



PENTECOST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY

THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

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THE NATURE OF GOD

- ▶ The nature of God describes who God is.
- ▶ Man cannot know God until God reveals Himself to Him.
- ▶ God has revealed Himself to man through the Scriptures.
- ▶ The following slides describes the nature of God by two authorities.

LOCKYER ON THE NATURE OF GOD

- **God is pure Spirit of infinite perfection** (John 4:24; Deut. 4:15, 16, 19; Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 40:25-26)
- **God has Personality:** God is not a collection of perfect and abstract qualities and ideas. He is a personal being.
- He is addressed as a person with all the attributes of personality such as life, intelligence, will, self-consciousness and self-determination, a Being we can trust, love and praise. (Exo. 3:14; 1 Corinth 2:11; Eph. 1:9, 11; John 5:26)
- **God is Infinite:** The noun infinity is from the word infinite. Infinite is a combination of two words “In” (meaning not) and “finite” (meaning limited).
- God’s infinity has to do with the fact that He is free from all possible limitations. His infinity is such that no limit can be assigned to his perfections (See Eph 1:23; Jer 23:24, Job 11:7; 26:14; 36:26). His infinity is revealed in His omnipresence. He is defined by his boundless essential nature as “God is love”, “God is Light”, “God is a consuming fire”.

GRUDEM ON THE NATURE OF GOD

This author emphasizes:

- **The independence of God-** He is Self-existent and He does not need or rest on anything in creation (Job 41:11; Rev 4:11-17)
- **The unchangeableness or immutability of God** (Psalm 102:25-27; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17). He is the same yesterday, today and forever!
- **The Eternity of God-** God has no beginning or end or succession of moment in his being and he sees all time equally vividly yet. (Psalm 90:2; John 36:26; John 5:58; Exo. 3:14 “I am who I am”; Ps 90:4; Gal 4:4-5; Rev 21:23, 25)
- **Omnipresence of God:** God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being yet God acts differently in different places. (Gen 1:1; Deut. 10:14; Ps 139:7-10, Amos 9:1-4, Col 1:17).
- **Unity:** God is not divided into parts. All the different attributes of God are emphasized at different times but he possesses them together.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- An attribute is a quality or characteristic inherent in or ascribed to someone or something.
- A.H Strong defines God's attributes as "those distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and which constitutes the basis and grounds for His manifestations to His creatures"
- God's attributes are:
 - *Permanent* - will not change over time
 - *Intrinsic* - cannot be gained nor lost. Inseparable from God's being, essence and existence



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- The virtues or qualities of God are as numerous as His names. These divine attributes imply:
 - Those inherent qualities or parts of character which God has attributed to Himself as constituting his nature or essence.
 - The sum of these manifold attributes are not to be conceived as constituting God, but as His method of revealing Himself to his creatures.
 - God never magnifies one of His attributes at the expense of the other.

CLASSIFICATION GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

- 1. *Absolute attributes:*** Those pertaining to God as an absolute not shared with his creatures. Qualities in God and about God that belong to Him alone. These are sometimes call incommunicable attributes
- 2. *Relative attribute:*** Those arising from the relation between the Creator and the creature. These are also called communicable attributes. God have these in their superlatives but humans also share in them such as Love, righteousness, goodness, wisdom etc.

ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

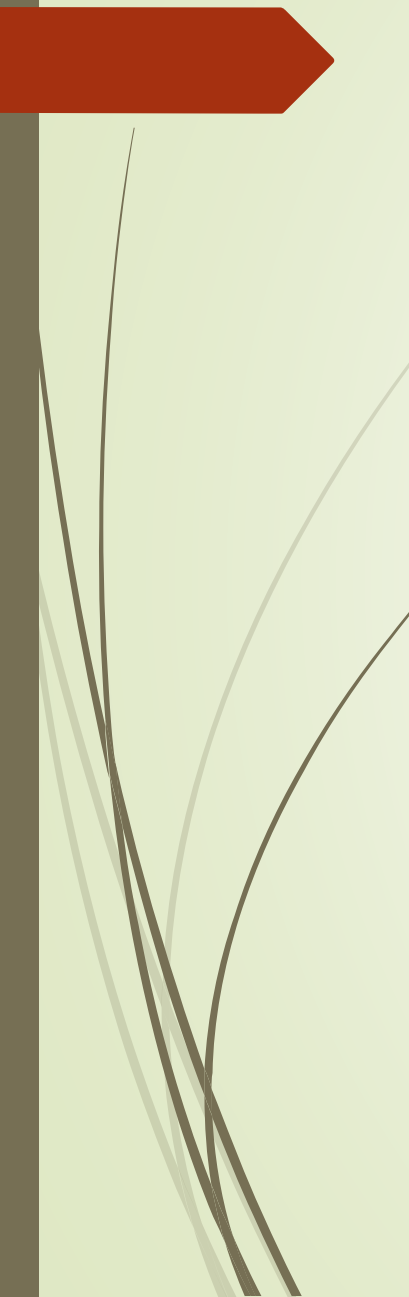
ETERNITY

- ▶ God is without beginning or end; He is free from all succession of time; He is the cause of time.
- ▶ He is not spatially limited. God cannot be subject to time.
- ▶ For God is the creator of everything that changes. God is not bound by the kind of changing being which time measures.
- ▶ He was, is, and is to be - Deuteronomy 33:27, Psalms 102:11-12, John 8:56-57, Ps 90:2; 102: 24
- ▶ God is absolutely free from the boundaries of time In contrast, all men had a beginning - God always was - the eternal I AM

ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

IMMENSITY

- God transcends all spatial limitations; He is present in every point in space with His entire being through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Louis Berkhof describes it as “that perfection of the Divine Being by which He transcends all spatial limitations and yet is present in every point of space with His whole Being”.
- God cannot be localized in one place. (1Kings 8:27, Isaiah 66:1, Jer 23:23-24, Acts 7:48-49)
- God is not limited in time, nor is He limited in space.
- Only material things exist in space and time, and God is not material. “God is spirit” (John 4:24).
- His centre is everywhere and His circumference is nowhere. (2 Chron. 6:18; Ps 139:7-10).



The centre of the circle of good is God and the circumference is the Kingdom of Heaven. The nature of God is love.

ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

IMMUTABILITY

- ▶ Louis Berkhof says it 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”
- ▶ God is an unchangeable God. “Thou art the same” (Heb. 1:12).
- ▶ In His person, He cannot change because He could not be better or more complete. If He did, He would not be God for he would have lacked some perfection.
- ▶ All His attributes are like Himself, unalterably fixed, enduring forever.
- ▶ His essence, perfections, attributes, purposes, will and promises are ever the same. Num 23:19; Ps 33:11; Mal. 3:6; Jas 1:17
- ▶ Seeing changes in God are due to changes in man. Jonah 3:10

ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

SELF-EXISTENCE

- ▶ He has the ground of His existence in Himself
- ▶ He is independent in His being and everything else, i.e in His virtues, works etc.
- ▶ And He causes everything to depend on Him
- ▶ His name I AM THAT I AM (Exodus 3:14) emphasizes He has continua existence in Himself



ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- ▶ God does not need anything or anyone to complete Himself - He is completely free from any outside requirements for happiness or fulfillment - Psalm 50:10-12
- ▶ God did not need to create the creation - but He did for His own purposes and pleasures - Revelation 4:11, Ephesians 1

ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

OMNIPRESENCE

- ▶ God is everywhere, at the same time in the totality of His person
- ▶ This does not mean that God is vaguely present everywhere in general but that He is actively and personally everywhere in particular (Psalms 139:7-12; Acts 17:24-28)
- ▶ He is everywhere at the same time in the totality of all that He is, not by diffusion, expansion, multiplication or division of Himself.
- ▶ Immensity emphasizes the transcendence of God and stresses that He is not bound by space
- ▶ Omnipresence and immensity is closely related.
- ▶ Omnipresence emphasizes immanence of God: He filling all space where nothing can escape His presence
- ▶ This is not Pantheism which states that God is *in* everything



ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

OMNIPOTENCE

- ▶ God can do anything that is in harmony with His other attributes -
Genesis 18:10-14, Jeremiah 32:15-17, Matthew 19:26
- ▶ He is not limited by any power outside Himself
- ▶ God's purposes are never frustrated as He has the power to bring about His will

ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

OMNISCIENCE

- ▶ God knows all things actual and possible, past, present and future in one eternal act.
- ▶ This implies that:
 1. God Knows all things that exist in actuality (Ps 139:1-6, 147:4, Math 6:8, 10:28-30)
 2. God knows all the variables concerning things that have not occurred. That is He knows what could have been that wasn't. (Mathew 11:21)
 3. God knows all future events: events that are future to man are an eternal now to God because He sees all things in one eternal act.
 4. God's knowledge is intuitive. It is immediate, not coming through the senses; it is simultaneous not acquired through observation or reason; it is actual, complete and according to reality.
- ▶ Because He is eternal, there is no increase in His knowledge; He is not shocked by anything as all things lie before Him

ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES

UNITY

- Two thoughts are expressed here:
 1. God is one numerically (Deuteronomy 6:4, 1 Timothy 2:5) .
 - This refers to His singularity
 - He is absolutely unique; there is none like Him and none that can be like Him.
 2. God is not a composite and cannot be divided into parts. This stresses the inner and qualitative unity of God
 - That is the triune God is one in His essence and cannot be divided.
 - In the being of God, there are not three individuals, but three personal self-distinctions within the one divine essence, in personality, and in will, manifesting itself in Persons, in characteristics and operations (Isaiah 46:1; Luke 3:22; John 15:26; Deut 6:4)



RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- ▶ Specific qualities manifested in God's relationship with His creation.
- ▶ These qualities seen in God inspires faith and confidence in Him

RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES

FREEDOM

- God cannot be confined or crippled by the laws of nature He created.
- God is sovereign over nature, history, salvation and creation.
- God's will is never frustrated as His sovereignty is connected to His omnipotence.
- God's freedom is ever conditioned by His nature, so he will never act contrary to His holiness and love.
- He is directing, executing, regulating, and permitting every event that occurs in heaven and on earth, according to His good pleasure and without any restraining influences.
- Every event in the life of a believer is for His glory and our benefit.
- Daniel 4:35; Romans 9:14-24

RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES

GOODNESS

- ▶ “That perfection which prompts God to *deal bountifully and kindly* with all His creatures.”
- ▶ His goodness is not derived; it is the essence of His eternal nature and includes benevolence, love, mercy, and grace.
- ▶ This goodness is not an added quality, but of His very essence and infinite in scope. Nothing can be added to His goodness to make Him more good. Ps 33:6; 104: 21; Nahum 1:7; Mat 19:17
- ▶ He is essentially, absolutely and consummately good

RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES

LOVE

- ▶ Love is the heart of God's nature. That is, God's self-sacrificial love.
 - ▶ God's love is not dependent on the response of the one being loved, its exercised in His free choice
 - ▶ God's love is based on a decision - not a "giddy feeling" in His stomach
 - ▶ Is not an emotion - but a reasoned out love (yet not devoid of emotions)
 - ▶ It is a *rational* and *voluntary* affection having its *grounds in truth and holiness*
- ▶ Two concepts
 - ▶ Unselfish concern for another's welfare
 - ▶ Seeks the highest good for the one loved
- ▶ Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Romans 5:8

RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES

HOLINESS

- ▶ It is God's total moral perfection and complete separation from sin - James 1:13, Job 34:12
- ▶ God possesses *ethical holiness*; He is separate from moral evil or sin. Leviticus 11:44-45
 - ▶ This makes Him the moral and ethical standard. He is the law. He sets the standard
 - ▶ God does not do something because it is right - rather it is right because God does it
 - ▶ God is the universal "ruler" for determining right and wrong
- ▶ God possesses *intrinsic holiness*
 - ▶ He is holy in nature. Ex 15:11; Is 57:15
- ▶ God possesses *original holiness*
 - ▶ God is the origin and source of holiness. Rev. 15:4; Ps. 99:9; 111:9;
- ▶ God possesses *transcendent holiness*
 - ▶ No one can measure the extent of God's holiness. Is 6:3; Mark 10:18

RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES

WISDOM

- “The virtue of God which manifests itself in the determination of worthy ends and in the choice of best means for the realization of those ends”.
- God knows ALL the facts and makes all decisions with full knowledge of them and in light of what is ultimately best.
- God makes no mistakes in His dealings with mankind and His purposes in history
- We need to submit to God’s Word and His direction in our lives because He knows what could happen and what will happen and His plan is much better than ours.
- Romans 11:33, 1 Corinthians 2:7, 1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 104:24

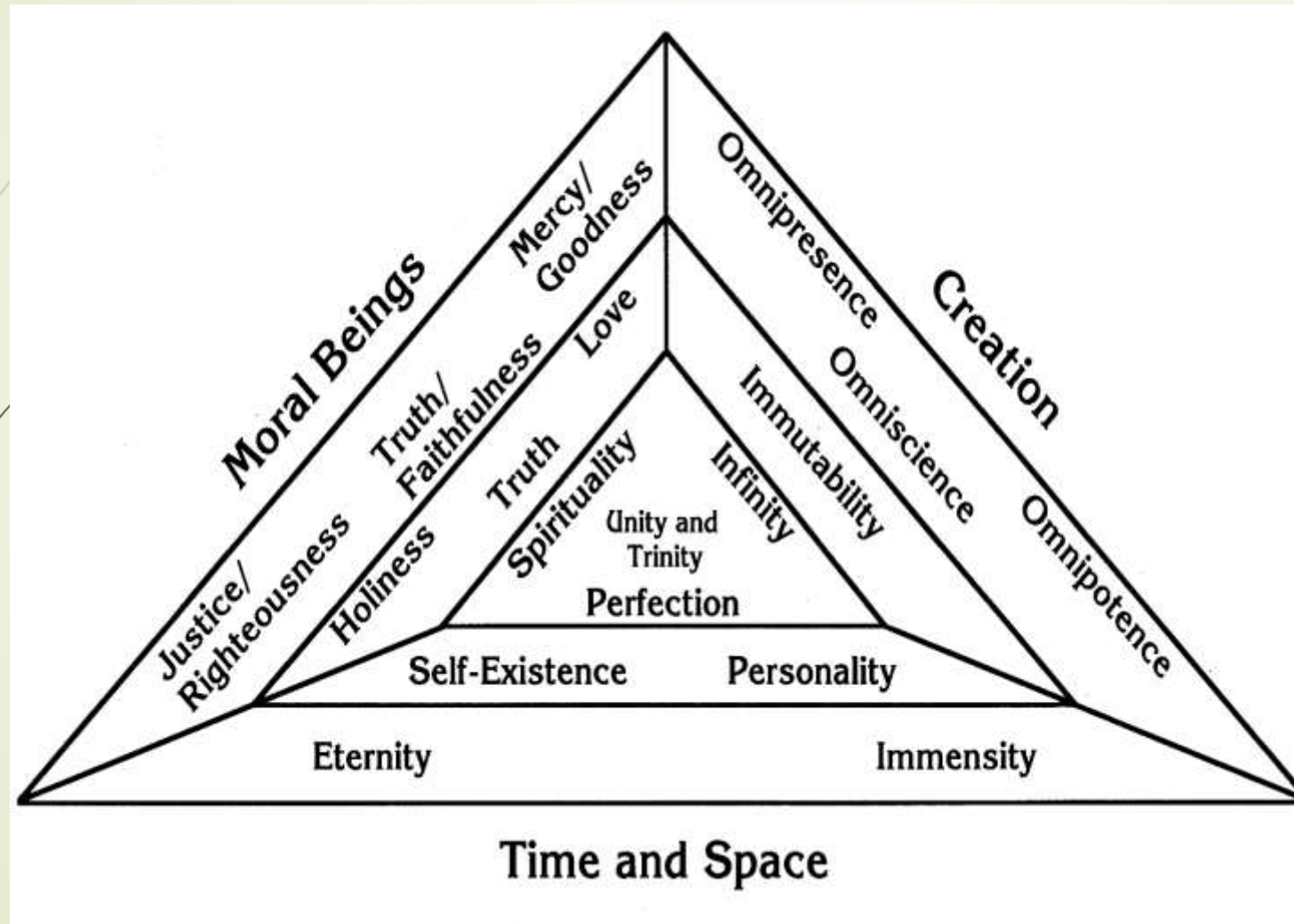
RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES cont'd

Other relative attributes of God are His:

- Mercy (grace, patience) Ex 34:6; Ps 103:8; matt 9:27
- Peace (or order) (1 Cor. 14:33; Romans 15:33)
- Righteousness (or Justice) Deut. 32:4; Ps. 19:8
- Jealousy (2 Cor. 11:2; 1 Cor. 4:7; Rev 4:11)
- Wrath (Exo. 32:9-10)

Men share some of these attributes with God because He wants us to demonstrate this kind of attributes

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD



THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD REVEALED THROUGH HIS NAME

- ▶ Another way the nature and attributes of God is revealed to us is through His names
- ▶ The names and designations of God in the Bible greatly reveals who is God is
- ▶ To the Hebrews one's name designates what one is. 1Samuel 25:25 E.g. Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.
- ▶ One way we get to know who is God in the Bible is through the names of God in the Bible.

THE NAMES OF GOD

- In the Old Testament among the names of God three are prominent:
 - *Elohim*
 - *Adonai*
 - *Yahweh (Jehovah)* which often appears as a compound name too.
- These principal names are themselves also combined as:
 - Yahweh Adonai- Our Sovereign Lord (Gen 15:2-8) and
Yahweh Elohim- The Eternal Creator (Gen 1:1)

ELOHIM

- **Elohim** is used according to Ryrie 2570 times of which 2310 are specifically in reference to God.
- El means strong or mighty and is used in reference to gods, including Almighty God.
- When the name “El” is used, it is used as a compound name to show the attribute or power of God in relation to his creatures.
- Eg: El Roi – The Lord who sees (Gen 16:13-14)
 - El Elyon – The Most High God (Gen 14:8).
- The ending **him** indicates three or more.
- **Elohim** simply refers “deity” or God. Seems to emphasize God as creator “In the beginning **Elohim** created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1). Other examples are in Exo 3:1-6, 15; Psalm 45:2;6.
- It is plural pointing to Trinity.

YAHWEH

- Yahweh was so revered the Jews did not pronounce it. Our English Jehovah is actually only an approximation of it as Hebrew that had no verbs (YHWH). *Yahweh: (YHWH)*- “The Lord” is the personal name of God used over 5321 times in the Old Testament .
- It connotes “active self-existent one” (Ex 3:14; 15:3; Gen 4:26; 9:26, 12:8; Is 42:8; Jer. 16:21).
- The significance of that name was revealed to Moses as “I am who I am” (Exo. 3:14). It means “I will be all that I will be”; i.e. God is eternal and unchanging.
- We see the names of YHWH in the redemptive names of God. These compound names are linked to some needs of man; meaning that YHWH will be all that His people need Him to be.
- Eg: Yahweh Jireh (The Lord will Provide); Yahweh Roi (The Lord my Shepherd)



ADONAI

- ▶ Like Elohim, Adonai is a plural of majesty is also used to refer to God. The singular means Lord, Master, Owner (Gen 15:2; 40:1; 1 Samuel 1:15).
- ▶ When it is used of God's relationship with man it conveys the idea of God's absolute authority. (Psalm 147:5; 86:12; Is 6:8-11).

YAHWEH cont'd

- ▶ **Yahweh** is often used as a compound name to qualify him such as:
 - ▶ *Yahweh Elohim* – The Lord God, the Redeemer-Creator. Gen 2:4
 - ▶ *Yahweh Meccadeshkem* or the Lord our Sanctifier. (Ex 31:13).
 - ▶ *Yahweh Roi/Raah*- The Lord our Shepherd. Ps 23:1
 - ▶ *Yahweh Shammah*- the Lord is there/ the Lord is present (Ex 48:35)
 - ▶ *Yahweh Adonai*- the Sovereign Lord (Gen 15:2-8)
 - ▶ *Yahweh Rapha*- the Lord our Healer (EX 15:26)
 - ▶ *Yahweh Jireh*- the Lord our provider (Gen 22:14)
 - ▶ *Yahweh Eloheenu*- The Lord our God (Psalm 99:5, 8, 9)

YAHWEH cont'd

- Yahweh Sabaoth- Lord of Host. Ps 24:10; 1 Sam 1:3
 - Yahweh Tsidekenu- The Lord our Righteousness (Jer. 23:6)
 - Yahweh El Gibor- The Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6-7; 42:13)
 - Yahweh EL- Olam- The Everlasting God (Genesis 22:33)
 - Yahweh Elyon –The Lord Most High (Gen 14:18; Ps7:17)
 - Yahweh Hosenu- The Lord Our Maker (Psalm 95:6)
 - Yahweh Nissi- The Lord Our Banner (Exo. 17:15)
 - Yahweh Shalom- The Lord Our Peace (Judg. 6:24)
 - Yahweh Eloheeka- The Lord Thy God (Ex. 20:2, 5, 7)
- Each of the redemptive names of God show how God meets every need of man in redemptive power. However, the ultimate revelation of redemptive names is found in the name of Jesus Christ. Eph 1:20-21