

LESSON 5
ATTRIBUTES OF GOD
(PART-1)

Reading : *Isa. 40:12-31*

Memory verses : *Isa. 40:25-26*

Theme : *To grow in the knowledge of God and walk in ways pleasing to Him.*

Introduction: What is the idea that comes into your mind when you think about God? If we examine the history of the world, we will see that no nation has grown above its religion and no religion has excelled above its knowledge of God. The spiritual and moral standard of an individual or a society depends on how they think about God. Thoughts about God are the most profound in man's mind and the word 'God' is the most meaningful in any language. We are as much blessed as we are close to the correct understanding of God. We need to examine ourselves to see how much we know about God. It is very important in our lives to have the correct knowledge about God. Incorrect understanding about God leads us to mistakes in our personal and spiritual lives. Hence it is absolutely essential to have a clear understanding about God and to transmit the same to the future generations.

CAN YOU FATHOM THE MYSTERIES OF GOD? (Job 11:7)

Who is God? Whom can He be compared? Is it possible to understand Him? These are some of the important questions that we face. Man forms his opinions on the basis of his previous knowledge and experiences. As they are limited by space and time, the opinions that man forms may not be complete or correct. If we can fully comprehend the eternal and almighty God, then God becomes smaller than our intellect. How foolish it is to define eternity by our time and measure omnipotence by our little strength! St. Paul describes God as "The blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, who

alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). How can we understand this great God? Bible's answer is: Through Christ. God has revealed Himself to man through Christ. As we approach Christ through faith and love, the darkness in us departs and the Sun Righteousness sheds His light to enable us to know God. Holy Spirit will dwell with us and lead us in all truths. Let us learn about the invisible attributes of God prayerfully.

THE INVISIBLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD:

We understand the attributes of God through nature, conscience, Word of God, etc. The most important of these is the Word of God (Bible). As the diamond has many sides, God's attributes also have many sides. We can study them in two sections: The Natural Attributes and the Moral Attributes. Let us first see the **natural attributes**:

1. God is Spirit (John 4:24):

Jesus reveals this truth to the Samaritan woman at the well in Suchar. What is the shape that comes to your mind when you think about the Spirit? Spirit is not a cloud in the sky, nor the wind that moves the leaves and branches of trees, nor a ghost who frightens small children, nor a formless vacuum. Spirit does not have a visible body as we have. Even then He has personality, wisdom, strength, desires and feelings. God is Spirit with these attributes. He cannot be contained in a particular form. That is the reason why he has totally forbidden idol worship. God cannot be contained in a particular place or temple (Acts 7:48-49, 17:24-25, 1 Kings 8:27).

As God is Spirit, we cannot see Him. Hence God should not be compared with any thing in the world (Isa. 40:25, Deut. 4:15-18, John 1:18). If God is invisible, how is it that the Israel and Moses saw Him? (Exo. 24:9-10, 33:18-20). Similarly it is mentioned that God appeared to Abraham and Gideon (Gen. 18:1, 2, 17; 20, 22, 19:1). Israel and Moses must have seen God's presence like a shadow. See what God tells Moses: "'You cannot see my face; for no one may see me and live' (Exo. 33:20). The person who appeared to Abraham and Gideon was none other than Jesus Christ who took the form of man. In the fullness of time the second Person of Trinity took the form of man and revealed God to man (John 1:18).

Although God is invisible, He has personality. We read: God loves, God speaks, God works, etc. His desires, His feelings, His works, etc.

are evidences of His personality (Jer. 31:2, 3, 11, 20, 2 Chro. 16:9). God who is Spirit is alive and is the source of all life (Jer. 10:10, 2:13). We have to see the invisible God through our spiritual eyes. True worshippers must worship Him in truth and in spirit (John 4:23). We should not limit God by our physical boundaries, nor should we try to please Him by superficial worship.

2. God is omnipresent (Psa. 139:6-12):

The omnipresence of God is related to the attribute of His being Spirit. Psalm 139 is a meditation of the omnipresence of God. In Jer. 23:24, it is stated that God fills the whole heaven and earth and one cannot hide from Him. Although He is everywhere, it is wrong to confine Him inside a tree or a stone or an idol and worship that object. God works independently in the Universe. His presence can be felt everywhere at all times. We read that the risen Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20, Acts 7:56, Mark 16:19). But Jesus has promised to be with us till the end of the world (Matt. 28:20) and also to be in the midst of two or three when they are gathered in His name (Matt. 18:20). So Christ is seated in heaven and also with His people on the earth. These two ideas are not contradictory. God is omnipresent. Father God and Son Jesus Christ abide with people through the Holy Spirit (John 14:18, 20, 23, Rom. 8:9). Also, the Holy Spirit is working in nature (Gen. 1:2). He is in communication with unbelievers convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgement. God is present everywhere listening to the prayers made in the name Jesus Christ. Let us submit ourselves to God and experience His presence with us all the time.

3. God is omnipotent (Gen. 17:1):

For victory in life, we should have full faith in the power of the Almighty God. There is nothing impossible with Him.

- a) The whole nature is subject to God (Psa. 107:25, Gen. 1:1-3, Nahum 1:5,6 Matt. 8:26,27, Exo. 14:21).
- b) Man is subject to His power. God made the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to eat grass like an animal (Dan. 4:32, 5:21). How weak man is in front of God who turned Saul, a terror for the early church into Paul, the greatest ambassador for the church (Acts 9:3-9, Luke 12:16-21, James 4:14-15)
- c) Angels and Satan are subject to God's will (Dan. 4:5, Heb. 1:13-14, Psa. 103:20-21, Job 1;10-12, 2:6, Luke 22:31-34, Rev. 20:2, 10)

God directs His power in His good, pleasing and perfect will. Although there is nothing impossible with Him, He works according to His love, wisdom and holiness.

4. God is omniscient (Rom. 11:33-34).

God knows everything. There is no end to His wisdom (1 John 3:20, Job 37:16, Psa. 147:5). He knows all that happens everywhere (2 Chro. 16:9). He knows everything big and small in nature (Psa. 147:4, Matt. 10:29). He knows all men and their words and deeds (Psa. 33:13, 15, Pro. 5:21, Psa. 139:4). He understands their sufferings and thoughts (Exo. 3:7, 2 Chro. 28:9). He has full knowledge of the times from eternity to eternity, all the events and the condition of man (Acts 15:18, Isa. 46:9-10, Eph. 1:9-12, 3:4-9, Col. 1:25-26). We will be blessed if we submit ourselves totally in the hands of God who knows what is good for us (1Pet. 1:2, Prov. 3:4-5).

5. God is eternal (Psa. 90:2):

Eternity is a topic seen throughout the Bible. What is the meaning of saying that God is eternal? We get an idea about time by sequence of events. But is beyond time. Hence Moses declares: "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psa. 90:2). In their first encounter, God revealed Himself to Moses saying, "I am what I am" (Exo. 3:14). Abraham also had this revelation. He worshipped in the name of the eternal God (Gen. 21:33). Read the following verses about the eternal nature of God: Deut. 33:27, Psa. 145:13, 102:24-27, Isa. 9:6, 40:28, 57:15, Jer. 10:10, Dan. 4:3, 9:24, Mal. 3:6, Hab. 1:12, Rom. 1:20, John 1:1, Rev. 1:8, 22:13. God has no beginning and no end. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow (James 1:7, Heb. 6:17, 13:8). Nothing else is required as a cause for God's existence. As God is life and the source of life, the Almighty is self-existent.

We have learned the natural attributes of God. God who is Spirit is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and eternal. We shall deal with the moral attributes of God in the next lesson.

Questions

1. Why is it necessary for a person to have the correct understanding about God?
2. How can we understand deeply about God?

3. "God is Spirit". Explain.
4. How does the Word of God reveal God's power?
5. Explain the truth about God's omnipresence.
6. How does the idea that God is Spirit affect our worship?
7. Describe the wisdom of God on the basis of the Word of God.
8. How does our understanding of the omniscience of God affect our lives?
9. Describe the idea that God is eternal.

