

# Theology: The Study of God

*God's Attributes (Part 1)*

# What Are Attributes?

*“...those distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and which constitute the basis and ground for his various manifestations to his creatures.”*

*(Strong, A.H. Systematic Theology. 1907, p.244)*

# What Are Attributes?

*What words would you use to describe the character and nature of God?*

# An Imbalanced View of God's Attributes

**Love**

*Gracious*

*Just*

*Good*

*Pure*

*Merciful*

*Patient*

*Righteous*

*Holy*

*Wisdom*

*Sovereign*

*Faithful*

*Truth*

# An Imbalanced View of God's Attributes

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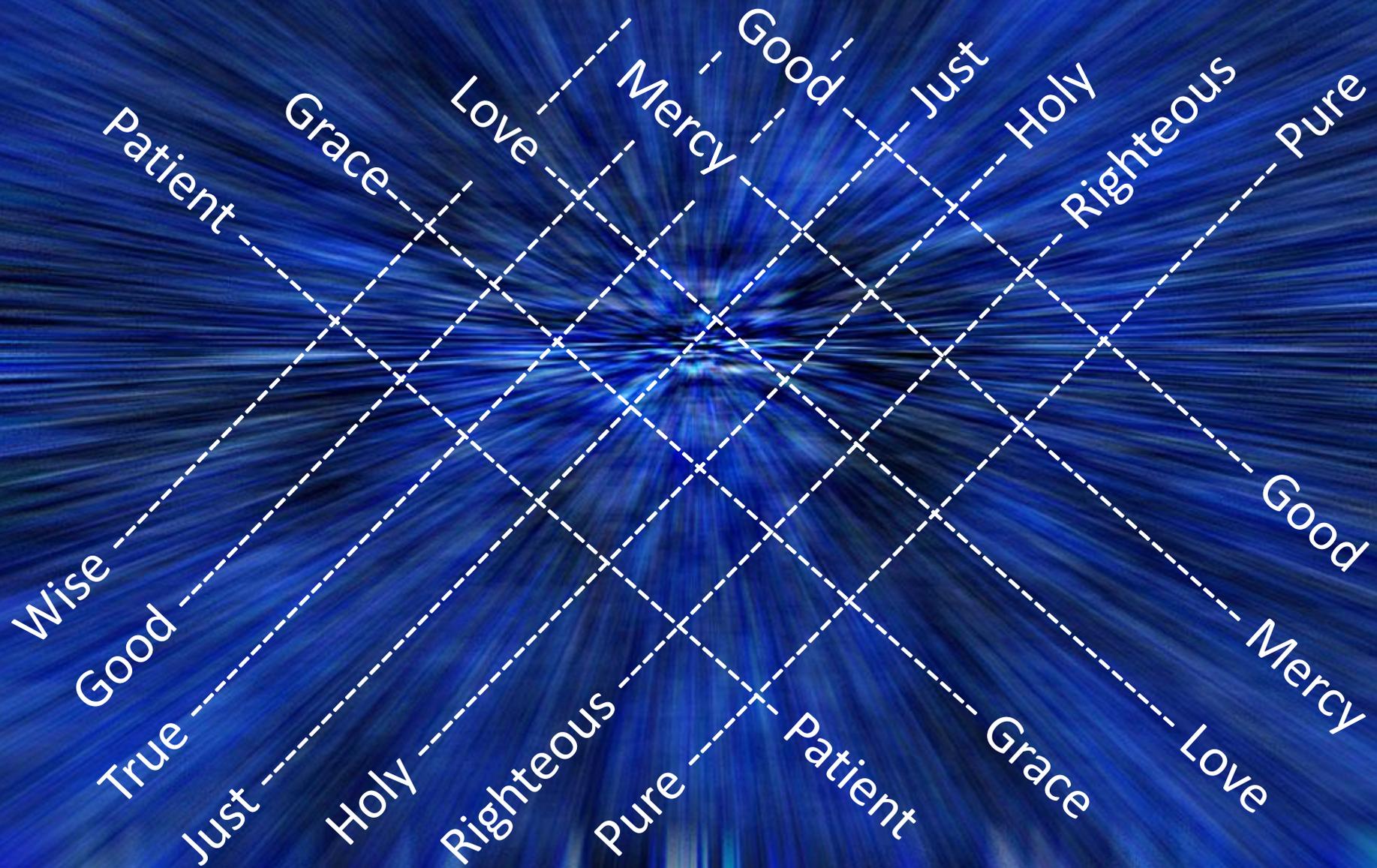
*Wisdom*

*Faithful*

*Truth*

*Love*

# A Balanced View of God's Attributes



# Categorizing the Attributes

## Several Ways to Classify:

- **Moral and Non-Moral**
- The **Goodness** and the **Greatness** of God
- Qualities God shares and those unique to Him
  - Or “communicable” and “non-communicable”

# Independence

- God is self-sufficient, He doesn't need the universe or anything in it.
- *“Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.”  
(Job 41:11)*
- God created us, not because He was lonely, but as an expression of his grace.
- Will we ever be independent like God?
- God delights in us, we are able to give Him glory.

“The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things...”

**Acts 17:24–25**

NASB

*“God does not need us for anything, yet it is the amazing fact of our existence that he chooses to delight in us and to allow us to bring joy to his heart. This is the basis for personal significance in the lives of all God’s people: to be significant to God is to be significant in the most ultimate sense. No greater personal significance can be imagined.”*

*(Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, p.162-163)*

# Unchangeableness

- God never changes with respect to his perfections, purposes, or promises
- *“I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed” (Malachi 3:6)*
- *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)*
- *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (James 1:17)*

“They [the heavens and earth] will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”

**Hebrews 1:11–12**

NIV84

# Unchangeableness

- Any change would make Him more or less divine but God is perfect (cannot improve)
- God doesn't change, but His dispensations do
- What about passages where it appears God changes His mind? (i.e. Jonah 3:10)
  - It wasn't God who changed by the people's hearts
  - He promises to forgive those who repent (Jer. 18:8)
  - God feels and responds differently to situations (illustration of the wind and weather vane)

# Eternity

- God has no beginning and no end
- *“Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” (Psalm 90:2)*
- *“But You, O LORD, abide forever, And Your name to all generations.” (Psalm 102:12)*
- *“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.” (Isaiah 46:10)*

# Eternity

- God (Father, Son, and Spirit) was not created, but has always existed and always will exist.
- His reign lasts forever, He does not grow old.
- God processes time differently than we do, unlike us He is not restricted or bound by it
- How does this give us hope for the future?

# Omnipresence

- The Lord is everywhere all the time, He is always near, His presence fills the universe
- *“But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27)*
- We should not think of God as having size or dimensions, He is immeasurable
- Do we need to go somewhere special in order to draw close?

Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are  
there. If I rise on the wings of the  
dawn, if I settle on the far side of the  
sea, even there your hand will guide  
me, your right hand will hold me fast.

**Psalm 139:7–10**

NIV

The reason we sense that God is remote is because there is a dissimilarity between moral characters. God is not far away in distance, but He seems to be because He is far away in character... The Bible has a word for this moral incompatibility, this spiritual unlikeness between man and God—alienation... God is not one inch away from a sinner. And yet He is far from the sinner. Am I contradicting myself? Not at all! Since God is omnipresent the distance is that of character, not space."

# Omnipotence

- God is all-powerful, able to accomplish His will
- *“Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.” (Psalm 24:8)*
- *“Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,” (Jeremiah 32:17)*
- *“I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.” (Job 42:2)*

# Omnipotence

- Is there anything God cannot do?
  - That which is inconsistent with His character:
  - He cannot lie, or commit sin... (*Heb. 6:18; Hab. 1:13*)
- People often wonder if God is all-powerful, why does He not end suffering or evil?
  - This is not His only attribute, He is also holy, wise...
  - He chose to create human beings with free will, capable of rejecting Him and His ways
  - He will return to judge the earth, but is patient

# Omniscience

- God knows all things past, present, and future
- *“Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.” (Psalm 147:5)*
- *“And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 4:13)*
- *“for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.” (1 John 3:20)*

# ISAIAH 46:9–10

ISAIAH

“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure”

# Omniscience

- He even knows what would happen under different circumstances (the cities of Tyre and Sidon would have repented if they had seen the miracles Jesus did, Matt. 11:21)
- He sees our thoughts and motives of our heart
- Is there any problem that could stump God?
- Does God's knowledge of our hearts and minds change His love for us?

# For Next Week

- The Attributes of God (part 2)
- Charles Baker “A Dispensational Theology,”
- Chapter 18, pages 134-144