

What Are the Essentials of the Christian Faith?

Lesson # 02 – Who is God? Part 1 ¹⁴³⁹⁻²

Attachment for this Lesson: File #1126 *God's Attributes*. Here is a more complete listing of God's attributes (39) which probably is not as complete as it should or could be.
File #1904 *Is God a Person?*
File #1905 *What is the Immanence of God?*

The Second Doctrinal Essential: "Who is God? Part I". There are greater than 20 attributes of God. It is hard to imagine that the lost world of men know all of these attributes of God. It is also true that most "born again" saints of God do not know, or remember, or fully understand all of these attributes of God either. For purposes of this essential of knowing God, I have listed two parts of this essential of knowing God – Part 1 & 2 which break down to ten individual elements that the world and the church attack regularly. (5 elements for each of the two essentials)

This Lesson is Part 1 of Who is God? Lesson #3 will be Part 2 of Who is God?

Note: You'll notice that each of these two parts of "Who is God?" are classified as "Theology". Just in our 1st Lesson #1 we referred to

<p>The 2nd Essential from File #0442 2 Who is God? - Theology</p>	<p><u>There is one personal God</u>^{1st*} <u>who is all sovereign,</u>^{2nd*} <u>all powerful,</u>^{3rd*} <u>all knowing,</u>^{4th*} <u>both immanent in</u>^{5th*} <u>and transcendent over His</u> <u>creation.</u>^{6th*} Job 39; Is 14:26-27; Is 43:10-13; Is 57:15-19; Eph 1:18-23; 1 Tim 6:13-16</p>
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* The superscripts reflect separate elements of this Essential. Individual Elements are listed numerically below:

I. "God is:

1st Element*: **There is one a personal God** – God is a person, an extremely complex and infinite and eternal person, One who is beyond our comprehension. An entirely unique person, there being no others of a similar nature. He is One in His essence, but three in His persons!

But what does it mean to be a person? A person is an individual, a being having unique characteristics, one who has relationships with other persons. The American Heritage Dictionary gives several definitions that would apply to God, the divine Creator, King, LORD, Master, etc. These definitions are:

"2. The composite of characteristics that make up an individual personality."

"3. An individual of some specified character."

"8. *Theology*. The separate individualities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as distinguished from the essence of the Godhead."

See file #1904, *Is God a Person?* for further discussion and consideration.

Isa 43:10-13 "*You are My witnesses,*" declares the Lord, "*and My servant whom I have chosen,* so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. *Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me.* ¹¹"*I, even I, am the Lord, and there is no savior besides Me.* ¹²"*It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange god among you; so you are My witnesses,*" declares the Lord, "*and I am God.* ¹³"*Even from eternity I am He, and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"*

All Scripture in this series is from the NASU unless other wise indicated.

Consider: In this passage we see a number of God's attributes reflected, but in regards to God's personhood, we clearly see that God declares that He has a mind, He has emotions, and He has a unique will of His own.

What Are the Essentials of the Christian Faith?

Consider Further: Read/Study attached file #1904 *Is God a Person?*

2nd Element: **God is all Sovereign:** - God is in control of all (physical and spiritual) events of the universe and all that He has created which includes all that man can know of, or conceive of, or even imagine. Adrian Rogers of the Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis TN once said to his congregation (national TV): “Did it ever occur to you that nothing ever occurs to God.” God knows of, chooses, decrees, elects, all that takes place including the birth and death of every microbe and the shifting of every summer breeze for every moment throughout all time. God has absolute control over the affairs of His creations. (the Spiritual – heaven and angels & the Physical – the universe and all that it contains)

Is 14:26-27 *This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. ²⁷For the Lord of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”*

Dan 4:34-35 *“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”*

Consider Further: Job 26; Job 41 thru 42:6.

3rd Element*: **God is all powerful:** – a.k.a. “**Omnipotent**”. God is not just sovereign, but He is also by necessity, “**omnipotent**” (from the Latin: *omni* – means “all” and *potens* – “power”) meaning “**all powerful**”. The use of the word “**almighty**” in Scripture also reflects this same attribute of the God-head! This doctrine is essential in that without this power, God could not in a meaningful way be considered to be sovereign. He must have the power to back up what He knows of, decides, chooses, decrees, and elects to happen.

Mark 4:37-41 *And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. ³⁸Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?” ⁴¹They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”*

Discuss:

Consider Further: Jer 32:17 & 26-27; Matt 19:23-26; Ps 115:1-3 ff; Eph 3:14-21.

4th Element*: **God is all knowing:** – a.k.a. “**Omniscient**”. God has all knowledge. There are no facts of the Spiritual Creation nor of the physical cosmos that are not part of His absolute knowledge. Remember the quote in the second element above, that “nothing ever occurs to God.” All facts, all events, all persons, all thoughts, all knowledge has been His from eternity past. We can state these revealed truths, but we can in no way in this life comprehend these truths! It may be more properly stated that we only **apprehend** these truths!

“**Synonyms** [of] apprehend, comprehend, grasp, understand. These verbs refer to varying degrees of mental perception. Apprehend is often limited to perception, and does not imply full understanding.” American Heritage Dictionary; p. 64; 1978.

What Are the Essentials of the Christian Faith?

Is 46:8-13 *Remember this, and be assured; recall it to mind, you transgressors. ⁹"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, ¹⁰declaring 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'; ¹¹calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it. ¹²Listen to Me, you stubborn-minded, who are far from righteousness. ¹³I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off; and My salvation will not delay. And I will grant salvation in Zion, and My glory for Israel.*

Consider Further: Job 37:16; 1 Cor 2:10-11; Job 28:24; Mt 10:29-30; Ps 139:1-2, 6 & 16;

5th Element*: God is Immanent: – Meaning that although fully transcendent above and beyond our created order, God is also fully and perfectly with us, caring for us within this created order. The title of Jesus the Christ as “Immanuel” means “God with us” is derived from the English word “immanent” which comes from the Latin word *immanens* meaning “to remain in”.

The heresy of Deism denied the immanence of God. They believed in a God the created the world and the universe and did so perfectly such that all that he created ran like a perfect eternal clock and that the maker had no need to perform any maintenance on it, did not need to wind it up, and did not need to adjust it at all. Therefore, this false god is off doing other things and is not involved in any significant way with the created order. This was and still is a serious heresy.

Immanence means that God is involved in the day to day, minute to minute operation of His created order. It also means that the true God has a purpose for this world/universe and He is ensuring that it is being accomplished perfectly.

Such religious movements as Unitarians, Unitarian Universalists, theological elements and sub-groups within Theological Liberalism (most mainline protestant churches) usually believe in a god of their own imaginations, but don't believe in the inerrancy of Scripture and thus do not believe in most precepts of who god is. They certainly deny the God of the Bible.

Col 1:13-17 *For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

Consider Further: Acts 17:24-31; Eph 1:9-14; Ps 139:1-10

6th Element*: God is Transcendent– Although God is Immanent, involved in His creation in every minute detail, yet He is not in any way part of this creation, nor is He in any way dependent on this creation. He exists separate from and outside of any and all creations that may exist. He is by nature not dependent on anything for His existence!

“The teaching of Scripture about the relationship between God and creation is unique among the religions of the world. The Bible teaches that God is distinct from His creation. He is not part of it, for He has made it and rules over it. The term often used to say that God is much greater than creation is the word transcendent. Very simply, this means that God is far "above" the creation in the sense that he is greater than the creation and he is independent of it.”

Wayne Grudem; Systematic Theology; p. 267

Acts 17:24-29 *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; ²⁵nor is He served by human hands, as though He*

What Are the Essentials of the Christian Faith?

needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; ²⁶and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' ²⁹"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

Consider Further: Rom 11:33-36; Is 55:8-9; Job 26:14; Col 1:15-17;

II. Communicable and Incommunicable Attributes of God

Theologians find it important to classify the attributes of God into two categories of attributes. This is an important task, although it is not as black and white as we might think it to be. Consider the division of God's attributes listed below.

A. The Communicable Attributes of God: There is a group of attributes which are considered to be "Communicable". These are attributes of God which we are commanded to incorporate into our lives. Some examples of attributes of God which clearly we saints are to share in His likeness include:

Love	Justice	Faithfulness	Personhood	Mercy
Honesty	Holiness	Wisdom	Immanence	Goodness
Integrity	Righteousness	Knowledge	Kindness	Peace

B. The Incommunicable Attributes of God: There are attributes of God that are not generally shared with or expected from the saints of God. These include:

Transcendence	Omnipotence	Sovereignty	Not Material
Eternality	Omnipresence	Self Existence	*Simplicity
Omniscience	Immutable	Infinite	*Alien to, separate from
Glory	Jealousy	*Perfection	*Righteous Wrath

*The attributes marked with an asterisk represent attributes of God which the saints of God may at times exhibit to a lost and dying world in a limited way.

Important Quotes

Doctrine means teaching, and it is by doctrine or teaching that the great realities of God and our relation to Him - of Christ, the Spirit, salvation, grace, glory - are made known to us. It is by doctrine (through the power of the Spirit) that believers are nourished and edified; and where doctrine is neglected, growth in grace and effective witnessing for Christ necessarily cease. How sad that doctrine is now belittled as unpractical, when - in fact - doctrine is the very base of the practical life. There is an inseparable connection between belief and practice: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov 23:7).

A. W. Pink; *The Sovereignty of God*; p. 239

The teaching of Scripture about the relationship between God and creation is unique among the religions of the world. The Bible teaches that God is distinct from His creation. He is not part of it, for He has made it and rules over it. The term often used to say that God is much greater than creation is the word "transcendent". Very simply, this means that God is far "above" the creation in the sense that He is greater than the creation and He is independent of it. God is also very much involved in creation, for it is continually dependent on Him for its existence and its functioning. The technical term used to speak of God's involvement in creation is the word "immanent", meaning "remaining in" creation. The God of the Bible is no abstract deity removed from, and uninterested in His creation. The Bible is the story of God's involvement with His creation, and particularly the people in it.

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 267