

The Attributes of God - Resource List

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD Preceptaustin

The Attributes of God - Chart

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THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

by Barry E Horner

These are in depth discussions from a conservative, evangelical perspective. Horner writes

"Let us be bold then to assert that a reverent, humble and truth-founded appreciation of the attributes of the living God of the Bible is the need of the hour. The present common void is like that of a shallow well that offers little to draw upon at a time when life experiences leave the soul parched. "

[Bible 101 Introduction - 131 page pdf](#) (or [here](#))

- [Title and Preface](#) - click here for the attributes listed below
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OUR AWESOME GOD

Ray Pritchard

Practical and easy to understand

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- [God in Three Persons: A Doctrine We Barely Understand](#)
- [Holy, Holy, Holy](#) - Isaiah 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- [He's Got the Whole World in His Hands \(Sovereignty\)](#) - Daniel 4
- [The Invisible Hand: Coming to Grips With God's Providence](#) - Genesis 50:20
- [His Eye Is On the Sparrow: The Doctrine of God's Omniscience](#) - Psalm 145:4, 5
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- [Is Anything Too Hard For God? The Doctrine of God's Omnipotence](#) - Jeremiah 32:17
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KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY A W Tozer

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THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

by John Gill

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THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

by Arthur Pink

Editorial Note: Be aware that Pink is often [Supernaturalistic](#) in his interpretations and makes frequent use of types - see [Typology- Study of Types](#)

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Daryl Hilbert

Grace Bible Church, Gillette, Wyoming

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Name - Definition - Scripture

1. Self-Existence - Not created - Isa 41:4; 42:8; 45:5-7
2. Eternality - Always existed - Gen 21:33; Exo 3:14; Isa 40:28
3. Immutability - Never changes - Psa 102:26-27; 1Sa 15:29; Num 23:19
4. Omniscience - All-knowing - Psa 139:1-6; Mat 6:8; 10:29-30
5. Omnipresence - All-present - Gen 16:13-14; Psa 139:7-12; Jer 23:23
6. Omnipotence - All-powerful - Gen 17:1; Psa 139:13-16; Isa 13:6

COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Name - Definition - Scripture

1. Holiness - Without sin - Isa 6:3; Ps 77:13; Hab 1:13
2. Righteousness - Right standard - Ps 119:137; Ps 145:17; Isa 51:6
3. Truthfulness - Cannot lie - Num 23:19; Psa 119:60; Heb 10:23
4. Love - Self-sacrifice - 1Jo 4:8; 2Co 13:11; Rom 5:8
5. Goodness - Benevolent - Ps 100:4-5; Mat 5:45; Psa 23:6
6. Mercy - Pity to needy - Ex 34:6-7; Isa 54:10; Jer 31:3
7. Sovereignty - Rules & reigns - Job 11:10; Ps 115:3; Eph 1:21

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

A. In my humble opinion, studying the attributes of God is the crème de la crème of theology. As we understand who God is by understanding His attributes, it results in an indelible mark on our souls.

B. We are able to worship God properly when we understand God's attributes. In addition, we are able to know how He deals with mankind and mankind is able to know how he is to respond to God.

C. Attributes are in reality a part of God's nature and essence. Even though we systematize them to understand them, we must realize that God's attributes are woven together so that no attribute is manifested independently or is preeminent over the rest. Therefore, God is who He is.

II. DEFINITION FOR THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

A. The attributes of God are the qualities or characteristics inherent in and ascribed to God. These could also be called the "perfections of God" because God is the very essence of the totality of these perfect attributes.

B. The attributes of God could be defined as, 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. (A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson, 1907), p. 244.)

III. ASPECTS OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

A. Customarily the attributes of God are divided into categories: Natural or Moral; Absolute or Relative; and Communicable or Incommunicable. Each has their own distinction and emphasis.

B. The terms, communicable and incommunicable express those attributes of God which are distinct to God alone (Incommunicable) and those which can be found in man albeit in an imperfect and finite resemblance (Communicable).

IV. INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

A. Self-Existence

1. Unlike man, God does not have a beginning or a cause, therefore God exists in and of Himself. Thomas Aquinas said, He is the first cause; himself uncaused.

2. This means that God has the ground of His existence in Himself, and unlike man, does not depend on anything outside of Himself. He is independent in His Being, in His virtues and actions, and causes all His creatures to depend on Him. (Louis Berkhof, Summary of Christian Doctrine)

3. God's self-existence is expressed in His name, "I AM" (hayah) which is connected to the name Jehovah

(yhvh - four letters; Tetragrammaton or Yehovah) in Exo 3:14.

- a) The Hebrew verb, "I AM" is a common Qal Imperfect of hayah ("to be" verb) which connotes continuous unfinished action, i.e. "the One Who Always Is."
- b) In the LXX, it is expressed, egō eîmi ó ón (I am the One who is) with a present "to be verb" (eîmi) and a present participle (ón).
- c) There is a connection contextually with the covenant name Yahweh. It expresses the basic idea that God has always existed as the Self-existent One and His covenants need only be based on Himself (Isa 41:4; 42:6).
- d) Self-Existent One is His name, there is no other, and He alone gives life (Isa 45:5-7; Rom 11:36; Acts 17:28 cp. Christ - Joh 14:6).
- e) Self-Existent One is His name and He will not share His glory with another (Isa 42:8).
- f) Self-Existent One is His name and He alone is Savior (Isa 43:10-11 cp. Christ - 2Pe 1:1).
- g) Though Christ became a man it is clear He retained His deity as the great "I AM" (Joh 8:58).

4. Since God is the self-existent One and He is the giver of all life, then He alone knows our true needs and He alone can meet our true spiritual needs.

B. Eternality

1. This attribute is a logical conclusion to God's self-existent because if God is self-existent, He must also exist eternally and endlessly. However, it is more than a logical conclusion; it is a major theme in Scripture.
2. Eternality could be defined as, God is without beginning, or end...God is free from all succession of time though He is the author of it. (Gibson, Study of God, Lancaster Bible College)
3. Louis Berkhof defines it as, that perfection of God whereby He is elevated above all temporal limits and all succession of moments, and possesses the whole of His existence in one indivisible present. (Louis Berkhof, *ibid*, pg. 60)
4. God's eternity is also seen in His name found in Exo 3:14. The Great I AM (Self-Existent One) has always existed and will always exist (cp. Christ - John 1:1-2, 15; 8:58; Col 1:17).
5. God exists from "everlasting to everlasting" (Psa 90:2). "Everlasting" in Hebrew is olam. In order to demonstrate God's eternity, He revealed Himself as El-Olam, i.e. the Everlasting God (Gen 21:33; Isa 40:28). In Rom 16:26, He revealed Himself as the "Eternal (aiōnios) God." The Greek expression, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνας means, "forever and ever" (Gal 1:5).
6. Since God is the everlasting God, then the life He gives through His Son is also everlasting. Since He never ceases to exist, our eternal life in Him will never cease (Mat 25:46; Joh 3:15-16, 36; Joh 5:24).

C. Immutability

1. God is not capable or subject to change ...God never becomes greater or lesser, better or worse ... never develops or improves, evolves or gets older. (Gibson, Study of God, Lancaster Bible College)
2. Immutability is that perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change, not only in His Being, but also in His perfections, and in His purposes and promises...and is free from all accession or diminution and from all growth or decay in His Being or perfections. (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), p. 58.)
3. Once again, we are brought back to Exo 3:14. God's name, "I AM WHO I AM," not only expresses self-existence and eternity, but also immutability (Psa 102:26-27). God is who He is and He never changes. God does not change for better or for worse. He is already perfection and perfection needs no improvement.
4. God does not lie or go back on His word. He does not need to because He decrees it perfect the first time and every time (1Sa 15:29; Num 23:19).
5. Some challenge God's immutability when they consider passages such as Gen 6:6 where God "repented" that He made man. First of all, God is sinless and therefore never sins or makes the wrong choice by which He must repent. The word "repent" (nacham - lit. "breath deeply," sigh) in Gen 6:6, might be better rendered "sorrowful" or "grieved." God was fully aware that man was going to sin, but God emotionally grieves over sin.

Immutability does not mean that God does not interact with man. When man repents God changes His judgment to mercy. For God is not taken by surprise nor does He work on a trial and error basis.

6. God's immutability is meaningful to the believer because He understands God will never change His mind concerning His promises (Heb 6:17-19; Mal 3:6). God's immutability is an anchor for the soul because God's word and counsel do not change (Psa 119:89; Psa 33:11 cp. Christ - Joh 14:2; Heb 13:8).

7. On the other hand, God will not wink at sin or change His mind concerning His judgment upon those who reject Christ (Joh 3:36).

D. Omniscience

1. Omniscient comes from two Latin words (omnis - all and scientia - knowledge) and means, "all knowing." It refers to God's infinite and perfect knowledge.

2. Ryrie states, God knows everything, things actual and possible, effortlessly and equally well.

3. A more comprehensive definition will state that God knows all things actual and possible, past, present, and future, in one eternal act. (Moody Handbook of Theology)

a) Note: It is important to recognize that in speaking of God's knowledge or foreknowledge it does not imply a passive awareness of what will happen, but in connection with His knowledge or foreknowledge He has decreed all events. (Compare Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 1:353-58, 396-99)

b) [God's foreknowledge could be stated as the], selective knowledge of God that makes one an object of God's love; it is more than mere knowledge or cognition beforehand. (House, Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine, p. 91 cp. Gen 4:1; Je 1:5; Amo 3:2).

4. David understood the personal side of the omniscience of God in Psa 139:1-4.

a) David's life was known by God (vs. 1).

b) David's ways were known by God (vs. 2-3).

c) David's thoughts and words were known by God (vs. 2,4).

5. God not only knows all things that are possible but also all things that are actual (Ps. 139:1-6; 147:4; Matt. 6:8; 10:29-30 cp. Christ - Mat 16:21; Luk 11:17; Joh 2:24; 4:29).

6. God knows all future events. Because God is eternal and knows all things in one eternal act, events that are future to man are an "eternal now" to God. He knew the nations that would dominate Israel (Dan. 2:36-43; 7:4-8), and He knows the events that will yet transpire upon the earth (Matt. 24:25; Rev. 6-19). The Moody Handbook of Theology)

E. Omnipresence

1. Omnipresence comes from two Latin words (omnis - all and praesens - presence) and means, "everywhere present." It refers to God's presence everywhere at all times.

2. One definition simply states that, God is everywhere present with His whole being at all times. (Gibson)

3. Another definition says, God, in the totality of his essence, without diffusion or expansion, multiplication or division, penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts. (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 279)

4. God's presence is everywhere at all times. This is not the same as pantheism, which states that God is in everything. But, omnipresence does mean that since God is everywhere, everything is in His presence, yet he cannot be contained (Gen 16:13-14 - El Raah; 1Ki 8:27; Psa 139:7-12; Jer 23:23-24; cp. Christ - cp. Christ - Gen 16:7, 10, 11; Mat 18:20; 28:20).

5. The omnipresence of God is a comfort to believers in that they are always in His presence and they are always under His protective eye (Psa 139:18).

6. The omnipresence of God is a warning to those who sin because they are sinning under His watchful eye (Pr 5:21; 15:3; Job 14:16). In addition, because God is omnipresent He is able to see man's inner thoughts (Mat 5:28; 6:4)

F. Omnipotence

1. Omnipotence comes from two Latin words (omnis - all and potentia - power) and means, "all powerful."

2. Gibson states, God is able to accomplish anything He designs or desires, and it will not be contrary to His nature.
3. Thiessen, in his Lectures in Systematic Theology, p. 82 writes, God is all-powerful and able to do whatever he wills. Since his will is limited by his nature, God can do everything that is in harmony with his perfections.
4. Sadly, there will always be those who ask the ridiculous questions such as, Can God create a rock so heavy that he cannot lift it? Or, Can God make a square triangle? The answer is that, God can never do anything that violates His own attributes and nature. If he did, he would cease to be God. Augustine argued that God could not do anything or create any situation that would in effect make God not God.
5. The psalmist declares God's omnipotence when he contemplates His own creation (Psa 139:13-16).
6. The name, God Almighty (Heb El Shaddai - Strong One) declares that God is an "all powerful" being (Gen 17:1; 28:3; Isa. 13:6; Joel 1:15).
7. Christ also has the attribute of omnipotence (Mat 28:18).
8. The believer is entirely encouraged by the omnipotence of God because all things are possible with God (Gen 18:14; Mar 10:27). This does not mean that God will do whatever the believer wants, but if it is in accordance with His will (Mar 14:36), no one or nothing will thwart Him (Psa 115:3; Eph 1:11 cp. Christ - Mat 28:18; Mar 5:11-15; Mar 5:30; Joh 11:43-44).
9. Salvation is accomplished by the power of God (Rom 1:16; 1Co 1:18) and the believer is kept by the power of God (1Pe 1:5). In addition, God empowers the believer (Eph 3:16; Col 1:11).
10. The unbeliever who rejects Christ will experience the omnipotent power of God with eternal punishment (Mat 10:28).
11. All of God's "omni's" are referred to in Psa 139:
 - a) God's Omniscience (1-6)
 - b) God's Omnipresence (7-12)
 - c) God's Omnipotence (13-16)
 - d) Man's Omni - Response (23-24)

V. COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

A. Holiness

1. We will begin the Communicable Attributes with the attribute of holiness. As was previously stated, the Communicable Attributes of God are those attributes, which can be found in man albeit in an imperfect and finite resemblance.
2. Though God possess all attributes perfectly and equally, His holiness is vigorously stressed in the Bible (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8). It is emphasized because sinful man must grasp how far short he has fallen from God's glory (Rom 3:23; Isa 6:5).
3. Gibson defines the holiness of God as, set apart from all uncleanness, impurity and is completely moral in all things.
4. Ryrie defines the holiness of God as, not only that he is separate from all that is unclean and evil but also that He is positively pure and thus distinct from all others.
5. Berkhof defines the holiness of God as, that divine perfection by which He is absolutely distinct from all His creatures, and exalted above them in infinite majesty. But it denotes in the second place that He is free from all moral impurity or sin, and is therefore morally perfect. In the presence of the holy God man is deeply conscious of his sin. (Berkhof, Summary of Christian Doctrine)
6. The Hebrew word for holy is qadosh and carries the literal meaning of "cut" or "separate." In one sense, God is separate from all that is sinful and unholy (cp. Hab 1:13; Job 34:10 cp. Exo 26:33; Lev 16:16-17; Isa 1:4). In another sense, God is transcendent and separate from all others because He is perfect in holiness (Exo 15:11; Isa 57:15). Still, in another sense, qadosh refers to that which is set apart for God's holy use (Exo

3:5; Lev 11:44). The Greek word for holy is *hágios* and reflects the same meanings as *qadosh* in the LXX and NT.

7. Because God is holy, everything He does is done in holiness (Psa 77:13). His name is holy (Lev 22:2; Psa 105:3) as is His word (Psa 105:42; Rom 1:2).

8. Because God is holy, he is to be worshipped in holiness (Psa 96:9; Psa 99:5).

9. Since God is holy, His people are to be holy (1Pe 1:15-16; 1Pe 2:9).

a) This is the prime way of honoring God. We do not so glorify God by elevated admirations, or eloquent 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, *The Attributes of God*)

B. Righteousness

1. Holiness could be described as an attribute that expresses God's intrinsic character. While righteousness, though inherent to God's character, describes more the outworking of holiness, especially in His dealing with His creation.

2. Though related to holiness, righteousness is nevertheless a distinct attribute of God. Holiness relates to God's separateness; righteousness, to His justice...law... [and] morality. (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, pg. 48)

3. [God's righteousness] signifies not only God's inherent righteousness and perfection of nature, but also his method of treating others; his plan of redemption; his method of saving others. (Clark in loc.)

4. The righteousness of God is that perfection by which He maintains Himself as the Holy One over against every violation of His holiness. In virtue of it He maintains a moral government in the world and imposes a just law on man, rewarding obedience and punishing disobedience. (Berkhof, *Summary of Christian Doctrine*)

5. Righteousness (Heb *tsedaqah*) originally meant, "to be straight." It was used for a straight measuring rule. Figuratively, this root connotes conformity to an ethical or moral standard. It is the ethical and moral standard based upon the nature and will of God. The Greek equivalent is *dikaïos*.

6. God alone is inherently righteous upon which His actions are based (Psa 119:137; Psa 145:17).

7. God's righteousness is an eternal constant (Psa 119:142) and therefore so is His Word (Psa 19:9; Psa 119:138, 142, 144).

a) It is not left to our choice whether we will accept them or no; they are issued by royal command, and are not to be questioned. Their characteristic is that they are like the Lord who has proclaimed them, they are the essence of justice and the soul of truth. God's word is righteous and cannot be impeached; it is faithful and cannot be questioned it is true from the beginning and it will be true unto the end. (Spurgeon in loc.)

8. When God's righteous standard (based on His own attribute of righteousness) is violated by any unrighteousness or sin, it evokes His eternal righteous indignation, i.e. wrath (Rom 1:18; Rom 2:5, 8; Rom 5:9; Rom 9:22; Rom 12:19).

9. God's righteousness coincides with His immutability and therefore guarantees the fulfillment of His covenants and promises (Isa 51:6).

a) [God's] righteousness is unchanging and endures from age to age. This is the joy and glory of the saints, that what God is he always will be, and his mode of procedure towards the sons of men is immutable. (Spurgeon in loc.)

10. Based on the righteousness of God, the believer need never fear that God will not do right by him. Indeed in salvation, Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believing sinner (Rom 4:23-24) and in sanctification, the Holy Spirit imparts righteousness (Rom 8:4).

C. Truthfulness

1. The truthfulness of God, which is also related to the veracity and the faithfulness of God, could be defined by the following:

a) This is that perfection of God in virtue of which He is true in His inner being, in His revelation, and in His relation to His people. (Berkhof, *Summary of Christian Doctrine*)

b) That God is truth means He is absolutely dependable, without falseness of any kind. Gods plan,

principles, and promises are completely reliable, accurate, real, and factual. (Keathly)

c) To say that God is true is to say, in the most comprehensive sense, that He is consistent with Himself, that He is all that He should be, that He has revealed Himself as He really is, and that He and His revelation are completely reliable. (Ryrie, Basic Theology, pg. 49)

2. The Greek word truth is *alétheia* and literally means “to not escape notice,” or non-concealment, or “real state of affairs.” Truth is that which is true or real as opposed to that which is false and not real.

3. First, God is truth in the sense (metaphysical) that God is everything conceived in the idea of God. He is God, the true God (Joh 17:3), as opposed to idols and false gods (Psa 96:4-5; Jer 10:8-10; 1Th 1:9).

4. Secondly, God is truth in the sense (veracity) that God is everything He revealed about Himself. The God of the Scriptures is true because He revealed the truth about Himself. For God to do otherwise would make Him a deceiver (Num 23:19; Rom 3:4; Heb 6:18). Jesus Christ claimed to be the truth (Joh 14:6) and by doing so declared Himself God.

5. Thirdly, God is truth in the sense (logical) that God knows all things as they really are and created man to know the reality of God’s truth (1Jo 5:20).

6. Fourthly, God is truth in the sense (ethical) that God communicates everything truthfully to man so that he might rely on God’s truth (Psa 119:160; Joh 17:17; 2Ti 2:15).

7. It is in this last sense that we understand God’s faithfulness, which is a major theme in the Scriptures.

a) God’s faithfulness is the basis for His promises and covenants (Heb 10:23; 2Ti 2:13).

b) God’s faithfulness is a timeless security for His children (Psa 119:90).

c) God’s faithfulness is the believer’s assurance of God’s mercy (Lam 3:22-23; 1Jo 1:9).

d) God’s faithfulness provides escape for His children from temptation (1Co 10:13).

e) God’s faithfulness is the basis for the believer’s perseverance (1Co 1:8-9; 1Th 5:23-24).

8. By understanding the truthfulness and faithfulness of God, the believer knows reality because He knows God, is able to live morally because he knows God’s truth in the Scriptures, and walks in security because God cannot be anything other than faithful concerning His promises.

D. Love

1. This is often called the most central attribute of God, but it is doubtful whether it should be regarded as more central than the other perfections of God. (Berkhof, Summary of Christian Doctrine). Such a statement may surprise us, but we must remember that God possesses, enjoys, and glories in all His attributes equally.

2. The love of God, like the holiness of God, is emphasized in the Bible because man is in desperate need of understanding it.

3. The love of God has been defined as the following:

a) The quality in God which moves Him to give of Himself and His gifts. (Gibson)

b) God seeks the highest good of humans at His own infinite cost. (House, Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine)

c) [It is] ... that perfection of the divine nature by which God is eternally moved to communicate himself. It is not a mere emotional impulse, but a rational and voluntary affection, having its ground in truth and holiness and its exercise in free choice. (Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology, p. 86.)

4. When the Bible speaks in reference to God’s love, it is almost exclusively from the Greek word *agápê*.

a) *Agápê* denotes a reasoned-out love, rather than an emotionally-based love (but not devoid of emotion) —one that loves the object irrespective of the worth of the object and even though the love may not be reciprocated. (Enns, Moody Handbook of Theology)

b) *Agápê* is the love that God possesses and is a selfless love that seeks to benefit another. It was coined almost exclusively by the New Testament writers. It is distinguished from *phílos* love, in that its devotion is not based on emotion but on the will.

5. References to the love of God in Scripture:

- a) Love is an attribute of God's nature (1Jo 4:8; 2Co 13:11) as is His holiness (1Jo 1:5).
- b) The death of Christ on the cross was motivated by God's love (Joh 3:16).
- c) The love of God was ultimately demonstrated in Christ's death on the cross (Rom 5:8).
- d) Christ is the special object of God's love (Joh 15:9).
- e) Believers are special objects of God's love (Joh 17:23; Eph 1:5).
- f) God's love is unfailing and everlasting (Jer 31:3).
- g) God's love is so prevalent in His nature that those who claim to be His children must abide and exhibit His love (1Jo 4:16, 19; Joh 13:34-35).

6. The unmerited love of God which reveals itself in pardoning sin is called His grace...that love relieving the misery of those who are bearing the consequences of sin is known as His mercy or tender compassion ...and when it bears with the sinner who does not heed the instructions and warnings of God it is named His longsuffering or forbearance. (Berkhof, Summary of Christian Doctrine).

E. Goodness

1. The divine attribute of goodness could be defined as:
 - a) Goodness covers two areas, what God is in and of Himself, and what God is to His creatures. In other words goodness covers His character and the expression of His character. (Derickson's Notes on Theology)
 - b) It is that perfection which prompts Him to deal kindly and bounteously with all His creatures. (Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), p. 70)
2. The Hebrew word good or goodness is tōb or tūb which when speaking in reference to God means, the intrinsic quality of graciousness and benevolence toward others.
3. The Greek word for goodness is agathosúnê which comes from agathós. Agathós can refer to God's moral excellence and His relational willingness to give. The original Saxon meaning of our English word "God" is "The Good." (Pink, The Attributes of God)
4. We see God's goodness in a general sense to everyone (Mat 5:45) and all things (Luk 12:24 cp. Psa 145:9, 15-16).
5. There is also the goodness of God in a specific sense to those who are His (Psa 23:6; Isa 63:7).
6. Likewise, God's children are to exemplify God's goodness in their lives (Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9).
7. God's goodness is a source of encouragement to those who know Him (Psa 27:13; Jer 31:14).
8. The goodness of the Lord is a reason for giving praise to God (Psa 135:3; Psa 100:4-5).
9. One can trust in God's sovereignty because God is good, does what is good, and brings about ultimate good (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28).

F. Mercy

1. Mercy can be defined as...
 - a) [Mercy] is the goodness or love of God shown to those who are in misery or distress, irrespective of their deserts. (Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, p. 72)
 - b) [Mercy is] God's tenderhearted, showing compassion toward the miserable, needy people he loves and also his not bringing on fallen people what they deserve. (House, Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine)
2. The Greek word for mercy is éleos and carries the idea of an attitude and emotion roused by the affliction of another (Friberg), often of a superior to an inferior. It is equivalent to the Hebrew word chesed, which was translated, "lovingkindness" and referred to God's faithful and covenantal love and mercy (Exo 34:6, 7; Isa 54:10; Jer 31:3).
3. References to the mercy of God in Scripture:
 - a) The mercy of the Lord is according to His own divine choice (Rom 9:15-16, 18, 23).

- b) The mercy of the Lord is the basis of man's salvation (Tit 3:5; Eph 2:4-5).
 - c) The mercy of the Lord comes through the death and resurrection of Christ (1Pe 1:3).
 - d) The mercy of the Lord is not mutable (Ps 21:7; Neh 9:17; Mic 7:18).
 - e) The believer can find mercy from the Lord for help at the throne of grace (Heb 4:16; 2Co 1:3).
 - f) The mercy of the Lord is extended to the repentant (Isa 55:7; Psa 32:5; 1Ti 1:11), to those who fear Him (Psa 103:17; Luk 1:50), to the afflicted (Isa 49:13), to the fatherless (Hos 14:3).
4. The believer can rest assured in the mercy of God. Positionally the believer has been forgiven from all sin. Conditionally, he but needs to confess his immediate sin and gain instant forgiveness (1Jo 1:9). It is akin to what Jesus told Peter, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet" (Joh 13:10). The believer is positionally clean and needs only to be conditionally cleansed in his walk.

G. Sovereignty

1. The following are definitions of the sovereignty of God:
 - a) God's sovereignty means that He is the absolute and sole ruler who is independent of all other rule. Keathley
 - b) Divine sovereignty means that God is God in fact, as well as in name, that He is on the Throne of the universe, directing all things, working all things after the counsel of His own will. Pink
 - c) The sovereignty of God ... may be considered from two different points of view... His sovereign will and His sovereign power. The will of God is represented in Scripture as the final cause of all things.... [The power of God means] that God can, by the mere exercise of His will, bring to pass whatsoever He has decided to accomplish. Berkhof
 - d) The sovereignty of God involves God's preordained plans and purposes which He sovereignly performs (Eph 1:11).
 - (1) "Predestined" (from *proorízō* - a boundary set beforehand) means that God has decreed certain things to take place in order to accomplish His will.
 - (2) "Purpose" (*próthesis* - to set forth) means that God has decreed certain things to take place according to the purposes God has previously set forth.
 - (3) "Counsel" (*boulê* - plan or deliberation) means that God has decreed certain things to take place according to the purposes which God has deliberated and decided upon.
 - (4) "Will" (*thélēma* - bring about by action) signifies that God is actively performing (present participle of *energēō*) that which He has planned and preordained.
2. God is sovereign over everything that happens and does whatever He pleases (Isa 46:10; Psa 103:19; 115:3; 135:6).
3. God is sovereign over everything that happens and no one or no thing is able to thwart His will (Isa 46:10; Job 11:10; Dan 4:35; Psa 135:6).
4. God is sovereign in regard to the affairs and hearts of men (Pr 21:1; 2Ki 19:28; Job 12:19)
5. God's sovereignty does not violate the responsibility of man.
 - a) God is sovereign but can never be accused of evil or making anyone do evil (Jam 1:13).
 - b) All creatures are responsible for their own sin (Satan - Eze 28:15; man - Rom 5:12).
 - c) God is sovereign and at the same time man is responsible for his own sin (Acts 2:23).
 - d) At times, God sovereignly removes the restraints from evil in order to accomplish His will (Exo 7:3 cp. Exo 8:15; Pro 16:4; Rom 9:22; Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28).
 - e) God has a plan (Act 15:18), which is all inclusive (Eph 1:11), which He controls (Psa 135:6), which includes but does not involve Him in evil (Pro 16:4), and which ultimately is for the praise of His glory (Eph 1:14). (Ryrie, Basic Theology, 49)
 - f) They say that to press the sovereignty of God excludes human responsibility; whereas human

responsibility is based upon Divine sovereignty, and is the product of it. Pink

6. God is absolutely sovereign in the salvation of man.

- a) God is sovereign in salvation because God is first and foremost sovereign. To be a sovereign God, God must be sovereign over everything. If God is sovereign over everything then it stands to reason that God is going to be sovereign in salvation. The major issue is not God's sovereignty in salvation, but God's sovereignty.
- b) God must be sovereign in salvation because man is unable in and of himself to respond to God's salvation (Rom 3:11; 1Co 2:14).
- c) God sovereignly chooses and appoints whom He will for salvation (Eph 1:4-5; Act 13:48; Rom 9:11, 19-23).
- d) God sovereignly draws those whom He sovereignly chose (Joh 6:37, 44, 64-65; Jon 2:9; Psa 3:8; 37:39).
- e) God sovereignly chose believers to be part of His ministry of reconciliation (2Ti 2:10; 2Co 5:20).

7. Practical Considerations

- a) God's sovereignty is one of the most important attributes to understand but sadly is one of the most neglected.
- b) God's sovereignty is the comfort of comforts to believers.
 - (1) There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that sovereignty overrules them, and that sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought to more earnestly contend to than the doctrine of their Master over all creation--the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands--the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that throne...for it is God upon the Throne whom we trust. (Spurgeon).
- c) In some cases, God sovereignly chooses to accomplish His will through the prayers of His people (Jam 4:2-3; 2Ch 7:14; Luk 11:8).
- d) God's sovereignty demands that believers submit to His will and not our own (Luk 22:42); to His Lordship and not ours (Luk 6:46; 1Ti 6:15).
- e) Sanctification is the believer's responsibility in cooperation with the sovereignty of God (Phil 2:13).
- f) Man is to have dominion and leadership but is to do it in the same wise, righteous, and merciful way that our sovereign Lord does it (Gen 1:26, 28; Col 4:1).