

9/13/2025

One-Day Seminar: The Nature and Attributes of God

Grand Avenue Baptist Church

BIBLE SURVEY

Where to look: Wherever the Bible speaks about God and **creation**, God and **idols**, or God and **man**.

God and Creation

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Isaiah 66:1-2, "Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.'"

Revelation 4:11, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

God is uniquely **distinct** from creation as its comprehensive lord and creator.

Isaiah 40:25-26, "To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? Says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these?"

The Bible invites us to use creation to reflect on the creator, while at the same time pushing us to emphasize **contrast** more than comparison.

God is not a **participant** in creation and history, he is not the best and biggest being, but is totally distinct and **unique**.

Craig Carter on God's transcendence in Isaiah 40-48 (God, idols, and the course of history).

"The identity of the Lord is elaborated: 'I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he' (Isa. 41:4). A distant echo of Exodus 3:14-15 can be detected in this description of God. Twice more in this section the LORD is said to be 'the first and the last' (44:6; 48:12). This is a theme that runs throughout the section and seems to identify the LORD as in some way above or not **contained** within history. The LORD transcends history and therefore relates to history differently that creatures do. He is simultaneously before historical events and at the end of the historical process, which enables him to be in **control** of history," (Craig Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 158).

God and Idols

Exodus 3:14, "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

"A god's name often reveals something of the realm of his power and his character. Moses is likely anticipating that the Israelites would want to know about the power and nature of this God of their fathers... God's name reveals at least two things. First, it declares the immutability of his eternal nature. Second, it shows that this eternally immutable God interacts with his creation. That is, God is both essentially transcendent and immanent," (Steve Garrick, in *Confessing the Impassible God*, 92).

Cf. Revelation 1:8, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'"

"As we saw above, Exodus 3 stresses the **uniqueness** of the LORD, and Genesis 1 shows an implication of this uniqueness: unlike the gods of the nations, the LORD in his being is **distinct** from all created beings and is also the source of the existence of all created beings. The gods of the nations are real, and they do have some power, but compared to the LORD, they are as **nothing**," (Carter, 141).

Deuteronomy 4:15-18, “Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth.”

Jeremiah 51:17-19, “Every man is stupid and without knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols, for his images are false, and there is no breath in them. They are worthless, a work of delusion; at the time of their punishment they shall perish. Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob, for he is the one who formed all things, and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name.”

Acts 17:24-29, “The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, **as though he needed anything**, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “ ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “ ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.”

When we compare God to idols we see that God is **Simple**, not made of parts; **absolute** and independent, not limited and finite; **self-sufficient**, not dependent on us; **omnipresent**, not stuck in a temple; **omnipotent**, not feeble.

God and Man

Numbers 23:19, “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”

God is **morally** different than man – he does not lie.

God is **essentially** different than man – he cannot change his mind.

1 Samuel 15:29, “And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”

Isaiah 57:15, “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

1 Timothy 1:17, “To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Timothy 6:15-16, “he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.”

Biblical Principles for Nature and Attributes of God:

1. God is **prior** to and utterly distinct from creation. Creation **depends** completely on him, he does not **depend** on creation at all.
2. God dramatically transcends any and all attempts to **depict** him. Even to compare him with created things is to completely **misrepresent** God. God is finally incomprehensible to **finite** creatures.
3. God is not like us. He does not **change**, he does not regret, he dwells **outside** of time, he is infinitely **good**, strong, wise, and **happy**.

Beatific Vision

We study what God has revealed about himself because you were created to be finally **satisfied** by beholding God.

You were made to **behold** God, to be **satisfied** in beholding him, and be **transformed** to be like him through beholding him.

Exodus 33:18-19, “Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

Job 19:25-26, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God”

Psalms 27:4, “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.”

Psalms 27:8, “You have said, ‘Seek my face.’ My heart says to you, ‘Your face, Lord, do I seek.’ Hide not your face from me.”

Psalms 63:1-2, “O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So, I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.”

Isaiah 33:17, “Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar.”

Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

2 Cor. 3:18, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

1 John 3:2, “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

Revelation 22:3-4, “No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.”

This is what we hope to move towards. That as we think about God, we wouldn’t just be piddling around with ideas and categories, but that we would be little by little learning to **see** God better and better, even while we long all the more for our faith to give way to sight.