaps it's time to reshape our view of God.

### **(A) His independence**

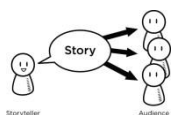
- God is self-existent
- God is self-sufficient

#### **God's Self-existent.**

*Meaning: existing independently of other beings or causes.*

A valid question today when discussing God is – Does God exist?

Psalm 14:1 "The fool says in his heart there is no God."



Talking to my doctor on one visit, we discussed faith. He said, 'I'm an atheist'. I said in reply, 'No you're not. You're an agnostic.' 'How do you figure that?' he replied. 'Well, to say definitively that something does not exist, means that you must have searched everywhere, exhausted all knowledge, contemplated all possibilities and after all that come up with blanks. The reality is that you are not capable of doing all that, so you cannot say with certainty that God does not exist. It's more realistic to call yourself agnostic.' He smiled and nodded.


## So here's the logic to the argument:

***In order to say God does not exist, you had to have searched all knowledge to see if God is there. And if you have searched all knowledge, then that means you have all knowledge. By definition, then, you are God, and therefore you deny your own existence with your statement, "There is no God."***

***You have to at least admit that there is a possibility that God exists.***

There are three main arguments for the existence of God:

1. Creation – from 'nothing comes nothing' – the Big Bang when discovered proved that the universe had a beginning just like the bible said – consider what prominent atheistic scientists said when it was discovered:

 ***"... the notion of a beginning is repugnant to me... I simply do not believe that ... things started off with a bang... the expanding Universe is preposterous... it leaves me cold."***

*Arthur Eddington*

***"Down with the Big Bang"***

*John Maddox – atheist, editor for Nature magazine*


***"It is a strange conclusion... it cannot really be true."***

*Allan Sandage - Carnegie Observatories*

***"There is a strange ring of feeling and emotion in these reactions. They come from the heart, whereas you would expect the judgments to come from the brain."***

*NASA's Robert Jastrow*

Consider the quote by Robert Zastrow (Director of NASA's Institute for Space Studies):

 ***The details differ, but the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same. This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always believed the word of the Bible. But we scientists did not expect to find evidence for an abrupt beginning because we have had, until recently, such extraordinary success in tracing the chain of cause and effect backward in time ... At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.***

2. Design – God has left the imprints of His glory upon the design of the earth.

Consider the incredible systems that exist in the world

- a. molecular machines that exist in the cell
- b. respiratory system – that converts oxygen to energy in our bodies
- c. circulatory system – pumps blood around our bodies
- d. nervous system – carries electrical signals around our bodies

Have you ever stopped to wonder how healing works?



Show Blood Clotting video

 **Romans 1:18-20**

***"Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."***

3. Morality – God has left the imprints of good and evil on our hearts.

We all have an awareness of right and wrong. If there is a law that we sense on our hearts then there must be a law giver – and that's God.

If we are evolved then there is no basis for right or wrong – simply what you 'feel' is right or wrong – these are personal preferences. There is justification for arguing against me because my opinion or preference is just as valid as yours. So in the end, might wins!

That's what happens when God is killed off in a culture. Consider the philosopher Nietzsche's comment, "God is dead" in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He said it would be the bloodiest century we've ever seen. He knew, as an atheist who said, "There is no God," that this radically affects the moral foundations of a culture, because that strips the culture of the moral lawgiver.

So we arrive at the point convinced that God exists. So where did come from?

God was never created and never came into being. "From everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Ps. 90:2). The reality is that God has no origin. He is the un-created God.

This certainly is a picture of faith. We consider the universe as having a beginning – something therefore **caused** it to exist. That **cause** is God Himself. But God is outside time – so a beginning and end do not make sense when we're talking about God!

God is entirely independent.

 **Acts 17:25 says**

***And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.***

He does not derive His life from any external source. All of us derive our lives from external sources, God doesn't. That means that God doesn't need us, or anyone for that matter, for anything.

- He does not need us for anything – that leads to the self-sufficiency of God

### **God's Self-sufficiency**

God has no needs.

 **Psalm 50:10**

***"For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it."***

God speaks - "Just in case you needed to know, if I were hungry, you would not be the person I would come to." He has no needs.

### **God does not need our companionship**

- God did not create man because He was lonely
- God has perfect relationship, and fellowship, within Himself in the Trinity.

### **He does not need our worship**

- God doesn't need our songs.
- He doesn't need our Bible study.
- He doesn't need our church attendance.
- He doesn't need your worship (think about heaven right now!)

 **Tozer said,**

***"Were all human beings suddenly to become blind, still the sun would shine by day and the stars by night, for these owe nothing to the millions who benefit from their light. So, were every man on earth to become an atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard to any other. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away."***

Where's the meaning for life then?

- Our meaning in life is not found in God's need for us.
- Our meaning in life is found in our need for God.



This is the opposite of what you're taught in the culture. It says, 'Your ultimate meaning is found in finding your significance.' The truth is – Christ is the ultimate significance and in finding Him, loving Him – we find our place in the universe, He is our significance.

## His Perfect Love

This speaks to us of His perfect love – He does not love us because He needs to. Rather, He chooses to love us because he **wants** to.

God needs no-one. God exists for Himself. We exist for God.

I know my place in God – if I dropped dead here today, God will still make His purposes known, He would still fulfil His plan. It has little to do with me, and everything to do with God.

And yet, He chooses to work through us and in us – that's an amazing truth today!

He loves us with a perfect love today.

## Summary

***Gal 5:20***

***I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.***

Look at that – Jesus gave Himself for you and me. It was a free-will offering of His own life for you and me – that's amazing!

***John 3:16***

***For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whosoever believes in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.***

Let's pray.