

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY

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PART 2 – GOD IS A UNIQUE GOD

Definitions

1. *Self-Existent (Exodus 3:14; Job 41:11; Psalm 50:9-12; John 5:26; Acts 17:24-25)*

- God has no origin, and since the lesser cannot produce the greater, then God must be the greatest.
- Everything was made by Someone who was made of none. God is the One who is the cause of all but is Himself caused by none. He is the Great Cause.
- He is unaffected by time or motion, and is outside of time and space.
- To ask, “Where did God come from?” unwittingly acknowledges our creaturehood, for we naturally think in terms of “being created,” whereas God is without origin.
- Therefore, God does not account to us for His being and is responsible to no one.

2. *Self-Sufficient (John 1:1; 5:26)*

- Whatever God is, and all that God is, He is in Himself. Therefore, all life is in and from God.
 - God cannot receive anything that He has not first given. God does not need anything, for to Him alone nothing is necessary.
 - God does not need any of His creatures, nor is He in any way completed by them. He did not bring His worlds into being to meet some unfulfilled need.
 - God is not greater for our being, nor would He be less if we did not exist. To believe in God adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away.

- God does not need our help, nor our defense.
- God cannot be elevated.

3. *Eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27; Job 36:26; Psalm 90:2)*

- Unending existence
- The idea of endlessness is to the kingdom of God what carbon is to the kingdom of nature; the concept of everlastingness is necessary to give meaning to any Christian doctrine.
- Time is part of creation and therefore has no application to God (II Peter 3:8). God appears at the beginning and end of time
- God lives in an everlasting now, and therefore has no past or future. Nonetheless, while God dwells in eternity, time dwells in God. Therefore, God has already lived all our tomorrows as He has lived all our yesterdays (therefore, it would be impossible for God not to be omniscient and sovereign). For God, everything that will happen has already happened (Isaiah 46:10).

4. *Infinite (Deuteronomy 29:29; Romans 11:33)*

- This means limitlessness, but it is impossible for a limited mind to grasp the Unlimited (Romans 11:33).
- His greatness cannot be conceived. Could we conceive of His greatness He would be less than the human mind which could form the conception. No statement can express Him, otherwise He is less than human speech.
- God knows no bounds; He is measureless. He is without growth or addition or development. Nothing in God is less or more, or large or small.
- God is above all this, outside of it, beyond it.
- He must, then, have attributes of which we know and can know nothing (Deuteronomy 29:29).

5. *Immutable (Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17)*
 - God never differs from Himself.
 - God cannot change for the better or for the worse, and there can be no alteration in His moral character.
 - Since God is self-existent, He is not composed and thus there are in Him no parts to be altered. Since He is self-sufficient, nothing can enter His being from without.
 - All that God is He has always been, and all that He has been and is He will ever be.
 - The immutability of God appears in its most perfect beauty when viewed against the mutability of men. In God no change is possible; in men change is impossible to escape (i.e., death).

6. *Omnipresent (I Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23-24)*
 - God is everywhere here, close to everything, next to everyone.
 - God is actively involved in creation and sustaining.

7. *Transcendent (Isaiah 57:15; I Timothy 6:16)*
 - God is far above creation in reference to quality of being.
 - This is more than eminence or preeminence; it is the recognition that God stands apart, in light unapproachable. We cannot use comparison here, for that would be a comparison between that-which-is-not-God and God, who is separated from it by infinitude itself.

8. *Omniscient (Job 28:24; Psalm 139:1-4; Isaiah 40:13-14; 55:8-9; Hebrews 4:13; I John 3:20; Wisdom – Psalm 104:24; Daniel 2:20; Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 1:11; 3:10)*
 - God has no need to learn, has never learned, and cannot learn. God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters. God knows all things equally well and never discovers anything. God never wonders about anything, nor does He seek information about anything.

- In His wisdom, God devises perfect ends and achieves those ends by the most perfect means. Since He sees the end from the beginning, He doesn't need to guess or conjecture.

We must humble ourselves.

To admit that there is One who lies beyond us, who exists outside of all our categories, who will not be dismissed with a name, who will not appear before the bar of our reason, nor submit to our curious inquiries: this requires a great deal of humility, more than most of us possess, so we save face by thinking God down to our level, or at least down to where we can manage Him.”

We must take this seriously.

“Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent Self back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good—about how to build a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. And for this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion and the decay of our inner lives.”

Applications

1. *Proper view of humanity (and life/earth)*
 - *Insignificance* – We cannot know who or what we are till we know at least something of what God is. Since man is created in the very likeness of God, the fact of God is necessary to the fact of man. Think God away and man has no ground for existence. Therefore, man is but a reflection, an echo. Apart from God, man would pass back into the void of nothingness from which he first leaped at the creative call (Colossians 1:16-17).

- *Significance* – To be right, we must think worthily of God. We must let Him be the God in our minds that He is in the universe. Man's only claim to importance is that He was created in the divine image. God exists for Himself and man for the glory of God. God is everything and man is nothing.
- *Emptiness* – Furthermore, His eternity seemingly trivializes our time-centered lives. We ask, "How shall we escape the abrasive actions of events that would wear us out and destroy us?" We feel the need for more, because having created us in His own image, God set eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Thus, we also have a proper view of life and earth as that which is merely a shadow of what God made us for.

2. *Proper view of sin*

- In God, Self (i.e., I AM THAT I AM) is not sin, but the quintessence of all possible goodness, holiness, and truth.
- The natural man is a sinner because he challenges God's selfhood in relation to his own. Although sin has many manifestations, its essence is one – a moral being, created to worship before the throne of God, sits on the throne of his own selfhood and from that elevated position declares, "I AM." Thus, sins are because sin is.
- Because he is born a rebel, he is unaware that he is one. Even for the believer, the struggle is to be good while the bent toward self-assertion still lives within him. This inward principle of self lies at the source of human conduct, turning everything men do into evil.
- I sin, then, because I am *proud*, self-asserting against this Altogether Unique One. I am ungodly in my recognition of Him and me.

3. *Proper view of the gospel*

- *Responsibility & Security* – On the one hand, God's omniscience burdens the sinner with his responsibility (Psalm 90:8); on the other hand, it blesses the believer with security in a God who knows all and still forgives (Isaiah 48:8-11).
- *Transformation (life through death)* – To save us completely, Christ must reverse the bent of our nature. He must plant a new principle within us so that our subsequent conduct will spring out of a desire to promote the honor of God and the good of our fellow men. Old self-sins must die, and the only instrument by which they can be slain is the cross (Luke 9:23; Galatians 2:20). "'Tis not enough that Thou forgive / The cross must rise and self be slain."
- *Necessity & Ability* – Furthermore, God's eternity and man's mortality join to persuade us that faith in Jesus Christ is not optional, but necessary. He is the answer to the longing of our heart. Since God is immutable, He is the great cure for man's mutability, and since He is "only wise," His salvation plan is perfect and will be accomplished (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

4. *Proper view of relationship*

- *Fear* – The awful majesty of the Godhead was mercifully sheathed in the soft envelope of human nature to protect mankind. We must not then, today, try to achieve communion with Him by divesting Him of His burning holiness and unapproachable majesty. It is his terrifying transcendence that caused people to all at His feet in the fear of God (cf. Isaiah 6, etc.). It is this vision that ends all controversy between the man and His God (Proverbs 14:27).

- *Sufficiency* – Nonetheless, since God is eternal and unchanging, He can be and continue forever to be the one safe home for His time-drawn children (Psalm 90:1). He really gives everlasting life! Furthermore, since He is infinite, we can turn from our limitations to a God who has none and never hurries; and since He is omniscient and omnipresent, we can rest in His knowledge of and care for our afflictions.
- *Boldness* – His mercy and love is also as unending and unchanging as His nature, and thus we have confidence in our relationship with Him. He's always in the God-mood (i.e., He's not a bad/good mood kind of Being). Finally, God's wisdom gives confidence to our faith that God is working for our present good and everlasting well-being.

5. *Proper view of motivation*

- *Release from Payment* – Divine self-sufficiency (i.e., He doesn't need us) will not paralyze Christian activity, but will properly stimulate it. It lifts from our minds the exhausting load of mortality and encourages us to take the easy yoke of Christ and spend ourselves in Spirit-inspired toil for the honor of God and good of mankind.
- *Joy in Partnership* – The blessed news is that the God who needs no one has in sovereign condescension stooped to work by and in and through His obedient children. *He needs no one*, but when faith is present, *He works through anyone*.

6. *Proper view of response*

- Humility and contrition
- Faith and love
- Obedience and worship