

LESSON ONE * PART III * BOOK 1

Attributes of God

Genesis 1:1-5

Now as we begin this lesson, I'm going to have you come right back to where we left off in the last lesson and that would be Genesis 1:1. I want to spend some time on the word G-O-D in that verse. You know so many people have all kinds of ideas about God. How many of you have heard the expression or even used it, "The man upstairs," or "Somebody up there is looking after me." Well listen, this is bringing God down so far beneath what He really is. I think we have to constantly remind ourselves, that yes, **He is the friend of sinners, He is the One who has promised never to leave us nor forsake us, He's the God in spite of His Sovereignty that is a God of Love, and Grace and all these other things that we're going to look at in this lesson.** We're going to look at the attributes of God, and consequently what I want to wind up this program on is, since He's that kind of a God, we can be perfectly comfortable in placing all of our faith in what He has said.

People can't seem to get the idea that what God has said, we can believe it. This is not a Book of myths or a Book that was put together as the Jews sat around their ancient campfires as some like to put it. **But as Peter says in his little epistle, "Holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." And that wasn't just the Old Testament, but the New Testament as well. The Apostle Paul over and over makes it so clear that everything he wrote was by revelation by the ascended Christ. When the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation, it was all by Holy Spirit inspiration. Every Word of this Book from cover to cover is the Word of God and we can believe it, because IT'S proven itself over and over.**

Well the first thing that I like to point out in this lesson is, that God has these certain attributes. I think it behooves us to just constantly remind ourselves of these from time to time that God is Sovereign. **He is absolutely Sovereign, and there is no one above Him.** He never has to go to someone else for advice or for questioning. He is absolute in His Sovereignty. Secondly, we can say that God is immutable, and the best verse that most of us know concerning that is in the Book of Hebrews where it says, **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!"** He has never changed in the past, He has not changed as of today, and He will never change in the eternity future, because He is immutable!

I have some school teachers in my classes and they like to tell me that the kids will remind them every once in a while, "After all we're living in the 1990's," as if that makes all the difference in the world. But concerning God, the things that God laid down at the beginning are still applicable today. God hasn't changed His attitude toward sin simply because it's a later time in human history. He is immutable, and the things that He declared anathema back there in the Old Testament, are still the same in His sight today, and they will be in the future if He tarries, because **God changes not! God is always the same!**

Those of you who dealt with human beings a lot more years even than I have known, that you've had people in your experience that maybe at one time you could trust them explicitly. But maybe sometime years later you found that that you couldn't trust them, well what's happened? Well they've had a change in their attitudes and they are not immutable, but God is. **God never changes!**

Alright, so number one, God is Sovereign, and number two He is immutable, and now for number three, and they don't necessarily have to be in this order. God is Omniscient. Now the only way I can spell that word is put omni and then science. It's the same word as science and knowledge. **So God is all knowledge, He's Omniscient!** There is nothing that God doesn't know, and He doesn't have to go looking anything up in a text book. I've got some lawyers in my classes, and some doctors in my classes, and they all agree that to be a good professional man you don't have to know everything, but you do have to know where to look it up. So that's our human weakness, as we can't know everything. Fortunately we can go to our libraries and men like this can go and search things out, but God doesn't have to do that. God doesn't have to go to His library, because **God is Omniscient! God knows the end from the beginning!**

I think I gave an illustration in one of my classes or maybe it was on television in an earlier time, and the first time I read it I had a hard time swallowing it, but you know the more I got into this Book, the more I could agree and believe it, and he made this illustration. Now this is mind boggling, believe me it is. That in the life of a woman or female, of any of the species, there are thousands upon thousands of ova, eggs. In the male of the species there are billions upon billion of sperm. They're so small you have to put them under the microscope to see them. **But God in His Omniscience has put every human being that has ever been born together according to His will.**

Now that's hard to swallow, I know it is. The billions in China? Yes. The millions here in our beloved America? Yes. The millions that have been aborted? Yes. **God in His Omniscience, and Sovereignty has put together every sperm and every egg that has ever been fertilized.** Now if that doesn't boggle your mind, then I don't know what it would take to do so.

But on the other hand, the first beautiful night that you can go look at a starlit sky, just step out and try to comprehend how many billions upon billions of stars there are. Now you know it isn't just billions of stars, but now we know there's billions of galaxies in which there are billions of stars, so now we're talking about trillions and trillions of stars. Do you think God has lost sight of anyone of them? Not a one. **So He is Omniscient, He is all knowing.**

Now the next one for your list is **He is Omnipresent.** In other words you cannot go anywhere without God being there. David, in the Psalms, even puts it in a place that's really hard to swallow, when he said, "Lo I go to the deepest Hell, God is there, and though I go to the highest Heavens, God is there. I've also read that astronomers feel that our universe is always expanding outwards, but does it ever go beyond God? Never.

So that brings up the next attribute of God. **He is Infinite.** You cannot comprehend a place that is beyond the God of this Book, He is Infinite. Now that's beyond me, but I believe it, and we're going to come back to why I can believe it, and why God expects me to believe it and you to believe it.

Now for another attribute of God. **He's Righteous, He's Just. God has never treated anyone or anything unfairly.** Now a lot of times terrible things happen, even to believers, and I know as humans we are often tempted to question, "Well is God fair? The other day Iris and I got news of a very sweet lady who had just been diagnosed with breast cancer. I told Iris, "Isn't it amazing, it just seems the dearest and sweetest people on earth are the ones that get stricken the most often", and we do say, "Well God why?" In fact David asked the question back there in the Psalms: "Why do the

wicked prosper?" And that is a valid question from the human standpoint, but does God ever make a mistake? No. He never makes a mistake because of his attribute. God is Righteous, He's Just.

I mentioned this one day to a seminary president that I talked to quite often on the phone, and had made the expression that **Grace was an attribute**. And this gentlemen said, "Les I'd never thought of it that way before." Well you know when you talk to a highly educated man, I'm more apt to think that he's right and I'm wrong, but I feel that the Grace of God is an attribute. Remember very few people, even believers, understand the Grace of God. Why? Because it's an attribute that's so far above and beyond the human intellect that's it's hard for us to comprehend. I've had many people, after they've heard me teach, that had never really had a grasp of Grace, until they heard me teach it.

I read a book every once in a while by a dear old theologian from England, and I don't recommend the book because it's a commentary on just six verses. I showed the book to Andre, and he said "How could anyone write a book that thick on just six verses?" And I said, "Because he's wordy." But I love to read the dear old gentlemen, whose dead now, but I showed Andre a quote that I have highlighted in the book, and I'll paraphrase it because it brings out this very attribute of Grace that I'm talking about. He makes this statement, "Unless we teach and preach the Grace of God as Paul delineated it back there in Romans chapter 3, where he said, *'he was slanderous accused of promoting sinful living just to prove that the Grace of God was greater'*" The old gentlemen goes on to say, "Unless we teach and preach Grace at the possibility of being accused of that, then we're not teaching Grace as this Book lays it out."

So we have to understand that this is so far beyond our human understanding, that a Righteous God, Holy, far above sinners the Book of Hebrews says. **And yet His Grace is always greater, and will always go farther than man's greatest sin, but I always include with that, "That's not license!"** Grace is not license, but rather Grace is that attribute of God that He is capable of absolutely forgiving and cleansing and calling Righteous the most vile sinner that will believe Paul's Gospel for salvation. I always like to use the example here in Oklahoma, where several years ago we had the steakhouse murders in Oklahoma City. It was terrible, and I would have been the first to say, put that guy to death, and the quicker the better, because of the horrible crime that he had committed, but God doesn't look at it that way. God looks at that murderer as a man that is still capable of His Grace. Now I know that's beyond us, because it's an attribute of God.

Another one of God's attributes, which is next door to Grace, is His love. What an attribute that God can love beyond lovely. I've been to Haiti and we ministered with Andre down there for a whole week, and a lot of those people naturally are not easy to love. They're poor, they're poverty stricken, but you see there isn't anybody that God can't love. You go into the ghettos in our huge cities, and crime and drugs run rampant, is anybody so far down the tube in those areas that God can't love? No. We can't always comprehend it, but God loves them, and He has already purchased their salvation, if they'll just cash in on it. They're already pardoned. A lot of people don't realize that, but the most vile sinner already has his pardon done, but he has to believe Paul's Gospel in order to appropriate it. So on and on we could go.

These are all attributes of this same God who created everything. He created man as we will see in coming lessons, He put him in the garden knowing what he would do, and yet the moment he sinned, the very next thing that God does is, put in gear the whole plan of redemption, where He is

promising the "**SEED**" of the woman in Genesis 3:15. And as some Bible scholars have put it, that begin that Red Scarlet cord of Redemption that goes all the way through this Book. Now that's not all of the attributes of God, I could go for at least another half hour, but that's enough for this time, so I want you to come back with me to the Book of Hebrews.

You'll find the Book of Hebrews, naturally over in the New Testament, and let's look at chapter 11:6. **Again I think this is a verse that we have to classify as one of the absolutes of Scripture, and of the God who we've just been talking about.** We know we're living in a culture where people don't want absolutes, but rather they want all restraint removed, but listen there are absolutes, and a Sovereign God is the One who has declared them. Here in this passage we have one of at least two absolutes that I'm always trumpeting on the most. There's more than that, but I usually use the two here in Hebrews, and this is the first one.

Hebrews 11:6a

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: (God, up in verse 5) for he that cometh to God must (repent? No, but rather) believe..."

That's why I'm almost screaming at people that today God's whole requirement for salvation is believe Paul's Gospel of I Corinthians 15:1-4. And how do we believe the Gospel? It's in this area of faith, without which it is impossible to please him.

Hebrews 11:6a

"But without faith it is impossible to please him (God) for he that cometh to God must believe..."

Now remember there are three words in Scripture that all basically mean the same thing. **To believe, to trust, and faith.** They all mean the same thing. When you trust the Word of God, you're believing it, and when you believe the Word of God, you're exercising faith, and when you exercise faith, you're trusting and believing. Do you see that? So you have to believe that He is, and in that area of believing, you must understand that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6b

"...for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

In other words, will God ever fail an individual? Never! I think, especially my Oklahoma classes know, that I like to use illustrations that are the most simplistic, because those are the ones that stick the hardest. As you came into the studio this afternoon, I could have just sat here and watched everyone of you that came in, and I would not have seen a single one of you examine the chair that you sat down in. Did you? Not a one of you examined the chair you're setting on to see if it would hold you up. Now if we were in an area where the chairs were weak, and you couldn't depend on them, that's what you'd have to do. You'd have to examine your chair to make sure you don't suddenly become embarrassed and fall flat on the floor.

Why did you not bother to even check the chair that you're sitting on? You have the utmost faith in it, that it's going hold you. See? You believed before you sit down that that chair was going to hold

you. Now bring that up into the spiritual realm. God expects the human race to put that same kind faith in what He has said, just as much as you place your faith in these material things that you take for granted. **It's the very same application, that when God has said something, we can believe it, and when we believe it, God is going to reward us with the greatest experience in all of human history, and what's that? SALVATION!**

To have that blessed assurance, not only of eternal life for that which is to come, but for the here and now. I tell my classes again, in Oklahoma, over and over, too many Christians have the idea that salvation is just simply a fire escape. They get saved so they won't go to Hell. Well that's all well and good, and that's certainly part of it, but listen there's a lot more to it than that. **Salvation and the knowledge that you're a child of God is that day by day assurance, that you're His, and He is yours, and how do we know that? Because this BOOK says so!**

Over and over I'll show people verses, and say, "Do you feel this?" "No." "Can you see this?" "No." "How do you know it's true then?" "Because the BOOK says so, that's what God's Word says." "And when you take God at His Word, what is that?" "FAITH!" I think I'm going to go ahead and put that definition on the chalkboard. I also know for those of you I've taught in years past that you know this forward and backwards, that "Faith is taking God at His Word" Now that is faith, and I have never found a better definition for it. **When you can read something in this Book, and even though you can't understand it, we believe it. Why? Because it's God that said it.**

When you go back to Genesis 1:1 where we've been studying, and it says, *"In the beginning, God created (call out of nothing) the heaven and earth."* Now I can't prove that, and science still can't prove it, but I believe it.

I like to refer my classes to an article I read quite a few years ago written in one of the scientific magazines that I was subscribing to at that time. This writer was discussing the origin of the universe, and of course with all of his big scientific terminology and all that, what it all boiled down to was, that he was now convinced that the whole universe at one time had come from a single source of light. Boy I read that to my little wife and said, "Honey do you hear what he's saying?" Because WHO is LIGHT? God is! And so where did everything come from when Christ spoke the Word? From Christ Himself! But here was the kicker in the article. He ended up his article, and after expounding on all the tremendous outburst of the beginning of the universe, he came to this conclusion: **He said, "I can foresee the day, (and I suppose he was talking in terms of billions of years,) when that whole thing will come back to that original source of light."**

Well what does Peter say:

II Peter 3:10

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

This old world is going to be melted down, it's going to dissolve. And everything as we now see it is going to totally disappear, but is that the end of it? No, but rather Peter says: *"There will be a new*

heaven and a new earth," and then when you jump over to the Book of Revelation chapter 21, what does John say:

Revelation 21:1

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea."

So you see, it all fits so beautifully. This is just to prove, and this is all I try to get people to understand, "Take God at His Word!" When you do that, it makes everything turn right side up, if we simply believe what He has said. Now going back to our timeline again, and we've already looked at a good portion of that timeline that was foretold way back in the Old Testament, and the first half of it has already come to pass. I think there's 360 some prophecies concerning Christ's first coming. Every one of them were fulfilled to the last detail. Well listen, if God has already fulfilled the first half of the prophetic proclamation, then why in the world can't people believe that He will fulfill the last part. Well He will because His Word has said so.

Now for a quick recap: With all the attributes of God that the Scriptures has declared and has proven, how in the world can someone say, "But I can't believe it." It isn't that they can't believe it, but rather they don't want to believe it. When people decry the habit of smoking, and say, "Oh if I could only get rid of this habit, but I can't quit." I say, "Do you want to quit?" "No, not really," is the answer I get so often. Well if you don't want to quit, then I guarantee you one thing, you're not going to quit, because the one has to come before the other.