

Twelve Lessons

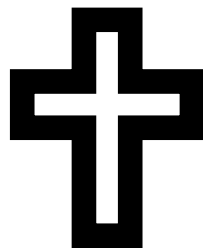
on

Attributes of God

Compiled and Written

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THE NATURE OF GOD: ESSENCE AND ATTRIBUTES – LESSON 1

Introduction: It is important to discuss the difference between the Essence of God and the Attributes of God.

1. Essence is that which makes a thing what it is; necessary part or parts; important feature or features.
2. An attribute is a quality considered as belong to a person or thing; characteristic.

Holiness is the essence of God and this essence allows for the various divine attributes. Why is this fact so important?

Consider the following. Love is an attribute of God but this quality or characteristic would be undependable if God's essence was not Holiness. God will do right because God is holy, without sin or the capability of sin. Man can love but not like God because man is sinful and undependable.

Lesson Goals:

1. Define the essence and attributes of God.
2. Show the relationship of God's essence of holiness with His many attributes.
3. Reveal the infinite nature of God and magnify His majesty and glory.

Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Essence – That which constitutes the particular nature of a being or substance, or of a genus, and which distinguishes it from all others; Formal existence; that which makes any thing to be what it is; or rather, the peculiar nature of a thing; the very substance
2. Incorporeal – Not consisting of matter; not having a material body; immaterial
3. Self-existence – Inherent existence; the existence possessed by virtue of a being's own nature, and independent of any other being or cause; an attribute peculiar to God; As an adverb, existing by its own nature or essence, independent of any other cause. God is the only self-existent being
4. Immensity – Unlimited extension; an extent not to be measured; infinity

I. THE ESSENCE OF GOD: SPIRITUALITY – John 4:24 – *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”*

A. God is Immaterial

1. God is Immaterial (not physical) and Incorporeal (without a body). Luke 24:39 states, *“for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”*
2. One may ask, “What about the Scriptures that present God as having bodily parts?”
 - a. These are anthropomorphic (attributing human forms or qualities to God). They are mere symbols such as the “eye of a needle, hands of the clock, or the teeth of a comb.”
 - b. The Holy Spirit used these emblems or attributes of God as a way of bringing an infinite God within the comprehension of a finite mind.

B. God is Invisible

1. John 1:18 states, *“No man hath seen God at any time.”*
2. One may ask, “But what about Scriptures that say men see God?” Example – Isaiah 6:1 – *“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord.”*
3. Men saw the reflection of His glory, but they did not see His essence. This may be illustrated by thinking of man who may see his reflection in a mirror. It would be true for the man to say, “I saw my face,” and yet in reality he did not see his face, only the reflection of himself.
4. The Spirit can be manifested in visible form. John 1:32 – *“I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.”* The invisible God had clothed himself with a visible dove so the essence of God had not been seen.

C. God is Alive

1. We see in Matthew 16:16 that Jesus is alive – *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*
2. Life implies feeling, power, activity.
3. Life reveals He is the source of all life. Acts 17:28 – *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”*

D. God is a Person

1. God is more than just a spirit, he is a personality without a body.
2. The personhood of God allows for self-consciousness. Simply, God thinks of what He thinks and relates His feelings, appetites, and actions to His Holiness.
3. Personhood also allows for self-determination. Simply, God makes no choices except in view of motives and

ends.

4. God also possesses all the psychological characteristics of personality.

II. THE ESSENCE OF GOD: SELF-EXISTENCE

A. The Nature of Self-existence

1. By self-existence we mean that God has the ground of His existence in Himself.
2. We have the ground of our existence outside of ourselves; but God is not dependent for His existence upon anything outside of Himself. He is “the first cause, Himself uncaused.”
3. Notice the following Scriptural statement: “*I am that I am*” – Exodus 3:14. The words signify “I AM, I WAS, I SHALL BE.”

B. The Names of Self-Existence – All the names given to God in the Scripture denote personality and self-existence.

1. Jehovah-Jireh: The Lord will provide (Gen. 22:13,14) I am will provide out of Himself without any help.
2. Jehovah-Rapha: The Lord that healeth (Ex. 15:26) I am will heal out of Himself without any help.
3. Jehovah-Nissi: The Lord our Banner (Ex. 17:8 – 15) I am will win our battles out of Himself without any help.
4. Jehovah-Shalom: The Lord our Peace (Judges 6:24) I am will be our peace out of Himself without any help.
5. Jehovah-Ra-ah: The Lord my Shepherd (Psa. 23:1) I am will be my Shepherd without any help.
6. Jehovah-Tsidkenu: The Lord our Righteousness (Jer. 23:6) I am will be my Righteousness without any help.
7. Jehovah-Shammah: The Lord is present (Ezek. 48:35) I am is present without any help.

Point: God is self-sufficient and is all you need.

III. THE ESSENCE OF GOD: IMMENSITY & ETERNITY

A. Immensity

1. God is not limited or circumscribed by space; on the contrary, all finite space is dependent upon Him.
2. Scriptures – I Kings 8:27; II Chron. 2:6; Jer. 23:24; Psa. 139:7; Isa. 66:1; Acts 17:28
3. God's immensity is larger than space or time, both of which are relative. An object is smaller or larger by the time it takes to go around it. An illustration: North Carolina must have looked larger when crossed in horse and buggy, but smaller when crossed by plane.
4. Since God is larger than space, time is eliminated. Since God is larger than space, every difficulty is erased. A child would struggle to lift 50 pounds, but a 250 pound body builder would have no difficulty whatsoever.

B. Eternity

1. In relation to time God is without beginning or end; He is free from all succession of time; and He is the cause of time.
2. God is without beginning or end may be inferred from the fact of His necessary existence: He who exists by reason of His nature rather than His choice, must always have existed and must continue to exist for ever.
3. God dwells outside of time but time dwells in God. Since God dwells outside of time, He does not have to get in a hurry because He is already there before He gets there.