

Adoring the God of Glory

September 17th, Class 1 – Adult Equipping Center
Introduction, God’s Knowability, Incomprehensibility and Unity

Introduction

What is the goal of this class?

To look directly and deeply at God’s glorious nature so that we might live in awe of Him.

- 2 Cor. 3:12-4:6

- Other examples?

Implication¹:

- *“...the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God.” (Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, p. 1)*

Two Foundations to Studying God’s Attributes

1. God is knowable.

The Challenge of Agnosticism

¹ Herman Bavinck: “Good theology puts this knowledge of God on display. It resists allowing theology to degenerate into rhetoric, a theology merely of words; it seeks the heart of the matter, knowing God in order to worship him, love him, serve him. Such theology is never a dry and academic exercise; it is eminently practical and superlatively fruitful for life. The knowledge of God, in Christ, after all, is life itself.” (Reformed Dogmatics-Abridged, Baker Academic, p. 148)

a. We can know God truly _____.

- Rom. 1:18-23
- Ps. 19
- Heb. 1:1-3 (Jn. 1:14, 1 Jn. 5:20)

b. We can know God truly _____ . God is _____.

- Ps. 145:1-9
- Is. 55:6-9
- Rom. 11:33-36
- Eph. 3:14-19

2. God is unified ("simple").^{2 3 4}

² "The harmony of his Being is the result not of a perfect balance of parts but of the absence of parts. Between His attributes no contradiction can exist. He need not suspend one to exercise another, for in Him all His attributes are one. All of God does all that God does; He does not divide Himself to perform a work, but works in the total unity of His being." (AW Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, 15)

³ "God's whole being includes all of his attributes...Every attribute of God that we find in Scripture is true of all of God's being, and we therefore can say that every attribute of God also qualifies every other attribute." (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 179)

⁴ Bavinck continues Grudem's thought: "When a single attribute is chosen as foundational it affects the total portrait of God; a wrong choice here points us to a different God than the one revealed in Scripture. Choosing love, for example, exposes to the danger of regarding other attributes of God, such as righteousness and holiness, as less real." (Herman Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics-Abridged, p. 176)

Scripture: God's Character / Nature is Constant and Perfect

[1 Jn. 1:5, 4:8; Ps. 7:11; Num. 23:19; Jn. 14:6; Ex. 3:14, 34:6-7; Ps. 89:34-35, Heb. 6:17-18]

Implications

1. ...
2. *True and accurate knowledge of God is a privilege and there's always more to learn!*⁵⁶
3. *God incomprehensibility forces us to be comfortable with mystery and content with creaturely limitation.*
4. *God is who He is all the time.*

Reacting and Reflecting on the God of Glory

1. Consider how your understanding of God's glory has fluctuated with your life with Christ. Do you see correlations to spiritual growth or sluggishness based on your understanding of who God is?
2. How well do you know God? Are you just getting to know Him or has supposed familiarity bred contempt? Spend a moment thanking God for revealing who He is and confessing any contempt or apathy related to familiarity.
3. How has the incomprehensibility of God been a comfort or a difficulty for you? Explain.
4. When do you struggle to believe that God is unified in character (meaning He is always all of who He is)? How might we grow in believing that His character is constant?

⁵ "What agnosticism regards as irresolvable contradiction, Christian theology regards as an adorable mystery." It is completely incomprehensible to us how God can reveal himself and to some extent make himself known in created beings: eternity in time, immensity in space, infinity in the finite, immutability in change, being in becoming, the all, as it were, in that which is nothing. This mystery cannot be comprehended; it can only be gratefully acknowledged and received in faith." (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 155)

⁶ "Because he is not able to be fully known, familiarity can never breed contempt... In a sense, God has a closet filled with infinite secrets about himself, but contains only priceless treasures, no skeletons. The secret attributes of God, should we come to learn them, would bring us nothing but pleasure and assurance. The infinite unknown of God holds no faith-shattering duplicity, just a multiplicity of perfections waiting to be discovered across eternity." (Jen Wilkin, *None Like Him*, pps. 34-35)