

## His Non-relational Attributes

Series: The Attributes of God

Foundations ABF

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### INTRO:

There are different ways to break down and describe the attributes of God.

One popular way is to talk about his non-relational attributes and his relational attributes.

“Non-relational” attributes are those things that God is/would be even if we didn’t exist.

“Relational” attributes are those things that God is in relation to us.

“Greatness” of God and the “goodness” of God.

ILLU S : What would be Kellie’s non-relational attributes? (5’6” brown eyes, etc.)

What would be her relational attributes? (kind, merciful, etc.)

Today – non-relational attributes. “Greatness” of God.

## I. GOD’S BEING : GOD IS SPIRIT AND PERSON

### A. GOD IS SPIRIT

John 4:24 Jesus said, "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."

1 Tim. 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Jesus said a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Lk 24:39 KJV)

W A I T ! W hat about..

ARM of God – Num. 11:23 The LORD answered Moses, "Is the LORD's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you."

HAND of God – Mk 16:19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.

EYES of God – Ps. 139:16 your eyes saw my unformed body.

BACK and FACE (and HAND again) – Ex. 33:23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.

TWO important terms:

1) Anthropomorphism: interpretation of what is not human in human terms

EX: Mother nature is angry

EX: Sun smiled down on us

EX : Lord's eyes are watching . The Lord does not need physical eyeballs like we do in order to see everything. The Scripture is meant to be taken figuratively.

2) Theophany: temporary self-manifestation of God

EX: God speaks – doesn't normally have a voice; it's a temporary self-manifestation of God in human form so that he can communicate with us.

EX : Moses sees God's back. Not sure exactly what Moses saw – whether it even looked like a human back, or was it just a glimpse of God's glory... but it was a theophany of sorts.

ILLUS : Mr. and Mrs. Flat.. I want to appear... Mirror.

NOTE : who's more "real"? Who would they think is more "real"?

## B. GOD IS PERSON

Sometimes we think of a spirit as not really fully existing, not having a personality. Actually, the opposite is true.

Some theologians would argue that it's impossible to be a spirit without being a person. If you're not a personality, then you're not a living spirit – you're a thing.

I agree

Problem is, some think it's possible to be a spirit and not a person.

NOTE: EASTERN RELIGION

THEREFORE: We need to note that God is both spirit and person.

1) God has a name – YHWH.

- Ex. 3:14

- Why is his name to be respected? (3<sup>rd</sup> command)

- Because name represents person not object

- ILLUS : "I hate microphones" v. "I hate the name Eric Gentry." One we laugh at, the other makes us uncomfortable – because the name represents a person.

2) God is active – does things. A "force" doesn't do things.

- a. Creates
- b. Relates

## II. GOD'S ESSENCE: GOD IS ONE AND THREE

### A. God is one. SHAMAH:

Deut. 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

#### 1) One indivisible being (not composed of parts) (unity of simplicity)

Your body can be divided but your spirit cannot be.

EX: You burn your hand – “I left a part of my hand on the stove”

But you can cut off hand, arm, foot, and still be completely you.

SONG: I left my heart in San Francisco – just figurative.

If you had no body, no material self, you couldn't be “divided.”

NOTE: This becomes important as we try to describe the trinity. Most analogies completely break down.

Ex: egg – 3 parts – not Trinity.

Ex: water – 3 manifestations – not Trinity

#### 2) The one and only one. (unity of singularity)

No other god exists.

“You shall have no other gods before/beside me.” Why not? Is God just competitive and proud and wants to have center stage? No - Because none exist – having any other god is living a lie.

## B. God is three

Jesus = God (Jn 8, Php 2)

Holy Spirit = God Acts 5:3-4 – Holy Spirit and God used interchangeably

Mt. 28:19 & 2 Cor. 13:14 – “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” are used as if they are equal.

### HOW CAN THIS BE?

NOTE: We would never make this up. If God is real, he can't be defined in human terms.

ILLUS: 2 people of same mind with complete mental telepathy. Inseparable. One being. Two persons, but one being.

## III. GOD'S EXISTENCE: GOD IS LIVING AND CONSTANT

### A. LIVING

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

NOTE: HE IS SELF-EXISTENT. He was never “brought in to being” by some other force. Life “in himself.”

Gen. 1:1 “In the beginning.” God was already there in the beginning.

Jn. 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word...” Jesus was there too. There is no beginning with either of them.

NOTE: Self-existence means he doesn't need you.

Acts 17:25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

B. CONSTANT

Ex 3:14 "I AM "

SEE PS 102:25-27

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth,

and the heavens are the work of your hands.

They will perish, but you remain;

they will all wear out like a garment.

Like clothing you will change them

and they will be discarded.

But you remain the same,

and your years will never end.

Mal 3:6 "I the LORD do not change."

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

NOTE: Not extreme in that nothing about God ever changes. Some take this to mean that God is in some kind of "eternal present" an almost "frozen present." That's not – I don't think – what Scripture means. The Bible is only leading us to believe that his character and his nature never change. God has the ability to act in history, to feel, to react, etc. So he is outside of OUR time but that doesn't necessarily mean he has no time at all.

NOTE: God can't be subject to time. Either God is outside of time altogether or time is part of God's nature. Life = motion?

HONESTLY, this is dizzying and beyond comprehension for me.

THEOLOGIAN ASKED: Can God think a new thought? Can God say, "I think I'll go create a new world"?

I think maybe so, but this is completely mind boggling to me.

#### IV . G O D ' S B O U N D A R I E S : G O D I S I N F I N I T E A N D G O O D

##### A. GOD IS INFINITE

(w e d o n ' t m e a n t h i s i n a m a t h e m a t i c a l s e n s e a l t h o u g h t h a t m a y b e t r u e)

God is NOT finite. Not limited by materiality. No physical limitations, not limited by time and space.

##### 1) SPACE: OMNIPRESENT and HERE

QUOTE: He is everywhere (immanent) but not any where (transcendent)

JER 23:23-24 "Am I only a God nearby,"

declares the LORD,

"and not a God far away?"

JER 23:24 Can anyone hide in secret places

so that I cannot see him?"

declares the LORD.

"Do not I fill heaven and earth?"

declares the LORD.

SEE PS. 139:7-12

Y e t . . . " I w i l l b e w i t h y o u a l w a y s " ( M t . 2 8 : 2 0 )

2) TIME: ETERNAL and PRESENT

ISA 44:6 "This is what the LORD says--

Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty:

I am the first and I am the last;

apart from me there is no God.

2PE 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

REV. 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy

is the Lord God Almighty,

who was, and is, and is to come."

YET PRESENT

EX 33:14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

3) KNOWLEDGE: OMNISCIENT AND ALL-WISE YET CHANGES MIND

PS 147:5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

yet CHANGES HIS MIND.

EX : Moses changed God's mind. (Ex 32:14) Yet Bible says God can't change his mind. (Nu 23:19) What does this mean?

#### POSSIBILITIES:

God can't "lie or change his mind" in the sense that he can't break a promise.  
(ILLUS: Tommy - "I'll play that game with you/I changed my mind" v.  
Parent: I'm going to punish you/changed my mind because you changed behavior.)

God changed his mind but knew he would.. .

#### 4) POWER: OMNIPOTENT yet ALLOWS FREE WILL

JER 32:17 "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

LUKE 1:37 For nothing is impossible with God.

MT 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

#### NOTE: DOES GOD HAVE ANY LIMITS?

He has the power to choose to limit himself temporarily.

- Sovereign, but temporarily limits his power to give us a certain amount of power.

- EX : Charlie can't beat me in basketball but I can hold back .

He cannot do that which is logically contradictory.

EX: Can God make a rock bigger than he is? Stupid question.

EX: Make a square circle.

He cannot do that which contradicts his nature.

○ Can't lie

○ Can't be unjust (explains atonement)

○ NOTE: We can do something that is not consistent with our "characterization." For God, this is logically impossible. He IS his character. God IS love. He cannot NOT love any more than he cannot make a square circle. Somebody needs to write this song: "Can love stop loving?" That lead us to...

## B. GOD IS GOOD

Ex. 34:6-7

EXPLAIN THIS.

Can God decide a lie is not wrong?

If nothing is bigger than God, then is the moral code beneath God?

If not, then is God subject to the moral code?

ILLUS: PLATO believed goodness was higher than anything else. The idea of goodness was the "form" that was the highest of all things. Basically that "goodness" was God. He was close.

TRUTH: The moral code comes from the very nature of who God is. God is love, God is righteousness, holiness, etc. God defines those things and those things define God. For God to change the definition of righteousness is as impossible as making a square circle or a rock bigger than himself. He would have to change himself and that cannot happen.

CONCLUSION: Kellie sing "How Great is our God."