

THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Psalm 48:1, "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God in the mountain of his holiness";

Psalm 96:4, "For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods";

Psalm 145:3 "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable."

Intro: The moral attributes of God form for the human race a guide for morality and justice in society. One of the moral attributes of God is His holiness. Leviticus 20:7 says: "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God." Many other examples can be given as to our need of studying and learning the lessons given to us in the moral attributes of God. C.H. Spurgeon commented: "The word, the character, and the actions of God should be evermore before our eyes; we should learn, consider and reverence them. Men forget what they do not wish to remember, but the excellent attributes of the Most High are objects of the believer's affectionate and delightful admiration. We should keep the image of God so constantly before us that we become in our measure conformed unto it. The inner love to the right must be the main spring of Christian integrity in our public walk. The fountain must be filled with love to holiness and then the streams which issue from it will be pure and gracious."

I. THE HOLINESS OF GOD

A. God is separate from all moral evil and sin. God is high and lifted up and exalted above all of His created beings. Holiness denotes that in all that God is and does, He is perfect.

1. Holiness is that attribute by which God desired to be known in the Old Testament.

a. Isaiah 40:25-26a: "To whom shall ye liken me, or shall I be equal? Saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and see who hath created all these things..."

b. Ezekiel 39:7: "So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel."

c. The holiness of God is stressed by the division of the tabernacle and the temple into the holy and the

most holy places.

2. The New Testament also attests to the holiness of God.
 - a. 1 John 1:5: "God is light and in him is no darkness at all."
 - b. Hebrews 12:10: "But they [parents] verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

B. What we learn from the holiness of God:

1. That there is a great chasm between God and man (Habakkuk 1:13, "For thou art of purer eyes that to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity...").
 - a. Man, the sinner, is estranged from God, and God is estranged from the man the sinner. There is a chasm between them.
 - b. Before Adam fell, God and man had fellowship; now that fellowship is broken.
2. Man can not approach God on his own; he must do so through the virtue, grace, and merit of another. Man does not have nor is he able to achieve the sinlessness necessary to approach our Holy God.
 - a. In Christ, access to God is made possible because of the Gospel. Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ: By whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.."
 - b. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. 2:18)
 - c. "Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. 10:19)

II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND THE JUSTICE OF GOD

A. The righteousness and justice of God is that aspect of His holiness which deals with the treatment by the Almighty of His creatures. "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne" (Psalm 97:2).

1. Moral government has been instituted by God upon His creatures. He has imposed just laws. God executes His

laws by way of bestowing rewards and punishments.

2. The bestowing of rewards is called remunerative [profitable] justice. This is illustrated by the faithful servant in the parable of the talents where Jesus said: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). The righteous things that you do, child of God, do not go unnoticed.
 3. The infliction of punishment is punitive justice and is an expression of divine wrath (Genesis 2:17: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."). Man ate of the tree and spiritual death came immediately; physical death began that very moment as well (Romans 5:12).
 - a. The principal end of punishment is the maintenance of justice.
 - b. The secondary purpose of punishment is reformation and or deterrence (1 Timothy 5:20 "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear").
- B. If God's law is disobeyed, then the penalty must be inflicted; for God cannot not make a law and not enforce it. When man trespasses, then punishment must be given out— either personally or vicariously.
1. Justice demands that the sinner be punished or justice can except the vicarious substitutionary death of another.
 2. We deserve eternal separation from God as is stated in Romans 6:23a: "The wages of sin is death..."
 3. The scriptures teach that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God", and that "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).
 - a. Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 - b. 1 Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..."

III. THE GOODNESS OF GOD

- A. The goodness of God is manifest in a number of different and wonderful ways.
1. The goodness of God is seen in the love of God.
 - a. That God grieves over our sins is a strong indication that He loves His children (Ephesians 4:30 “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God...”).
 - b. 1 John 4:10 tells us that it is God who initiates love: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
 2. The benevolence of God is proof of His goodness.
 - a. Psalm 145:9: “The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”
 - b. The benevolence of God is not restricted to believers only. “...He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth the rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45).
 3. The benevolence of God is seen in His mercy.
 - a. “God’s mercy is his goodness manifested towards those who are in misery or distress...Mercy is an eternal necessary quality in God as an all-perfect being, but the of it in a given case is optional.[as is seen at the pool of Bethsaida] ” (Thiessen 86)
 - b. We who believe are saved because of His mercy to us (Titus 3:5).
 - c. Mercy is not getting what we deserve.
 4. The goodness of God is declared by His Grace. Grace is God’s goodness manifested to the undeserving. Grace is getting what we do not deserve.
 - a. Grace like mercy is optional to God. He does not have to bestow grace.
 - b. He shows grace to His chosen (Eph. 1:4-6).
 - c. Grace means that we are saved wholly apart from our own works or merit. The whole experience of salvation is a gift not a reward; it is all of grace (Eph. 2:8-9).
- B. The wonderful goodness of God is a testimony that He is the true and living One.

IV. THE VERACITY OF GOD

- A. That God is truth is evident. He is altogether trustworthy.
 - 1. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).
 - 2. God is faithful to Himself (2 Tim. 2:13: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.) He cannot deny His Word (Hebrews 11:11). He cannot and will not deny His people (1 Thess. 5:24 “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it”).
- B. The believer is in Him that is true (1 John 5:20).

Conclusion: God has set forth His marvelous moral attributes for us to live by and rejoice in.

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