

“Unless God reveals Himself, men do not know who He is...”

I The Natural Attributes of God

God's natural attributes are those which describe his NATURE. We already know that the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct personal beings who all share the same common divine essence. Essence is that which makes something what it is. The divine essence is the quality or the state of being that makes something divine. No other personal being in the universe has this essence, this NATURE. But, our God does. The first natural attribute of God is of course that He is Triune. The God of the Bible is the one and only true God. His nature is clearly described throughout the scripture. What has God revealed to us about His nature??

· Self-Existent

Novatian once said, “God has no origin”. It is precisely this concept of no-origin that separates that-which-is-God from that-which-is-not-God. Origin is a word that can apply only to things created. When we think of anything that has origin we are not thinking of God. God is self-existent, while all created things necessarily originated somewhere at some time. Aside from God, nothing is self-caused. When we try to discover the origin of something, we confess our belief that everything was made by Someone who was made of none. From familiar experience we are taught that everything “came from” something else. Whatever exists must have had a cause that antedates it and was at least equal to it, since the lesser cannot produce the greater. Any person or thing may be at once both caused and the cause of someone or something else; and so, back to the One who is the cause of all but is Himself caused by none.

Exodus 3:13 “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM**; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

This was of course God's greatest assertion of self-hood: “**I AM THAT I AM**” Everything God is, everything that is God, is set forth in that unqualified declaration of independent being. Yet in God, self is not sin but the absolute possession of all possible goodness, holiness, and truth. The natural man is a sinner because and only because he challenges God's selfhood in relation to his own. In all else he may willingly accept the sovereignty of God; in his own life he rejects it. For him, God's dominion ends where his begins. For him, self becomes Self, and in this he unconsciously imitates Lucifer, that fallen angel who once said in his heart....

Isaiah 14:12 “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, **I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation,** in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the most High.**”

Gen 1:1 “**In the beginning** God created the heaven and the earth.”

John 1:1-3 “**In the beginning** was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him;** and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

Col 1:16-17 “For by him were **all things created,** that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him,** and for him: And **he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**”

Hebrews 1:3 “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power,** when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

The doctrine of the natural depravity of man springs from this truth.. Why? The essence of man is to will one thing, that thing being that we set our will against the will of God--- an impenitent man can do nothing but sin and his good works are really not good at all. His best religious works God rejects just as He rejected the offering of Cain. It is only when we give our throne back to God that our works are acceptable to him. The struggle of the Christian life is to do good while still having the bent toward self-assertion that lives within us. Sin at its root is rebellion against the will of God and the assertion of the right of each man to choose for himself the way he shall go.

Isa 53:6 “**All we like sheep have gone astray..we have turned every one to his own way**”

An inward principle of self lies at the source of human conduct, turning everything men do into evil. 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. The old self-sins must die, and the only instrument by which they can be slain is the cross.

Math 16:24 “**If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.**”

Gal 2:20 “**I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.**”

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We must give up the right of our existence, deny the fact our existence, and resoundingly conclude that because God is alone self-existing, then my existence is completely based on him. Therefore, I must give the right to myself and let the Holy Spirit do His work of driving from me all of me and filling me up with all that is of God.

· **Self-Sufficient**

Jesus taught that God was self-sufficient...in one brief sentence he revealed a very deep and almost ungraspable truth. God is what He is, whatever that may be, in Himself. Whatever God is, and all that God is, He is in Himself. All life is in and from God, whether it be the lowest form of unconscious life of the highly self-conscious, intelligent life of a seraph. No creature has life in itself; all life is a gift from God. The life of God, conversely, is not a gift from another. Were there another from who God could receive the gift of life, or indeed any whatever, that other be God in fact. An elementary but correct way to think of God is as the One who contains all, who gives all that is given, but who Himself can receive nothing that He has not first given. To admit the existence of a need in God is to admit incompleteness in the divine Being. Need is a creature-word and cannot be spoken of the Creator. God has a VOLUNTARY relation to everything that He has made, but He has no NECESSARY relation to anything outside of Himself. His interest in his creatures arises from His sovereign good pleasure, not from any need those creatures can supply nor from any completeness they can bring to Him who is complete in Himself.

John 5:26

For as the **Father hath life in himself**; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;”

John 10:17

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that **I might take it again.**”

Remember that God’s qualities stand out as unique; he embodies these things alone. His self-sufficiency tells us that to God alone nothing is necessary. Nothing is complete is itself outside of God, and all things require something outside itself in order to exist.

Col 1:17

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Heb 1:3

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power”

The word *necessary* is wholly foreign to God. Even though we still do not know exactly why God created the universe, we do know enough to know that he did not form the world and the universe and all that is in it in order to fulfill some unsatisfied need within himself. Since He is the Being supreme over all, it follows that God cannot be elevated. Nothing is above Him, nothing beyond Him. Any motion is His direction is elevation for the creature; away from him, descent. He holds His position out of Himself and by leave of none. As no one can promote Him, so no one can degrade Him. How could he be raised or supported by the things he upholds??

If every man were atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard to any other. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away. Indeed, God does not need our help. Because he is almighty, he needs no support. Is our concept of God one who is nervous and ingratiating trying to win the favor of men.. God is not greater for our being here, nor lesser if we did not exist. That we do exist is altogether of God’s free determination, not because we deserve it or because of some divine necessity. God needs no defenders as well...A God who must be defended is one who can help us only while someone is helping Him.

This is the crux of the matter: man’s only claim to importance is that he was created in the divine image; in himself he is nothing. That God exists for Himself and man for the glory of God is the emphatic teaching of the Bible. The high honor of God is first in heaven as it must yet be in earth. This is why faith is vital...and unbelief a deadly sin. Among all created beings, no one dares trust it itself. God alone trusts in Himself; all other beings must trust in Him. Unbelief is actually perverted faith, for it puts its trust not in the living God but in dying men. The unbeliever denies the self-sufficiency of God and usurps attributes that are not his. This dual sin dishonors God and ultimately destroys the soul of the man. In His love and pity God came to us as Christ. We wrongly associate all the weaknesses and limitations of the man Jesus Christ with the Deity. The truth is that Jesus came not as a demonstration of unveiled Deity, but perfect humanity. Do we know Jesus only after the flesh??

2 Cor 5:16

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation”

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This truth is a rebuke on our self-confidence. We need to take upon us the yoke of Jesus and spend ourselves not in futile efforts trying to find out who we are or why we are here, but spend ourselves on Spirit inspired toil for the honor of God and the good of mankind. When I fight for myself and my cause, I don't fight for very much. But when I fight for God, I fight for the one being who exists outside of everything else..time, space, and even someone else's sufficiency. The good news is that the God who needs no one has in sovereign condescension stopped to work by and in and through His obedient children.

John 15:4 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”
Matt 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
2 Cor 6:1 “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

Our fulfillment lies in loving obedience to his commandments of Christ and the inspired admonition...

Eph 1:11 “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will”
Phil 2:13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”
Col 1:29 “Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

He needs no one, but when faith is present, **He works through anyone**.

· **Eternal**

The word “eternal” is used in the Bible in two senses: figuratively, as denoting existence which may have a beginning, but will have no end (angels, the human spirit) AND literally, denoting existence which has neither beginning or ending. Time has past, present, and future; eternity has not. Eternity is infinite duration without beginning, end, or limit- an ever abiding present. It is duration, without beginning or end. Existence, without bounds or dimension; present, without past or future. God's eternity is youth, without infancy or old age; life, without birth or death; today, without yesterday and tomorrow.

1 Timothy 1:17 “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”
Hebrews 9:14 “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
Daniel 7:13 “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.”
Revelation 1:8 “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”
Isaiah 46:8-10 “Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure”
Habakkuk 1:12 “Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.”
Psalms 102:24-25 “I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.”

If God is eternal then our values and perspective on life should be *eternal* as well. How do we have eternal values?? What is living with an eternal perspective??

Colossians 3:1-3 “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”
Mark 8:35-37 “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
2 Cor 14-15 “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”
Matthew 6:19-21 “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

· **Infinite**

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The infinitude of God is the most difficult to grasp. To try to even think of it already appears self-contradictory because we know from the outset that we can never accomplish the task of grasping infinity. Infinitude means limitless.

Rom 11:33 “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

It is hard for us to imagine a mode of being that is foreign to us. We have nothing remotely similar in our familiar world of matter, space, and time. God is greater than our minds...he is greater and larger than any words of language could express him to be. If any statement could express Him, He would be less than human speech which could by such statement comprehend and gather up all that He is. All our thoughts about Him will be less than He is and our loftiest utterances will be trivialities in comparison with Him. Infinite is more than just our common association of much or a great deal... the word cannot really be used to describe created things. Does the universe stretch infinitely?? Does the building block of an atom continue to grow smaller and smaller?? When we say God is infinite we mean that He knows no bounds. Whatever God is and all that God is, He is without limit. He is measureless. Measurement is the way created things have of accounting for themselves... it describes limitations, imperfections, and cannot apply to God. He is beyond and outside the scope of all that He has created. We cannot speak of measure or amount or size or weight and at the same time be speaking of God. --these all tell of degrees and there are no degrees in God.

All that God is He is without growth or addition or development. Nothing in God is less or more, large or small. He is what He is in Himself, without qualifying thought or word. He is simply God. But what does it mean to us?? What practical use does it have apart from thinking about it??

Because God's nature is infinite, everything that flows out of it is infinite also. How nice it is to turn from our own limitations to a God who has none!!!! Eternal years lie in His heart. For Him, time does not pass, it remains; all those who are in Christ share with Him all the riches of limitless time and endless years... God never hurries. There are no deadlines against which He must work.. We are not the same...time is our enemy. The great news is that while God's gifts in nature have their limitations, the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus is as limitless as God..

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
John 17:3 “*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*”

· **Immutable/Unchanging**

God's character never changes, but his dealings with men change as they change from ungodliness to godliness and from disobedience to obedience.

Malachi 3:6 “*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*”
James 1:17 “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*”
1 Samuel 15:29 “*And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.*”
Hebrews 13:8 “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*”

· **Omnipotent**

God is in control.... All powerful means that God can bring to pass everything which He wills. God's power admits of no bounds or limitations. God's declaration of His intention is the pledge of the thing intended being carried out. Sovereignty and omnipotence must go together. One cannot exist without the other. To reign, God must have power, and to reign sovereignly, He must have all power. Omnipotent is just that-- having all power. The word **almighty** is an Anglo-Saxon word which carries the same meaning for the Latin word for omnipotence. God possesses what no creature can: an incomprehensible plenitude of power.

Revelation 19:6 “*And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God **omnipotent** reigneth.*”
Job 42:2 “*I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*”
Genesis 18:14 “*Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.*”
In nature:
Genesis 1:1-3 “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*”

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- Psalms 107:25-29 “For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.”
- Nahum 1:5-6 “The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.”

In the experience of mankind:

- Daniel 4: Nebuchadnezzar
Acts 9: Conversion of Saul
Exodus 4:11 Pharoah
James 4:12-15 “... For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.”
Luke 12:16-21 Parable of the rich fool

In control of the heavenly inhabitants

- Dan 4:35 “He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven.”
Heb 1:14 “Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

In control of Satan:

- Job 1:12/2:6 The trial of Job
Luke 22:31,32 The request for Peter
Zechariah 3:1-2 “And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?”

• **Omnipresent**

- Psalms 139:7-9 “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea”
- Jeremiah 23:23-24 “Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

• **Omniscient**

To say that God is omniscient is to say that He possesses perfect knowledge and therefore has no need to learn. But it is more: it is to say that God has never learned and cannot learn. He is absolutely perfect in his knowledge. God has never learned from anybody

- Isaiah 40:13 “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?”
Job 11:7-8 “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?”
Isa 40:28 “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.”
Job 37:16 “Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?”
Psa 147:5 “Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.”
1 John 3:20 “For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
Rom 11:33-36 “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”
Pro 5:21 “For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.”
Psa 147:4 “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.”
Matt 10:29-30 “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
Psalms 139:2-6 “Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

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· **Immense, Awesome**

- Gen 28:17 “He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."“
- Deu 4:34 “Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?”
- Deu 7:21 “Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.”
- Deu 10:17 “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.”
- Deu 10:21 “He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.”
- Deu 28:58 “If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name--the LORD your God--”
- Jdg 13:6 “Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name.”
- 2 Sam 7:23 “And who is like your people Israel--the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?”
- 1 Chr 17:21 “And who is like your people Israel--the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?”
- Neh 1:5 “Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands,”
- Neh 9:32 ““Now therefore, O our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes--the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings and leaders, upon our priests and prophets, upon our fathers and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today.”
- Job 37:22 “Out of the north he comes in golden splendor; God comes in awesome majesty.”
- Psa 65:5 “You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas”
- Psa 66:3 “Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.”
- Psa 66:5 “Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf!”
- Psa 68:35 “You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!”
- Psa 89:7 “In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.”
- Dan 9:4 “I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands”
- Deut 4:24 “For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.”
- Deut 9:3 “Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.”
- Heb 12:29 “For our God is a consuming fire.”

· **Sovereign**

- Psalms 115:3 “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”
- Ephesians 1:11 “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will”
- Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”