



THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

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On Knowing God



- This is what the Lord says: “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord. (Jer 9:23-24)
- The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father... (C.H. Spurgeon)

On Knowing God to the Right Ends



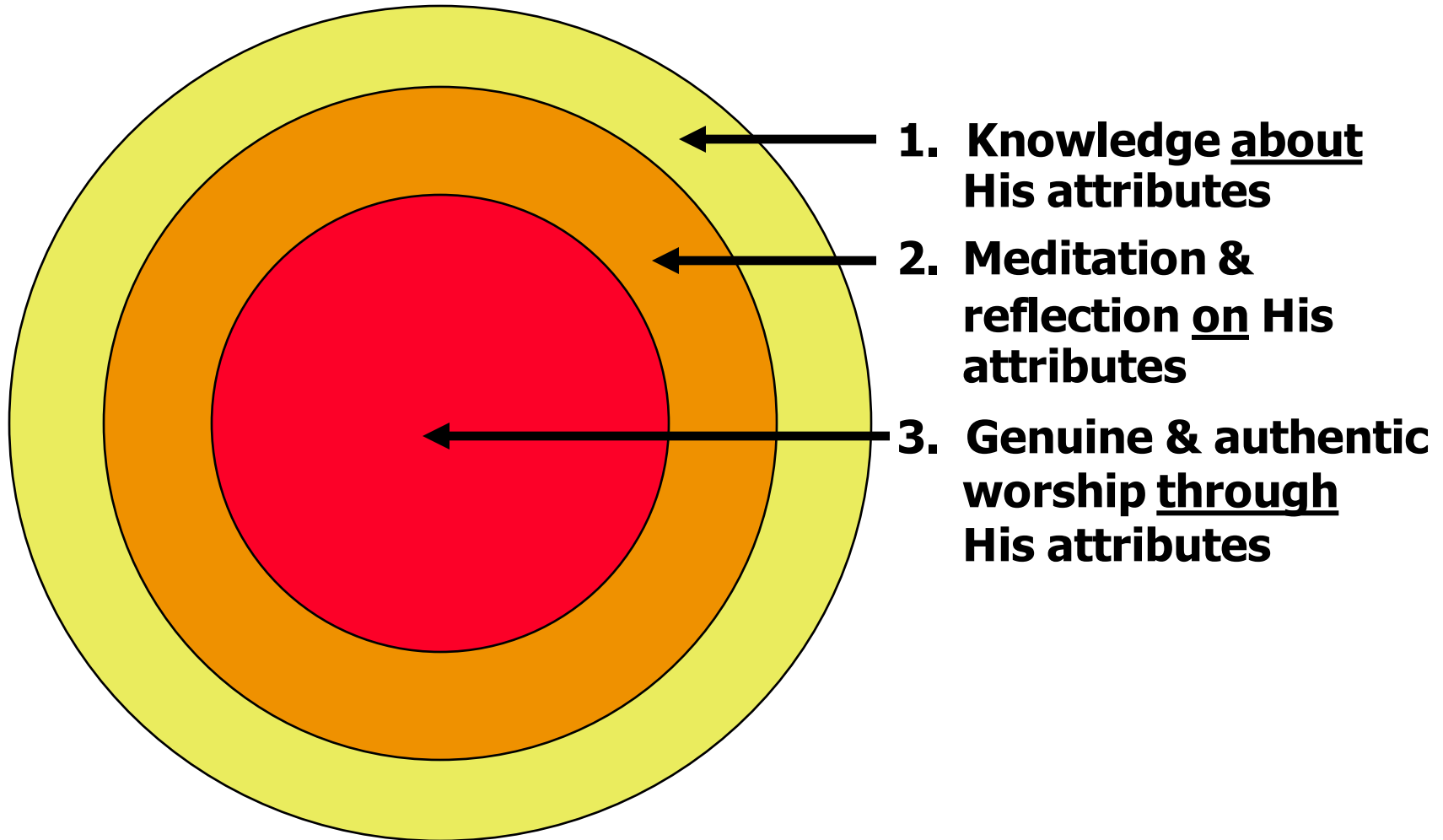
- The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into him, that they may delight in his presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God himself in the core and center of their hearts. (A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*)
- You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. (Jn 5:39-40)

What Knowing God Brings



- This is the great business of life--to “put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks.”...God remains gloriously all-satisfying. The human heart remains a ceaseless factory of desires. Sin remains powerfully and suicidally appealing. The battle remains: where will we drink? Where will we feast?...Feast on God. (John Piper, *Desiring God*)

Steps to Knowing God



Knowledge About His Attributes



- Sound bible exposition is an imperative must in the church of the living God. Without it, no church can be a New Testament church in any strict meaning of that term. (A.W. Tozer)
- Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is, at best a very slender part of religion. Though right tempers cannot subsist without right opinions, yet right opinions may subsist without right tempers... (John Wesley)

Meditation & Reflection on His Attributes



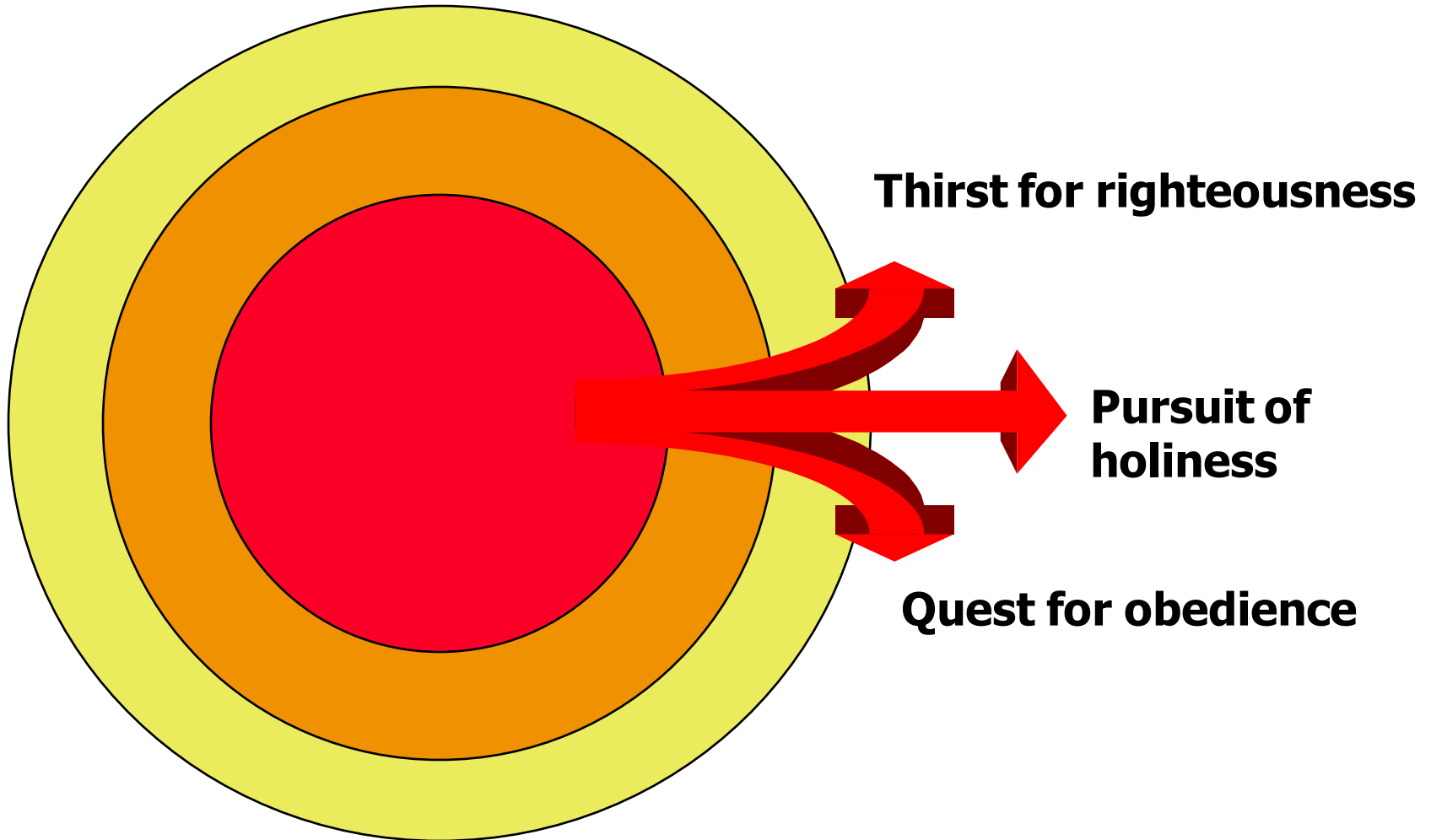
- How are we to do this? How can we turn our knowledge about God into knowledge of God? The rule for this is simple, but demanding. It is that we turn each truth that we learn about God into a matter for meditation before God, leading to prayer and praise to God. (J.I. Packer, Knowing God)
- I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds. (Ps 77:12)
- Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders. (Ps 119:27)

Authentic Worship Through His Attributes



- Vain worship is a worship in pretense alone:
 - You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ““These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”” (Mt 15:9)
- Authentic worship consists of our glad affirmation of God’s entire being and nature through our hearts, minds, souls, and with all our strength (Mt 22:37)
- Worship may only be authentic when presented to God in accordance with his attributes (nature)
- Authentic worship is the right end to which all knowledge of God flows

Results of Knowing God



Meditations on Knowing God



- Is our knowledge of God limited to knowledge *about* God, or does it go beyond?
- Tozer claimed that for “millions of Christians God is no more real than he is for non-Christians. They go through life trying love an ideal and be loyal to a mere principal.” Is this true in our Christian experience?
- Do we couple meditation upon God’s word with our Scripture reading, or tend to “read and walk away?”
- Do we find our worship tending toward pretense or a genuine response in light of his nature?

Who Do We Study?



- There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin and who will no means clear the guilty (WCF 2.1)

Summary of God's Attributes



- God's attributes are distinct, but integrated and linked throughout his entire essence:
 - The One True God
 - The Triune God
 - The Incarnate Christ
 - The Omnipresence of God
 - The Omniscience of God
 - The Omnipotence of God
 - The Immutability of God
 - The Holiness of God
 - The Freedom of God

Summary of God's Attributes



- God's attributes (cont):
 - The Sovereignty (Dominion) of God
 - The Decrees of God
 - The Wisdom of God
 - The Justice of God
 - The Wrath and Severity of God
 - The Goodness of God
 - The Mercy and Grace of God
 - The Patience of God
 - The Faithfulness of God
 - The Love of God

The One True God



- In Exodus, the Lord begins to reveal essential aspects about himself to his people:
 - Many of these aspects are revealed through his Name (see Ex 6:3)
- An key moment in this revelation is found in Ex 3:13-14. I AM who I AM:
 - Yahweh (to exist, to be)
 - A statement of God's self-existence and eternal everlastingness; the one true God (Is 45:4-7)
- This name is...a reminder to mankind that he has life in himself, and what he is now, he is eternally (Packer, Knowing God)

The One True God



- The name [I AM] is linked with the ancient name for God, Jehova. But it is more than just a name. It is a descriptive name, pointing to all that God is *in himself*. In particular, it shows him to be the One who is entirely *self-existent, self-sufficient, and eternal*. (J.M. Boice, Foundations of Christian Faith, italics mine)
- The greatest and best man in the world must say, “By the grace of God I am what I am,” but God says absolutely--and it is more than any creature, man, or angel can say--I am that I am (Matthew Henry’s Commentary)

The One True God



- On the basis of “I AM,” God initiates the first two commandments (Ex 20:3-6):
 - No other gods before Jehovah
 - Worship and serve no idols or likenesses of anything in heaven or earth
- Throughout Scripture, God reinforces his “one trueness”:
 - Dt 4:32-39; Is 45:4-7, 14, 21-22; Is 46:9; Joel 2:27

The One True God



- Ultimately, all sin involves trying to take the incommunicable attributes which make God “One and True” and make them our own
- Ultimately, all sin reduces to violating the first two commandments, and all men engage in it:
 - Jew (Mt 16:19-22)
 - Gentile (Ro 1:21-23)
- The ultimate, and most deadly, violation of the first two commandments is the idolatry of self:
 - Jer 2:11-13; Jer 17:9

Meditations on the One True God



- Read Ex 3:12-13
 - Reflect on the name "I AM." Who is I AM where you are?
- Read Is 46:9-10
 - What are your personal memorials when God revealed his oneness to you?
- Read Jer 2:11-13
 - What are the broken cisterns in your life--the cisterns that hold no water?

The Triune God



- And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Gen 1:2-3, NASB)
- There is but One only, the living and true God. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q 5-6)

How Can One be Three?



- Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: (Dt 6:4)
- But in this verse the word for “one” is echad which means not one in isolation, but one in unity. In fact the word is never used in the Hebrew Bible of a stark singular entity. It is the word used in speaking of one bunch of grapes, for example, or in saying that the people of Israel responded as one people.
J.M. Boice, Foundations for Christian Faith
- This word is also the same word used “and they became one flesh.” (Gen 2:24)

Unity and Diversity



- Each person [subsistence] of the Godhead refers to himself as “I”, yet none exist without the “you” of the same Godhead. Each are distinct in terms of existence, yet none exist individually. When the Godhead speaks, it speaks as “I”. This is diversity subsumed by unity.
- Nobody else, no philosophy, has ever given us an answer for unity and diversity. So when people ask whether we are embarrassed intellectually by the Trinity, I always switch it over into their own terminology--unity and diversity...Christianity does have an answer in the existence of the Trinity. (Francis Schaeffer, He is there and he is not silent)

The Roles of the Trinity



- The Father:
 - The “grand conductor” of the Godhead:
 - Is 55:10-11
 - Mt 24:36
 - The great authority of the Godhead:
 - Jn 5:19, 30
 - Rev 2:25-27
 - The sender of the Son and Spirit:
 - Of the Son: Jn 16:28
 - Of the Spirit: Jn 15:26

The Roles of the Trinity



- The Son:
 - The Word of God (logos) - the expression of thought--not the mere name of an object
 - The means of creation:
 - Gen 1:3; Jn 1:10; Col 1:16
 - The basis of redemption:
 - 2 Co 5:20-21; Col 1:12-14; Ro 8:1-4
 - The great advocate:
 - 1 Jn 2:1-2; Heb 4:15-16, 7:23-25

The Roles of the Trinity



- The Spirit:
 - The Breath of God, the Counselor (comforter)
 - The great witness:
 - Jn 15:26-27; 2 Co 1:20-22
 - The great tutor:
 - Jn 14:25-26, Jn 16:7-15
 - The indweller and enabler:
 - Ro 8:9-14

Meditations on the Triune God



- Reflect on the unity and diversity of your personal existence and world about you. What does understanding the Holy Trinity say about understanding the way you should approach these things?
- Reflect on the roles of the Father, Son, and Spirit. How do you see these come to life in your daily existence? What reasons do you have to offer daily praise for these roles?

The Divine Incarnation



- The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived of the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man (WCF 8.2)

Very God



- The Word has always been God:
 - In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. (Jn 1:1-2)
 - Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form (nature) of God... (Ph 2:6)
 - And he is the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his nature...(Heb 1:3)
- The Word forfeited his glory, not deity, to become man:
 - although he existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of man (Ph 2:5-7)

Very God



- The deity continued in the Christ:
 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:14)
 - He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation (Col 1:15)
 - 4413 protos (pro'-tos); contracted superlative of 4253; foremost (in time, place, order or importance): KJV-- before, beginning, best, chief (-est), first (of all)
 - For in him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form (Col 2:9)
 - ...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus (Ti 2:13)

Very God



- Christ, and those he dealt with, understood his deity:
 - But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. (Jn 5:17-18)
 - He who has seen me has seen the Father (Jn 14:9)
 - Truly, truly I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am (Jn 8:57-58)
 - Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:27-28)

Very God



- After his ascension, Christ re-assumed his former glory:
 - Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth (Ph 2:10-11, see Is 45:23)
 - When he had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb 1:4)

Very Man



- The humanity of Christ was true humanity:
 - What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life...what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also that you may have fellowship with us (1 Jn 1-3)
 - Since then the children share in flesh and blood He himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death...(Heb 2:14)
 - Therefore, he had to be made like his brethren in all things, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb 2:17)

Very Man



- The vigils and passions of Christ display his true humanity:
 - and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. (Jn 4:6)
 - Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." (Mt 4:1-2)
 - And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. (Lk 22:44)

Very Man



- Christ's very real temptations display his true humanity:
 - And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and {began} to pray, saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." (Lk 22:41-42)
 - For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (Heb 2:18)

A Similar Paradox



- Certain experiments, such as those involving interference and diffraction effects, show that electromagnetic radiation interacts as waves; other experiments, show that electromagnetic radiation interacts as particlelike quanta known as photons. Surely the wave and particle interpretations are not consistent...We are therefore trapped into an uncomfortable conclusion: light is not *either* particles or waves; it is somehow *both* particles and waves and only shows one or the other aspect, depending on the kind of experiment we are doing.

Kenneth Krane, *Modern Physics*

One Christ



- Because of the incarnation, we consider that the creator of life is our personal atoner
- Because of the incarnation, Christ assumes the role of true and eternal mediator:
 - Heb 4:14-16
 - Heb 7:23-25
 - Ro 8:33-34
- Because of the incarnation, we catch a glimpse of how the realms of deity and humanity converge:
 - Jn 11:1-44

The Majesty of God



- O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth, who hast displayed Thy splendor above the heavens! (Ps 8:1)
- Three foundational attributes combine to make up God's majesty and splendor:
 - The omnipresence (all presence) of God
 - The omniscience (all knowledge) of God
 - The omnipotence (all power/authority) of God

The Omnipresence of God



- God's essence is omnipresent. That is, he is "all present" or "everywhere present"
- Omnipresence consists of two elements:
 - Immanence - "God is immanent, and this means he is with us. Look at a stone: God is present. Look at a person: God is present." (James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*)
 - Transcendence - "This means God is beyond us and our world. He is otherly. Look at a stone: God is not in it; God is beyond it. Look at a man: God is not he; God is beyond him." (Sire)

The Omnipresence of God



- Immanence and transcendence:
 - “Some, therefore said, ‘God was everywhere and nowhere.’ Nowhere, i.e. not bounded by any place, nor receiving from any place anything for his preservation or sustainment. He is everywhere, because no creature, either body or spirit, can exclude the presence of his essence.” (Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*)
 - “It was a good expression of a heathen to illustrate this, ‘That God is a sphere or circle, whose center is everywhere, and circumference nowhere.’” (Charnock)

Proofs of Immanence



- "Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places, so I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD. (Jer 23:23-24)
- Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Thy hand will lead me, and Thy right hand will lay hold of me. (Ps 139:7-10)
- ...that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' (Acts 17:27-28)

Proofs of Transcendence



- "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built! (1 Ki 8:27, also 2 Chr 2:6)
- Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? (Is 66:1)
- ...one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in [you] all. (Eph 4:6)
- For by Him all things were created, {both} in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Col 1:16-17)

Theophanies



- Many instances of Scripture identify the Lord displaying himself in anthropomorphic or other physical form (e.g., Gen 32, Ex 34). Such an appearance is known as a theophany (or, in some cases, a Christophany)
 - The theophanic form of appearance does not disclose what God is ontologically in Himself, but merely how He condescends to appear and work for the redemption of His people. It establishes a redemptive and revelatory presence in definite localities, which does not, in the mind of the writer, detract from the divine omnipresence. (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)

Meditations on God's Omnipresence



- Do our actions confirm our belief in God's immanence?
 - Ez 8:1-12
- Do our actions confirm our belief in God's transcendence?
 - Jn 4:7-24
- How does God's immanence and transcendence affect our approach to worship?

The Omniscience of God



- Omniscience - All knowing or “everything knowing”
 - Closely correlated to omnipresence
 - An attribute uniquely assigned to God by Scripture
 - Many times allegorized in the Scripture as “all seeing” or “all hearing”
- God knows and has always known all; he has never learned it; he has never been instructed by anyone:
 - Is 40:13-14
 - Ro 11:33-36

The Omniscience of God

- All knowledge descends from the all-knowing God:
 - "God's knowledge is primary, for he is the pattern and source of all knowledge from which others merely borrow" (Thomas Watson); See Col 2:1-4
 - Apart from God, there is no answer to the question "How does the scientist [person] know; on what basis can he know that what he knows, he really knows?"
 - Apart from the all-knowing God, there is no basis for the universals which bind together our particulars of knowledge

The Omniscience of God

- God's knowledge penetrates all realms:
 - Nations and persons:
 - Is 7:1-9; Mt 10:28-30
 - Visible and hidden:
 - Ps 33:13-18; 139:1-4; Is 66:18
 - Is 29:15-16; Heb 4:13
 - Extending to the heart and thoughts:
 - Jer 17:10; Amos 4:13; Lk 16:13-15
 - Unlimited by time:
 - Jer 1:4-5; Is 46:9-10
- *Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite (Ps 147:5)*

Meditations on the Omniscience of God



- Consider that we may be able to deceive ourselves, but we are unable to deceive God who knows all things and all intentions
- Consider that God knows the worst and best about us at all times in life
- Consider that God doesn't see us simply in the "yesterday or today;" but as he yet will make us

The Omnipotence of God



- Omnipotence - All powerful
- In Scripture, omnipotence is attributed to God alone:
 - God can do whatever he wills
 - The power of God is that ability and strength whereby he can bring to pass whatsoever he pleases, whatsoever his infinite wisdom may direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of his will may resolve...How vain would be the eternal counsels, if power did not step in to execute them. Without power his mercy would be but feeble pity. His promises an empty sound, his threatenings a mere scarecrow. God's power is like himself: infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; it can neither be checked, restrained, nor frustrated by the creature (Charnock)

The Omnipotence of God



- Biblical names of God symbolizing his omnipotence:
 - The Almighty (Rev 19:6):
 - pantokrator (pan-tok-rat'-ore); the all-ruling, i.e. God (as absolute and universal sovereign)
 - El Shadday (Gen 17:1)
 - the almighty
 - Lord of Hosts (Ps 24:10)
 - power represented by the splendor of his retinue
 - Abhir (Gen 49:24)
 - strong one or mighty one
 - El Gibbor (Jer 20:11)
 - God hero or God champion

Proofs of God's Omnipotence



- 'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee, (Jer 32:17)
- "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and {among} the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' (Dan 4:35)
- But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. (Ps 115:3)
- For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. (Ps 135:6)

God's Two Forms of Power



- *Potentia absoluta* - Power exercised without the intervention of second causes (creation, miracles, direct revelation, inspiration, regeneration)
- *Potentia ordinata* - All of God's works of providence (i.e., through the use of "natural" second causes)

Examples of God's *Potentia Absoluta*



□ Creation:

□ The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine; the world and all it contains, Thou hast founded them. The north and the south, Thou hast created them; Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at Thy name. Thou hast a strong arm; Thy hand is mighty, Thy right hand is exalted. (Ps 89:11-12)

□ Miracles:

□ And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, you can make me clean." And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (Mt 8:2-3)

Examples of God's *Potentia Absoluta*



□ Revelation:

- For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal 1:11-12) .

□ Spiritual regeneration:

- He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5)

Examples of God's *Potentia Ordinata*



- Through natural elements:
 - He who made the Pleiades and Orion and changes deep darkness into morning, who also darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the LORD is His name. (Amos 5:8)
- Through birth:
 - And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?' "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." (Gen 18:13-14)

Examples of God's *Potentia Ordinata*



- Through nations & rulers:
 - "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'" (Is 44:28)
- Through dispositions of men:
 - "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive." (Gen 50:20)

Common Arguments Against Omnipotence



- Absolute Power:
 - Argument: If God is omnipotent, can he annihilate himself? Can he create a rock he cannot lift? Can he do evil?
 - Response: When, therefore, it is said that God is omnipotent because he can do whatever he wills, *it is to be remembered that his will is determined by his nature.* (Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology)
- The doctrine of omnipotence does not say “God can do anything.” The doctrine says “God can do whatever he pleases.” He will not be pleased to do that which is contrary to his nature. This is not a restriction on his power; it is an upholding of his perfection.

Common Arguments Against Omnipotence



□ The “Problem of Evil”:

1. If God is all-good, He would destroy evil
2. If God is all-powerful, He could destroy evil
3. Evil is not destroyed

Therefore, there is no such God

□ Reconcile by adding:

4. God has a morally sufficient reason for the evil that exists
(Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready*)

□ The morally sufficient reason is the preservation of God’s elect:

- Mt 13:24-30; 37-43

Meditations on the Omnipotent God



- How does knowing the omnipotent God put our own power in perspective? Are we humbled or arrogant in our strength? (Ps 8:3-4)
- Do we see God's *potentia ordinata*, or do we really believe in the "God of the gaps"?
- Does the knowledge of God's omnipotence enable us to genuinely trust his leadership of our lives?

The Immutability of God



- Immutability: The divine attribute of unchangeableness; related to the “God who changes not.”
- God’s immutability is portrayed in three primary areas:
 - Through his essence (life)
 - Through his character (attributes)
 - Through his counsel (plans & purposes)
- Like his “omni” attributes, his immutability is incommunicable
 - Not transferable to his creation
 - God’s uniquely alone

Immutable in Essence



- His nature and being are infinite, and so, subject to no mutations. There was never a time when He was not; there will never come a time when he shall cease to be. God has neither evolved, grown, nor improved. All that he is is today, he has ever been and ever will be (Arthur Pink)
- Created things have a beginning and ending, but not so their creator...He exists forever, he is always the same. He does not grow older. His life does not wax or wane. He does not gain new powers or lose those he once had. He does not mature or develop (J.I. Packer)

Immutable in Essence



- Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. (Ps 90:1-2)
- Of old Thou didst found the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end. (Ps 102:25-27)
- For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another. Listen to me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. (Is 48:11-12)

Immutable in Character



- God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth (WSC, Q. 4)
- He is sovereign and will always be sovereign. He is holy and will always be holy. He is just and will always be just, good and will always be good, truthful and will always be truthful. (J.M Boice)

Immutable in Character



- Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth (Ex 34:6); For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (Mal 3:6)
- Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations. (Ps 100:4-5)
- The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! Again you shall take up your tambourines, and go forth to the dances of the merrymakers. (Jer 31: 3-4)

Immutable in Counsel



- God's counsel includes his purposes and plans as decreed in his Word:
 - Regarding the plan of redemption
 - Regarding the destiny of creation
- Immutability here does not refer, however, to the inability to be affected by anything in any way (apatheia)
 - He is not like that divinity of Platonism who is unconcerned, and therefore unmoved, by all that happens upon the earth, but goes his way in heaven without looking around, without taking into consideration what is happening. (Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God)

Immutable in Counsel



- The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. (Ps 33:11)
- "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Num 23:19)
- "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." (1 Sam 15:29)
- For, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord abides forever." (1 Pe 1:24-25)
- in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. (Heb 6:18)

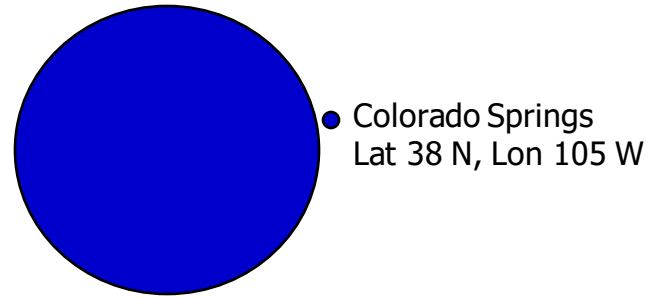
What About Relenting?



- Several Scripture verses deal with God's relenting or grieving over a direction taken:
 - Gen 6:5-7; Ex 32:10-14; Jon 3:10
- These verses must be taken "anthropomorphically" and from the "human plane"
 - Similar to God's "eyes" (1 Pe 3:12); "mouth" (Is 55:11); "wings" (Ps 17:8), "hand" (Ex 8:1)
- An interpretive aide in passages like these is the understanding of Biblical "reference frames"

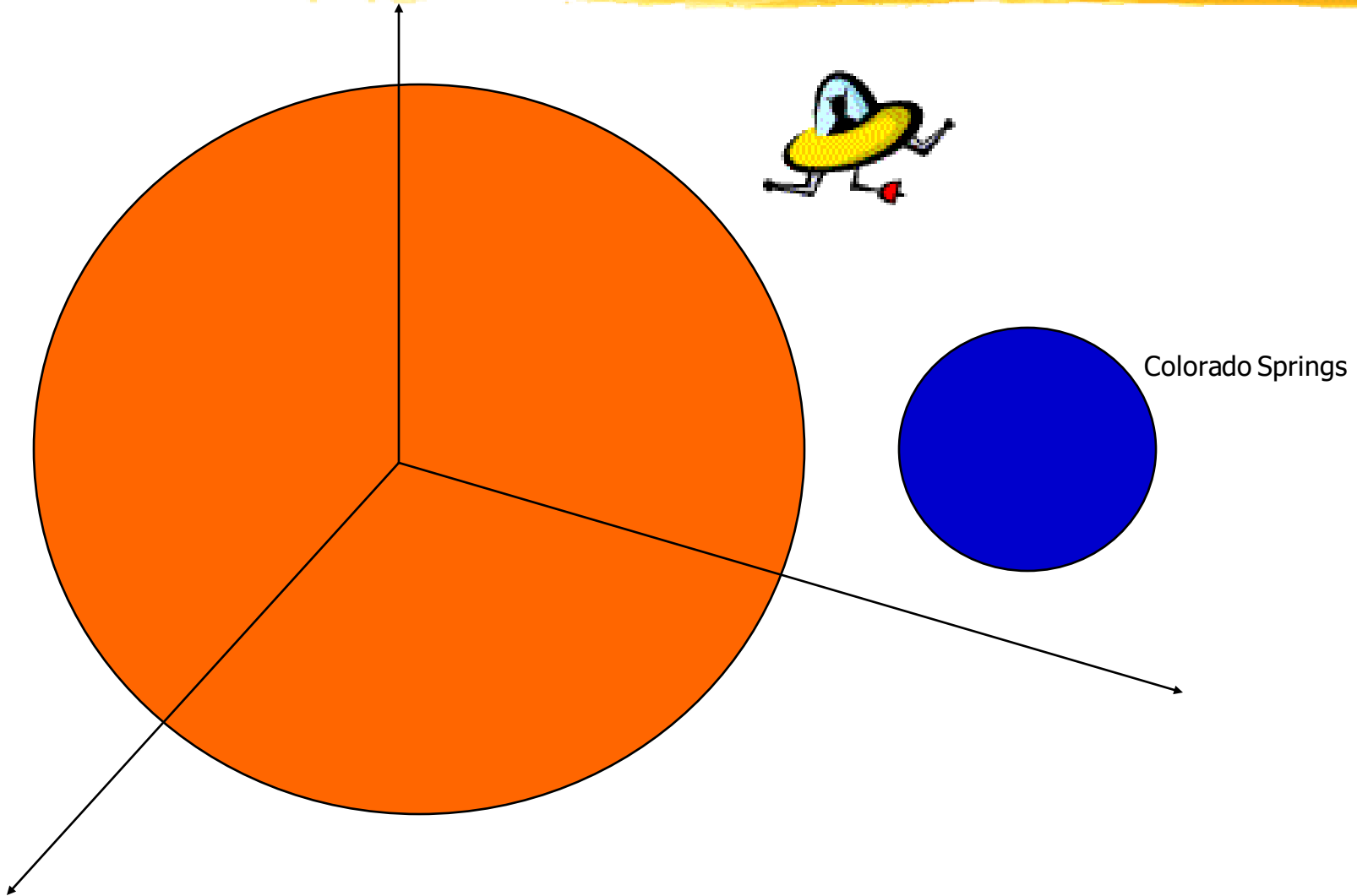
Biblical Reference Frames

- Biblical reference frames are analogous to common human “dimension problems” we have every day:
 - Directions to your house; from where???



The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps (Prov 16:9)

Biblical Reference Frames (Cont)



Meditations on the Immutable God



- Consider the number of dynamic things in life, and how you can find solace in the stability of “The Rock”
- Consider how the unchanging nature of God ensures your position in him cannot be shaken
- Consider how the unchanging nature of God means his promises are always “yes in Christ”
- Consider how the unchanging nature of God ensures a comfort in prayer

The Holiness of God



- God's holiness: His "attribute of attributes" which reflects his divine purity, excellence, perfection, and beauty; his separation from all that is morally impure or imperfect
 - Power is God's hand or arm, omniscience his eye, mercy his bowels, eternity his duration, but holiness is his beauty. (Charnock)
 - God is oftener styled Holy than Almighty, and set forth by this part of his dignity more than by any other. This is more fixed as an epithet to his name than any other. (Charnock)
 - This holiness may be said to be a transcendental attribute, that, as it were, runs through the rest attributes and casts luster on them (Pink)

The Holy God



- "So you shall keep My commandments, and do them: I am the LORD. And you shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel: I am the LORD who sanctifies you," (Lev 32:21-22)
- "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; for all the nations will come and worship before Thee, for Thy righteous acts have been revealed." (Rev 15:4)
- Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." (Is 6:2-3)

Illustrations of His Holiness



- Moses' First Encounter:

- Ex 3:5-6

- The Radiance of Moses:

- Ex 34:29-35

- Isaiah's Terror:

- Is 6:1-5

Illustrations of His Holiness



- The Tabernacle & Day of Atonement (Lev 16):
 - High priest cleansed in the basin & put on special garments
 - Sacrifice for himself & household at Bronze Altar
 - Entered Most Holy Place with incense covering the ark
 - Sprinkled blood on the atonement cover (mercy seat)
 - Cast lots for scapegoat and sacrificed the other goat
 - Returned to Most Holy & sprinkled blood on the atonement cover (sins of the people)
 - Returned to Holy Place & Outer Courtyard and sprinkled blood
 - Laid hands on the scapegoat & confessed sin
 - Removed special garments & washed in the basin

God's Holy Law



- God's Law reflects his absolute holiness through his perfect moral nature
- "I am the Lord" represents his identification with the commanded perfections:
 - Lev18:30; 19:3; 19:4; 19:10; 19:14; 19:25; 19:28; 19:30; 19:31; 19:32; 19:33; 19:36; 19:37; 20:7
- The law remains the perfect standard by which we (a) know the Lord's holiness and (b) know our own unholiness:
 - So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good (Ro 7:12)

God's Holy Substitution



- ...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (1 Pe 1:18-19)
- But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls...sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:11-14)

Meditations on the Holy God



- How is our attitude toward our sinfulness shaped by our understanding of God's holiness?
- How is our attitude toward the Savior shaped by our understanding of God's holiness?
- In view of God's holiness, how seriously do we consider God's command "so be holy in all you do; for it is written "be holy, because I am holy"?"
 - This is the prime way of honouring God. We do not so glorify God by elevated admirations, or elequent expressions, or pompous services of Him, as when we aspire to a conversing with Him with unstained spirits, and live *to* Him in living *like* Him (Charnock)

On “Seeing” God



- No physical creation has seen God in his true essence:
 - “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Jn 4:24)
 - “Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. (Jn 6:46)
- No physical creation has seen God in his ultimate glory:
 - But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” (Ex 33:20)
- Men have seen physical manifestations of God and agents of God revealed in “time and space”:
 - God incarnate
 - Theophanies
 - Angelic beings

On “Seeing” God



□ God Incarnate:

- Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? (Jn 14:9)

□ Theophanies:

- And the LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. (Ex 13:21)

On “Seeing” God



- Angelic Beings (Representatives):
 - So Jacob named the place Peniel, for {he said,} "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved." (Gen 32:30)
 - So Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God." (Jdg 13:32)
- Also, “seeing” does not always refer to literal physical sight, but rather perception or experience:
 - Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. (3 Jn 1:11)

The Freedom of God



- Freedom or Solitariness: God is absolutely free and independent from external constraints related to his counsel and action. He is subject to no one and nothing apart from himself.
- God is under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create. That he chose to do so was purely a sovereign act on his part, caused by nothing outside of Himself, determined by nothing but His own good pleasure... (Arthur Pink)
 - This statement may be applied to all of God's actions

The Basis of God's Freedom



- God's absolute power removes him from external limitations
- God's "higher ways" remove him from subjection to his creation:
 - "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For {as} the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Is 55:8-9)
 - Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? (Ro 11:33-34)

The Basis of God's Freedom



- As creator, God is not subject to his creation:
 - You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, that what is made should say to its maker, "He did not make me"; or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? (Is 29:16)
 - "Woe to the one who quarrels with his maker-- an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands'? (Is 45:9)
 - On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? (Ro 9:20-21)

The Basis of God's Freedom



- Since God is obligated to no one, he has the right to do as he pleases:
 - 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?' (Mt 20:15)
 - Then the LORD said to Job, "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it." (Job 40:1-2)
- Because God is indebted to no one, he may freely grant mercy as he chooses:
 - What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." (Ro 9:14-15)

The Result of God's Freedom



- Because God is totally free, he may act exclusively for his good pleasure and will:
 - He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (Eph 1:5)
 - for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Php 2:13)
- Although God acts to bring glory to himself, he does not need man's affirmation or approval:
 - Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. (Is 40:15)

Meditations on the Most Free God



- Do we seek to hold God accountable to our standard of fairness?
- Do we think and act in ways which imply that God is obligated to us?
- Do we truly think of God as “big” enough to be entirely free and entirely solitary?
 - He is solitary in His majesty, unique in all His excellency, peerless in His perfections. He sustains all, but is Himself independent of all. He gives to all, but is enriched by none. (Arthur Pink)

The Sovereignty of God

- God's Sovereignty: Expressed as the supreme rulership of God, or the exercise of his absolute supremacy:
 - Closely tied to his omniscience, omnipotence, and freedom
- God's sovereignty reinforces every other attribute we ascribe to him:
 - Yet the sovereignty of God is greater than any one of the attributes which it contains. Others may seem more important to us--love, for instance. But a little thought will show that the exercise of any of these attributes is made possible only by the sovereignty of God. God might love, for example, but if he were not sovereign, circumstances could thwart his love...God may desire to establish justice, but if he were not sovereign, justice could be frustrated, and injustice prevail (Boice)

The Sovereignty of God

- While God's sovereignty permeates Scripture, it causes great problems for the world and the church:
 - ...there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great stupendous, yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne (Spurgeon, sermon on Mt 20:15)
- The distinction between omnipotence and sovereignty:
 - ...by the authority {sovereignty} of God, we mean the right he has to act what he pleases: omnipotence is his physical power whereby he is able to do what he will; dominion {sovereignty} is his moral power, whereby it is lawful for him to do what he will (Charnock)

The Sovereignty of God



- God deals sovereignly in the affairs of his creation:
 - Both animate and inanimate:
 - Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; who makes lightnings for the rain; who brings forth the wind from His treasuries. He smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast. He sent signs and wonders into your midst, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh and all his servants. He smote many nations, and slew mighty kings, (Ps 135: 6-10)
 - Nations and kings:
 - "But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to deliver him into your hand, as he is today. (Dt 2:30)

The Sovereignty of God



- God deals sovereignly in the affairs of his creation:
 - In life and death:
 - See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; and there is no one who can deliver from My hand. (Dt 32:39)
 - Even with the smallest of his creatures:
 - Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it. (Is 46:9-11).
 - Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. (Mt 10:29)

The Sovereignty of God



- God deals sovereignly in the affairs of his elect:
 - Determining those who he calls:
 - He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love. He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Eph 1:4-6)
 - Utilizing those he calls:
 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10)

The Sovereignty of God



- God deals sovereignly in the affairs of his elect:
 - Preserving those he calls:
 - For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Ph 1:6)
 - For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (2 Ti 1:12)
- God is the Sovereign who all creation will acknowledge:
 - For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." (Ro 14:11)

Challenges to Sovereignty



- If God deals absolutely sovereignly with all creation, where is the room for volition (choice)?
 - 1 Ki 22:1-38
- How can God be absolutely sovereign and not the author of evil?
 - God sovereignly ordains all things to pass, including things involving evil. He utilizes all agents, including evil ones, to achieve his purpose. No evil may be done apart from God's permission:
 - Ro 9:17
 - Job 1:6-12

Challenges to Sovereignty



- How can God be absolutely sovereign and not the author of evil (cont)?
 - When evil occurs, it is always through “second causes,” even when it appears to be attributed to God (as the first cause):
 - 2 Sa 24:1-2; 1 Chr 21:1-2
 - Therefore, God does not author evil, even though he sovereignly controls it and utilizes it to his purposes

Meditations on the Sovereign God



- Does God's absolute sovereignty deepen our veneration and worship of him?
 - What kind of a God is he whose sovereignty must be increasingly restricted lest he be imagined to be invading the citadel of our "free will"? Who can worship such a truncated and pitiable deity? (Boice)
 - A 'god' whose will is resisted, whose designs are frustrated, whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity, and so far from being a fit object of worship, merits nought but contempt (Pink)
- Does God's sovereignty provide comfort in the midst of trials, temptation, and sorrow?

Meditations on the Sovereign God



- Does God's sovereignty afford us a deep sense of security and confidence?
 - Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, (Jude 24)
 - For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (Heb 2:18)
 - Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him {be} the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Eph 3:20-21)

The Decrees of God



- God's decree may be defined as his purpose or determination with respect to future things:
 - God's decrees are linked to his counsel (wisdom), purpose, and will
- God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established (WCF, Chap 3)

The Decrees of God



- God's glory is always the end, or purpose, of his decree:
 - "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images. "Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you." (Is 42:8-9)
 - For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." (Ro 9:17)
 - "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created." (Rev 4:11)

The Decrees of God



- The decrees of God form one comprehensive plan:
 - “It is inconsistent with the idea of absolute perfection, that the purposes of God are successive, or that He ever purposes what He did not originally intend; or that one part of his plan is independent of other parts. (Hodge)
 - He {God} did not merely decree that general laws should be established for the government of the world, but He settled the application of those laws to all particular cases...We may learn what is the extent of the Divine decrees from the dispensations of providence, in which they are executed. The care of Providence reaches to the most insignificant creatures, and the most minute events--the death of a sparrow, and fall of a hair (Pink)

The Decrees of God



- The decrees of God are eternal:
 - He sees the end from the beginning; the distinctions of time have no reference to Him who inhabits eternity (Hodge)
 - ...of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (2 Ti 1:8-9)
 - just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. (Eph 1:4)
 - For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1 Pe 1:20-21)

The Decrees of God



- The decrees of God are immutable:
 - Change of purpose arises either from the want of wisdom or from the want of power. As God is infinite in wisdom and power, there can be with Him no unforeseen emergency and no inadequacy of means, and nothing can resist the execution of his original intention. (Hodge)
 - The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. (Ps 33:11)
 - Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. (Ja 1:17)
 - Many are the plans in a man's heart, but the counsel of the LORD, it will stand. (Pro 13:21)

The Decrees of God



- God's decrees are free, efficacious, and all-encompassing:
 - There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the LORD. (Pro 21:30)
 - This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it. And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?" (Is 14:26-27)
 - I am God... saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure' (Is 46:9-10)

Objections From Foreknowledge



- God's decrees are foreknown, but not *merely* foreknown; they are foreordained:
 - this Man delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:23)
 - But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. (Is 53:10)
 - For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (Ro 8:29)

Meditations on the Decrees of God



- Do we acknowledge and reflect on the “details in the decree?”
- Do we acknowledge, delight, and reflect on the outcomes of God’s sovereign decree for us?
 - and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Ro 8:28-35)

The Wisdom of God



- Biblical wisdom is the power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it (Packer)
- The characteristics of Biblical wisdom (Charnock):
 - Acting for a right end--fixing a right end, choosing fit means, and directing to that scope
 - Observing all circumstances for action--taking advantage of the fittest opportunities to bring designs about with full foresight of second causes
 - Willing and acting according to the right reason, according to the right judgment; application of knowledge (understanding) in a practical sense

Wisdom and Power



- God's absolute wisdom is closely tied to his absolute power:
 - Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. (Dan 2:19-20)
 - In truth I know that this is so, but how can a man be in the right before God? If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times. Wise in heart and mighty in strength, who has defied Him without harm? (Job 9:2-4)
 - "With Him are wisdom and might; to Him belong counsel and understanding. (Job 12:13)

Manifestations of God's Wisdom



- The wisdom of God appears in his natural creation:
 - Ps 104:1-24
- The wisdom of God appears in his human creation:
 - Ps 139:13-18
- The wisdom of God appears in his handling of his children:
 - The chastening of Jacob (Gen 32)
 - The preparation of Joseph (Gen 50:19-21)
 - The confrontation of David (2 Sa 12, Ps 32:3)
 - The consolation of Elijah (1 Ki 19:9-18)

God as the Source of Wisdom



- God is the fountain of wisdom:
 - For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, (Prov 2:6-7)
- God dispenses wisdom to his creatures:
 - I Ki 3:4-15 (Solomon's request)
 - But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (Ja 1:5)

God as the Source of Wisdom



- God withholds wisdom as an act of punishment
 - Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from me... the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be concealed." (Is 29:13-14)
- God invites those who seek wisdom to find wisdom in him:
 - "To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. "O naive ones, discern prudence; and, O fools, discern wisdom. (Pro 8:4-5)

Meditations on the Wisdom of God



- How has, and is, God displaying his wisdom through the events and circumstances in our lives?
- How much consideration do we give to the benefits of wisdom and the means of attaining them?
 - Dan 2:14-16; 30
- How much do we display the fruits of heavenly wisdom?
 - But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peaceloving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere (Ja 3:17)

The Justice of God



- Justice: rightness (satisfying the demands of the law) or “setting things right.” Justice is synonymous with righteousness.
- When we regard God as the author of our moral nature, we conceive of Him as holy; when we regard Him in his dealings with his rational creatures, we regard Him as righteous (just). He is a righteous ruler; all his laws are holy, just, and good. In his moral government He faithfully adheres to these laws. He is impartial and uniform in their execution. As a judge he renders unto every man according to his works. (Hodge)

The Justice of God



- "For I proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! "The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. (Dt 32:3-4)
- Aspects of God's justice:
 - As the just lawgiver, God establishes "right division" and equity in his commands
 - As the just judge, God utilizes retribution to "make crooked paths straight"
 - As the just caretaker, God always upholds the righteous

Right Division and Equity



- Much of God's law is devoted to establishing principles of rightness and general equity:
 - With regard to "honest scales" (Lev 19:35-36)
 - With regard to canceling debts (Dt 15:1-11)
 - With regard to care and oppression of the poor (Dt 24:10-15)
 - With regard to treatment of servants (Dt 15:12-18)
 - With regard to refuge for unintentional crimes (Dt 4:41-43)
 - With regard to allegation and prosecution (Ex 23:1-3, 6-9; Dt 19:15-21)

God's Just Retribution



- "Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty. (Ex 23:7):
 - The golden calf rebellion (Ex 32)
 - The complaints of the Israelites (Nu 11:1-3; 21:4-8)
 - Stoning of the Sabbath breaker (Nu 15:32-35)
 - Korah's rebellion (Nu 16)
 - The Moabite seduction (Nu 25)
 - Ananias and Sapphira's deceit (Acts 5)
 - Herod's death (Acts 12:19-24)

God's Justice & Mercy



- God's mercy never "preempts" God's justice
- Both justice and mercy are sovereignly used by God to bring about his right ends. The two are related by the ends they achieve and both are equally required:
 - And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Mi 6:8)
- The relationship between God's acts of justice and acts of mercy stems from his wisdom

Upholding the Righteous



- God's treatment of the wicked and righteous differs:
 - Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. (Ps 1:6)
 - The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, and the one who loves violence His soul hates. (Ps 11:5)
 - For it is Thou who dost bless the righteous man, O LORD, Thou dost surround him with favor as with a shield. (Ps 5:12)
 - The righteous cry and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. (Ps 34:17)

Upholding the Righteous



- Even when the evil seem to flourish, God guards the way of the righteous:
 - Ps 37
- God is willing to spare the land for the sake of the righteous:
 - Gen 18
- God is willing to cut short the final persecution for the sake of the elect:
 - Mt 24:21-22

Meditations on the Just God



- How have we seen God “straighten our paths” through the course of life?
- Do we practice the just principles of equity when dealing with others?
- Do we pray for God’s wisdom when dispensing his justice and mercy upon the land?
- Have we entered the sanctuary of God to understand how he upholds the cause of the righteous? (Ps 73)

The Wrath & Severity of God



- Wrath: Synonymous with hot displeasure, anger, indignation, or fury
- 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. (Pink)
- Wrath related to other attributes:
 - God's holiness (perfection) brings forth wrath against sin
 - God's justice is the means by which wrath is exerted

Elements of God's Wrath



- ...God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger often is. It is, rather, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil. (Packer)
- God's wrath and vengeance is always in response to violation of his holy requirement:
 - "Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, and the LORD was so angry with you that He would have destroyed you. (Dt 9:7-8)

Elements of God's Wrath



- God's wrath is always judicial (as a judge administering justice):
 - For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." (Heb 10:30)
 - But God is the Judge; He puts down one, and exalts another. For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; it is well mixed, and He pours out of this; surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs. (Ps 75:7-8)
 - O LORD, Thou hast seen my oppression; Judge my case. Thou hast seen all their vengeance, all their schemes against me... Thou wilt pursue them in anger and destroy them from under the heavens of the LORD! (Lam 3:59-60, 66)

Elements of God's Wrath



- God is uniquely qualified to execute holy wrath and vengeance:
 - See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; and there is no one who can deliver from My hand. Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, as I live forever, If I sharpen My flashing sword, and My hand takes hold on justice, I will render vengeance on My adversaries, and I will repay those who hate me. (Dt 32:39-41)
 - Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (Ro 12:29)

Lessons from the Wrath of God



- God's intense wrath teaches us about God's hatred of evil:
 - Disobedience and idolatry of the people (Eze 5:7-13)
 - Replacement of God's glory with another (Ps 78:58-66)
 - Suppression and denial of truth (Ro 1:18-21)
 - Unrepentant spirits (Ro 2:5-6)
 - Immorality and impurity (Eph 5:3-6)

Lessons From the Wrath of God



- God's wrath provides his people a proper sense of fear and reverence:
 - And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it. (Acts 5:5)
 - Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire. (Heb 12:28-29)
 - "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Mt 10:28)

Lessons From the Wrath of God



- God's wrath allows us to understand that from which we've been delivered:
 - For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1 Th 1:9-10)
 - Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! (Ro 5:10)
 - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (Jn 3:36)

Meditations on the Wrath of God



- Do we esteem God more or less because he is a God of severity and wrath?
- Do we maintain the necessary reverence and fear of God as the “consuming fire?”
- Do we share, with God, a hatred of evil?
 - Hate evil, you who love the LORD, who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. (Ps 97:10)
- Does the reality of God’s wrath make the reality of God’s deliverance more significant?

The Goodness of God



- Goodness: Heb towb: Beauty, “best-ness”, excellence, virtuousness, beneficence
- What this goodness is. There is a goodness of being, which is the natural perfection of a thing; there is a goodness of will, which is the holiness, and righteousness of a person; there is a goodness of the hand which we call liberality or beneficence, a doing good to others. (Charnock)
- The goodness of God endureth continually (Ps 52:1, KJV)

The Goodness of God



- 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 superadded 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 the good, for He cannot be less good than He is; as there can be no addition made to him, so no subtraction from Him (Thomas Manton)
- "God is summum bonum, the highest good" (Pink)

The Goodness of God



- Biblical proofs of God's goodness:
 - Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (Ex 33:18-19)
 - How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you. (Ps 31:19)
 - His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (2 Pe 1:3)

Characteristics of God's Goodness



- God's goodness is underived; it is of himself:
 - This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. (1 Jn 1:5)
 - "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good-- except God alone. (Mark 10:18)
- All of God's creation derives its goodness from him:
 - God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-- the sixth day. (Gen 1:31)
- The goodness of God is his inclination to deal well and bountifully with his creation (Charnock)

Characteristics of God's Goodness



- God's nature is, by definition, good. His essence defines good. Thus, those who call good evil, deny the essence of God:
 - Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. (Is 5:20)
- God's goodness is subject to his freedom:
 - Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' (Mt 20:15)
 - For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. (Ro 9:14-16)

Characteristics of God's Goodness



- God's goodness is subject to his freedom
 - It is true all things are not subjects of equal goodness. The goodness of God is not so illustriously manifested in one thing as another. (Charnock)
 - The goodness of God is seen in inequality. If God were equally good to all, it would destroy commerce, unity, the links of human society, damp charity, and render that useless which is one of the noblest and delightfulest duties to be exercised here; it would cool prayer, which is excited by wants, and is a necessary demonstration of the creature's dependence on God. (Charnock)

Characteristics of God's Goodness



- God's goodness is subject to his freedom (cont.)
 - God ought to be allowed the free disposal of his own goodness. Is not God the Lord of his own gifts; and will you not allow him the privilege of having some more peculiar objects of his love and pleasure, which you allow without blame to a man, and use yourself without any sense of a crime? Is a prince esteemed good, though he be not equally bountiful to all his servants, nor equally gracious in pardoning all his rebels; and shall the goodness of this great Sovereign of the world be impeached, notwithstanding those mighty distributions of it, because he will act according to his own wisdom and pleasure, because he will act according to men's fancies and humors? (Charnock)

Characteristics of God's Goodness



- God's goodness is not exclusive of his justice and judgment:
 - Compare Ex 33:18-19 with Ex 34:7
 - It is a property of goodness to hate evil, and therefore, a property of goodness to punish it: it is no less righteousness to give according to the deserts of a person in a way of punishment, than to reward a person that obeys his precepts in a way of recompense. (Charnock)

Meditations on the Goodness of God

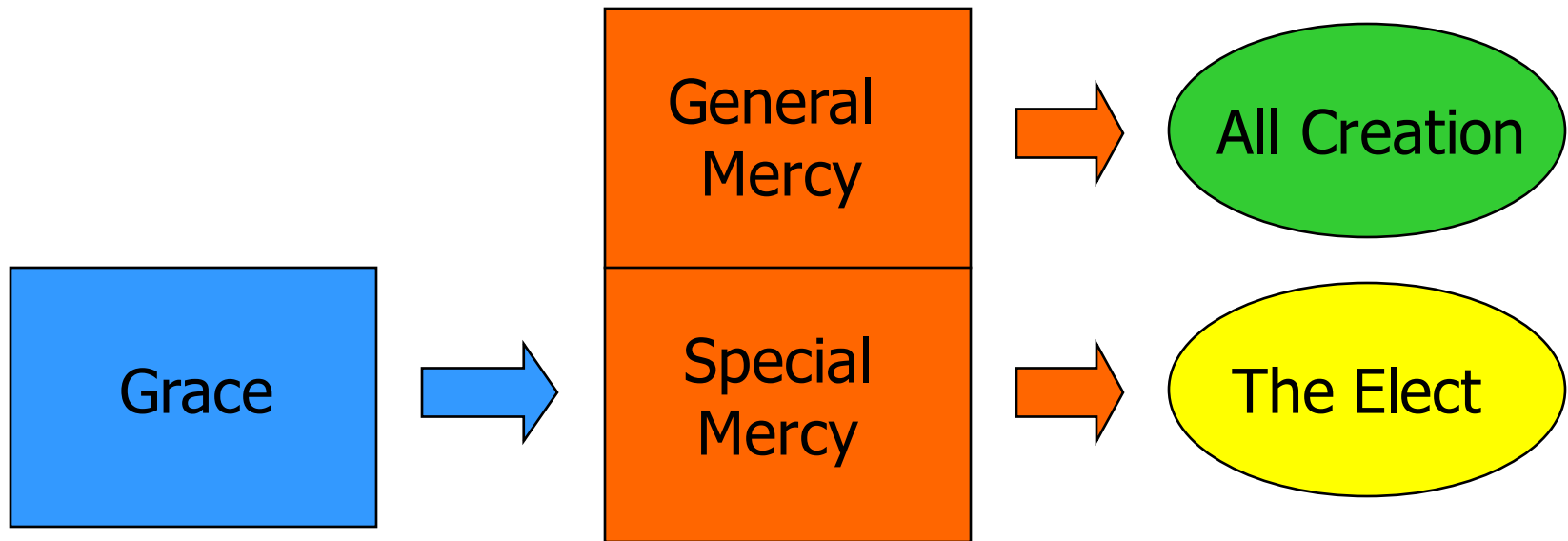


- Contemplate and meditate on God's goodness, both in general creation and in your life:
 - How many different examples can you consider which point to God's goodness?
 - How much of God's goodness do we consider "natural"?
 - How much do we honor him because of his goodness in our life?

The Mercy and Grace of God

- Mercy: kindness, active compassion, and goodwill toward the afflicted (with God, those afflicted in sin):
 - General providence toward all creation
 - Special mercy for the elect
- Grace: favor or benefit independent of merit (in the case of God, applied to the elect)
 - Grace is a perfection of the Divine character which is exercised only toward the elect. Neither in the Old Testament or the New is the grace of God ever mentioned in connection with mankind generally, still less with the lower order creatures. It is distinguished from mercy for the mercy of God is “over all his works (Ps 145:9)” (Pink)

The Relationship Between Grace and Mercy



Examples of General Mercy



- The LORD is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works. (Ps 145:9)
- ...neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things (Acts 17:25)
- But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Mt 5:44-45)
- He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine which makes man's heart glad, so that he may make his face glisten with oil, and food which sustains man's heart. (Ps 104:14-15)

Characteristics of God's Grace



- God's grace is eternal; that is, grace was "preplanned" before it is ever exercised:
 - ...but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (2 Ti 1:8-9)
 - just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him... to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Eph 1:4,6)

Characteristics of God's Grace



- God's grace is freely given; for none can deserve it:
 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (Ro 3:23-24)
 - In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. (Ro 11:5-6)
 - I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly. (Gal 2:21)

Characteristics of God's Grace



- Grace is sovereignly given and sovereignly applied:
 - But now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. (Ez 9:8)
 - For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God (Eph 2:8)
 - And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith (Ro 12:6)

Grace Applied



- God's grace is applied in the justification of the elect:
 - But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Ro 3:21-24)
 - For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Ro 5:17)

Grace Applied



- God's grace is applied in the sanctification of the elect:
 - As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Pe 4:10)
 - But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1 Co 15:10)
 - "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)
 - And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Co 12:9)

Grace Applied



- God's grace is applied to the glorification of the elect:
 - Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pe 1:13)
 - And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (1 Pe 5:10)

The Law and Grace



- The law establishes God's holy standards and through the law we become conscious of right and wrong:
 - Ro 3:20; 7:7
- However, the law (written code), contains no innate power to be delighted in, or followed:
 - Ro 7:8-11
- Likewise, our merit attained by keeping the law cannot be relied upon as a basis for rightness before God:
 - Gal 3:10-11
 - Ja 2:10-11

The Law and Grace



- Conversely, Christ's merit attained by the law can be relied upon as a basis for rightness before God:
 - We receive this rightness (justification) by grace, through faith, in Christ
- Additionally, by grace (living by the Spirit), we delight in God's holy law, though we are not merited by it:
 - Ro 3:31, Ro 7:12
- Similarly, when we live by grace, we do not use our freedom as a license to sin:
 - Ro 6:15-18

Arguments Against “Sola Gracia”



- Absolute sovereign grace is inconsistent with God’s justice (equity)
 - God is able to sovereignly apply grace as he wishes. This does not deny his justice which is always fulfilled--either by his wrath upon the sinner, or his wrath upon the Son. Justice, however, does not mandate “equal grace to all.” If it did, grace would no longer be grace.
- Sola gracia denies human responsibility
 - Sola gracia does not deny human responsibility, but it contextualizes it. The Christian is to “work out his salvation with fear and trembling,” but the Christian is never to forget “it is God who works in you to will and act according to his good purpose” (Ph 2:12-13)

Special Mercy Extended From Grace



- The special mercy, derived from grace, is God's ultimate act of compassion upon sinners; it is his totally redemptive pardon:
 - ... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. (1 Ti 1:12-16)
 - But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted." (Lk 18:13-14)

Meditations on The Mercy and Grace of God



- How much do we daily recognize, and give thanks and praise, for God's common mercy?
- Do we think about grace being applied in every element of our lives, not simply in our justification?
- Do we daily appreciate and stand in the peace of God which is the eternal result of grace?
 - Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Ro 5:1-2)

The Patience of God



- God's patience: endurance, steadfastness, longsuffering, constancy, perseverance, forbearance, slowness in avenging wrong
 - The patience of God is that excellency which causes him to sustain great injuries without immediately avenging himself (Pink)
 - The Divine nature is impassible, incapable of any impair, it cannot be touched by the violences of men, nor the essential glory of it be diminished by the injuries of men; but as it signifies a willingness to defer, and an unwillingness to pour forth his wrath upon sinful creatures, he moderates his provoked justice, and forbears to revenge the injuries he daily meets within the world (Charnock)

The Patience of God



- God's patience is closely aligned with God's goodness and mercy, yet different from them both:
 - God's goodness is extended to all of his creation; his patience primarily extended to man as man is the creature who, by sin, insults God's nature
 - God's general mercy stems from a compassion upon the miserable; his patience bears with the sin stemming from the offender
 - God's patience also demonstrates the element of self-control, and is therefore linked to his power

The Patience of God



- Relationship between God's power and patience:
 - Men that are great in this world are quick in passion, and not so willing to forgive an injury, or bear with and offender, as one of a meaner rank. It is the want of power over that man's self that makes him do unbecoming things upon provocation. A prince that can bridle his passions is a king over himself as well as over his subjects. God is slow to anger because he is great in power. He has no less power over Himself than over His creatures.
(Charnock)
- He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.
(Prov 16:32)

The Patience of God



- God's patience does not equate to apathy, rather it stems from a deep willingness to bear with sin:
 - Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." (Ex 34:6-7)

Elements of God's Patience



- God extends patience even to objects of his wrath:
 - In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure." (Gen 15:16)
 - What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-- prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory-- (Ro 9:22-23)

Elements of God's Patience



- God's patience promotes repentance:
 - Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? (Ro 2:4)
 - The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Pe 3:9)
 - But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home?...I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. (Jon 4:1-2)

Elements of God's Patience



- God extends great patience to his people, and enables patience among his people:
 - The LORD performs righteous deeds, and judgments for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel. The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. (Ps 103:6-10)
 - May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ro 15:5-6)

Christ's Demonstration of Patience



- Patience with those who opposed him
- Patience with his disciples':
 - Slowness to learn
 - Desire for self-glorification
 - Lack of faith
 - Arrogance and misplaced confidence in self
 - Abuse of position and gifts
- Patience unto death:
 - Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:2)

God's Patience...And Us



- Our ability to display patience is one of the foremost measures of sanctification:
 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)
 - Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive... (Col 3:12-14)
 - Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. (Ja 5:7-8)

Meditations on God's Patience



- How often do we remember the patience of God which led to our salvation?
- Do we daily recognize the patience of God required for our successful sanctification?
- Do we, in our dealings with others, display the same amount of patience that we request from God?
 - Mt 18:21-35

The Faithfulness of God



- Faithfulness: Heb. 'emuna, dependability, loyalty, and stability particularly as it describes God in His relationship to human believers. (Nelson's)
- Faithfulness is tied to promises made and promises kept. It involves not only the promise, but the willingness and power to fulfill that promise.
- Unfaithfulness is one of the most outstanding sins of these evil days...How refreshing, then, how unspeakably blessed, to lift our eyes above the scene of ruin, and behold One who is faithful, faithful in all things, faithful at all times. (Pink)

Proofs of God's Faithfulness



- Scripture speaks abundantly about God's faithfulness:
 - Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. (Dt 7:9)
 - Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (Is 11:5)
 - Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." (Lam 3:23-24)
 - Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. (Ps 36:5)

God's Promises Faithfully Fulfilled

- Noahic covenant promise to sustain creation:
 - "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." (Gen 8:20)
- Abrahamic covenant promise to possess the land:
 - Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. (Gen 15:13-16)
- Abrahamic covenant promise to bless the nations:
 - All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. (Gen 28:14)

God's Promises Faithfully Fulfilled



- God's promise of the Messiah:
 - A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. (Is 11:1)
- God's promise of salvation for the Gentiles:
 - "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, (Is 42:6)
- Davidic covenant promise of the eternal kingdom
 - Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness-- and I will not lie to David--that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun (Ps 89:35-36)

The Basis of God's Faithfulness



- In all instances, God's faithfulness is tied, not to the faithfulness of his people, but in his faithfulness to himself. His unconditional covenant is the basis for his faithfulness:
 - If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (2 Ti 2:13)
 - Jer 2:20-29, 3:9-19

God's Faithfulness To Us



- God is faithful to preserve his people by persevering through us:
 - He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (I Co 1:8-9)
 - Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way...Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Heb 10:19,23)

God's Faithfulness To Us



- God is faithful to discipline his people through affliction, for affliction chastens his people to more diligently seek him:
 - I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness you have afflicted me. (Ps 119:75)
 - "If his (David's) sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. (Ps 89:30-33)
 - The Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? (Heb 12:5-7)

Meditations on the Faithfulness of God



- What are the monuments of God's faithfulness in our lives, both past and present?
- Do we see, and respond, to God's affliction as a demonstration of his faithfulness?
- Are we confident that God's faithfulness will persevere through us to the day of Christ?

The Love of God



- God's love (*agape*): love, i.e. affection, benevolence, brotherly love, good will
- Love, whether used of God or man, is an earnest and anxious desire for and an active and beneficent interest in the well-being of the one loved. (ISBE)
- God's love is an exercise of his goodness toward 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. (Packer)

The Love of God



- There are many today who talk about the love of God, who are total strangers to the God of love. The Divine love is commonly regarded as a species of amiable weakness, a sort of good-natured indulgence; it is reduced to a mere sickly sentiment, patterned after human emotion...How little real love there is for God. One chief reason for this is because our hearts are so little occupied with His wondrous love for His people. The better we are acquainted with His love--its character, fullness, blessedness--the more will our hearts be drawn out to love Him. (Pink)

Elements of God's Love



- God's love is unmerited or uninfluenced:
 - This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 Jn 4:10)
 - Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Ro 5:7-8)
 - The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery...(Dt 7:7-8)

Elements of God's Love



- God's love is sovereignly eternal:
 - "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals." (Mal 1:2-3)
 - For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will (Eph 1:4-5)
 - Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (1 Chr 16:34)

Elements of God's Love



- God's love is sovereignly eternal:
 - The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. (Jer 31:3-4)
 - I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. (Ps 89:1-2)

“The World” Verses



- Many times, Scripture uses “the world” in a figurative sense to mean broadly or generally:
 - The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” (Jn 1:29)
 - No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world. (Jn 7:4)
 - All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you understood God’s grace in all its truth. (Col 1:6)
 - First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. (Ro 1:8)

Terms for Love & Hate

- Esau I hated (Mal 1:3):
 - sane' (saw-nay'); a primitive root; to hate (personally): enemy, foe, (be) hate (-ful, -r), odious, X utterly.
- Esau I have hated (Ro 9:13), Hate his father...(Lk 14:26):
 - miseo (mis-eh'-o); from a primary misos (hatred); to detest (especially to persecute); by extension, to love less
- Love your enemies (Mt 5:44):
 - agapao (ag-ap-ah'-o); to love (in a social or moral sense)
- ...because of his great love for us (Eph 2:4):
 - agape (ag-ah'-pay); from 25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast:

Elements of God's Love



- God's love is immutably infinite:
 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ro 8:35, 38-39)
 - And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Eph 3:17-19)

Elements of God's Love



- God's love is sacrificial and costly:
 - "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. (Lk 11:42)
 - This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 Jn 4:10)
 - It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. (Jn 13:1)

Elements of God's Love



- God's love is holy:
 - Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 Jn 2:15)
 - Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. (Ro 12:9)
 - Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. (1 Co 13:6)
 - This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. (1 Jn 5:3)

Meditations on God's Love



- Is our love conditional or uninfluenced as is the Lord's?
 - If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? (Mt 5:46)
- Is our love mutable and changing or enduring and lasting as is the Lord's?
 - Jn 21:15-17
- Is our love costly and sacrificial as is the Lord's?
- Is our love rooted in holiness as is the Lord's?
- Is our love grounded in Christ?
 - Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. (1 Jn 4:7-12)

Meditating on God



- Christian meditation represents the “watering” of the seed of the Word within our souls. It is lost on most Christians in our “frantic” paced world. Therefore, we see so little true growth and transformation:
 - Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders. (Ps 119:27)
 - I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees. (Ps 119:48)
 - May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause; but I will meditate on your precepts. (Ps 119:78)
 - My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises. (Ps 119:148)