

I. Intro. & Review

A. Attributes

1. What is an attribute? Answer: A quality or characteristic of something or someone.
2. How do God’s attributes differ from ours? Answer: His attributes are essential to Him; He is perfectly and infinitely His attributes; God IS His attributes. What alternative name to attributes: perfections, virtues.
3. Explain the distinction incommunicable and communicable. Answer: Some of God’s attributes are shared with and reflected in God’s children in a creaturely, finite way. It is part of salvation (II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:29).

B. God’s incommunicable attributes are

1. *Independence*: that God depends on nothing outside of Himself for His being or for His continuance.
2. *Simplicity* (oneness): that there is one God; He is not composed of parts, and that He is peace with Himself.
3. *Infinity*: God is limitlessness both with respect to time (eternity) and space (omnipresence).
4. *Immutability*: God is unchangeable and unchanging in His being and in His will and purpose.
5. *Omnipotence* (sovereignty): God possesses all power and authority and can do (and does) what He pleases.
6. *Omniscience*: God knows all things perfectly, past, present and future because He has decreed them.

II. God’s Communicable Attributes

A. As such

1. **God gives some of His attributes to His people when He renews them after the image of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:10).**
 - a. He gives them to us in a finite way; we never become infinitely holy, wise, loving, etc.
 - b. He gives them only to His people; the reprobate never partake of the attributes of God; no totally depraved person does because he is in the image of Satan (John 8:44).
 - c. It is part of our adoption as God’s children that *we become like Him* and begin to show forth His glorious characteristics (Rom. 8:29). But even in this life we only have a small beginning of this.
2. **Our partaking of the communicable attributes of God never makes us God, or gods.**
 - a. We remain always creatures – finite, dependent on God; God remains God forever. Even in heaven, when we will be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, we will only ever be creatures while He remains God alone (Rev. 21:3). The lie of the devil will never be realized (Gen. 3:5).
 - b. We will never possess the incommunicable attributes and we only have the communicable ones in a limited creaturely way.

B. Holiness

1. The word “Holy” in Scripture means “separated” or “consecrated.”

- a. God’s holiness is His devotion to Himself. It is His *self-consecration* so that everything in His being and everything which He does is for His own glory. God’s Name is to be exalted above all others; God’s will is to be accomplished; God’s honour is to be sought. That is holiness. Therefore, our holiness is our devotion to Him alone as the only Good.
- b. God’s holiness is His absolute purity and ethical perfection. In Him there is no imperfection, spot or blemish; He does not sin; He cannot sin; He cannot approve of or tolerate sin (Hab. 1:13). The Bible calls God light (I John 1:5).
- c. The book of Leviticus especially teaches God’s holiness, and Isaiah repeatedly calls God *the Holy One of Israel*.

2. Because God is holy He responds to all that which is unholy with indignation and wrath

- a. Is wrath an attribute of God? No, because God is never wrathful in Himself. God’s wrath is not His becoming angry in an emotional sense or losing His temper. It is a settled disposition *against evil*.
- b. God’s wrath is His attitude or response to unholiness. God has no pleasure in wickedness (Ps. 5:4-5).
- c. Because God is holy, and all sin (as a personal attack on Him) is an affront unto Him, there is hell for the wicked. Because God loves Himself and His own honour and glory, He hates sin and sinners.
- d. Because God is holy and God’s elect people are sinners, the cross was necessary. God’s holiness was satisfied there.

3. God’s people are holy because He is holy

- a. The most common word (esp. in the NT) to describe believers is *saints*, holy ones.
- b. God chose us in Christ to be holy (Eph. 1:4); Christ died for us to make us holy (Eph. 5:26); the HS indwells us to make us holy. That is why He is called the Holy Spirit (not the “jolly Spirit”).
- c. Holiness is both positive (a consecration, devotion to God) and negative (a separation from and hatred of sin). To be holy is our calling and our great privilege. None but the elect even begin to be holy.

C. Righteousness

1. The word *righteous* in Scripture means straight, upright, level or even.

- a. The idea is that something is righteous when it conforms to a given *standard*. God, however, IS the standard, and there is no standard outside of Him to which He conforms.
- b. God IS righteous in Himself. “The righteous Lord loveth righteousness” (Ps. 11:7). Everything God does is in harmony with Himself (Deut. 32:4).
- c. Because God is righteous, all His works and ways are righteous. Because God is righteous He gives to His creatures a righteous Law and He Himself judges righteously (Ps. 96:10).
- d. God’s righteousness means that everyone who stands in conformity with His Law (which reflects God’s perfect character) will be acquitted, found not guilty and justified; and that everyone who does not conform (but deviates and is therefore twisted and perverse) will be condemned.
- e. God’s righteousness means that He rewards men acc. to their works and is no respecter of persons.

2. God’s people are righteous

- a. We are righteous, first, legally. Because Christ’s righteousness (His perfect record of lifelong obedience to God’s commandments) is imputed to us and our sins (our unrighteousness) were imputed to Him at the cross God accounts, reckons us to be righteous.
- b. We are righteous in that we begin to live in harmony with the will of God revealed in His Law.
- c. The Bible, esp. the Psalms and Proverbs, calls God’s people *righteous* or *just* or *upright*.

D. Wisdom

1. The difference between knowledge and wisdom: wisdom is the *right application* of knowledge.

- a. God is the only wise God; He knows all things and He is able to use that knowledge with a view to His own glory, which is the highest purpose for everything (Rom. 16:27; Jude 25).
- b. God displays His wisdom in His works, using the best means to reach the highest goal. In wisdom He created all things in all their detail so He would be glorified (Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19); in wisdom He planned everything in history so that He would be glorified; in wisdom He devised the way of salvation so that He would be glorified in the highest possible way.
- c. How does the WMO deny God’s wisdom?
- d. Jesus Christ IS the wisdom of God: Prov. 8:23; Col. 2:3, etc. The cross is God’s wisdom, although it is foolishness to men.

2. Wisdom is found in God’s people

- a. The Bible calls unbelievers fools, not because they do not know but because, although they know, they do not act in accordance with their knowledge.
- b. But the Bible makes us wise unto salvation (II Tim. 3) and to us the preaching of the cross is wisdom, not foolishness (I Cor. 1:24)
- c. In us, wisdom is the using of knowledge to attain the highest good. For us, the highest good is not an easy life for ourselves but God’s glory. The one who seeks God’s glory is wise, the self-seeker is foolish.
- d. God’s gives wisdom through prayer (Jam. 1:5) and through instruction in the truth (Prov. 4:7), and fools despise instruction.