

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

STUDY GUIDE

Module 2:
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Lecture 7:
**THE ATTRIBUTES
OF GOD, PART 3**



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Module 2

The Doctrine of God

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Module 2:

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Lecture 7:

The Attributes of God, Part 3

Introduction

The Bible teaches us that there is an objective beauty, that God himself is the ultimate source, standard, and superlative display of true beauty. He *is* beauty and defines beauty. For example, in Psalm 29:2, we sing, “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” In this world, Christian believers behold that beauty by faith; and in glory, of course, their chief joy will be delighting in the sight of God for eternity. God manifests his beauty and glory to his creatures. He reveals to us who he is and what he does. Our study of God’s attributes is a study of the beauty of God’s glory. Each attribute provides another window for the believing eye to behold God. What a privilege and what a pleasure God extends to such who are so unworthy as ourselves.

Theme: *The Attributes of God—his wisdom, holiness, justice, veracity, goodness, love, and mercy.*

I. Scriptural Basis

“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.” (Exodus 34:5–8)

1. God proclaimed “The name of the LORD” in connection with the manifestation of his attributes.
2. It speaks of God’s mercy, graciousness, long-suffering, goodness and truth, his faithfulness, love, holiness, and justice.

3. God sovereignly and analogically communicates his attributes to his creatures.
4. Moses' response—he bowed his head toward the earth, and he worshipped.

Questions:

1. What is the historical background of Exodus chapter 34? What did God proclaim in connection with the manifestation of his attributes?

2. What does it mean to say that God sovereignly and analogically communicates his attributes to creatures?

II. Doctrinal Overview

As summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 2, paragraph 1:

“There is but one only, living and true God: who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute...”

1. God's divine wisdom.
 - a. God is perfectly, infinitely, eternally, unchangeably, and incomprehensibly wise.
 - b. Wisdom is God's ability to manage and order all things.
 - c. In his wisdom, God is able to direct all things to his own glory, and to our good.
 - d. God displays his wisdom preeminently in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. God's divine holiness.
 - a. Separation.
 - b. Purity.

3. God's justice.
 - a. Justice refers to God's constant will of giving each his due—people receiving what they deserve.
 - b. The nature of the atonement, through the Lord Jesus Christ's death, is a display of justice.
4. God's veracity.
 - a. The true God is the God of truth.
 - b. Jesus Christ is God's truth incarnate.
 - c. God's faithfulness is tied to his veracity.
5. God's divine goodness.
 - a. God is good; he *is* goodness.
 - b. God's goodness is displayed in creation, in providence, and in his work of redemption.
6. God's divine love.
 - a. God *is* love.
 - b. Within the Godhead, there is a perfect love in the indwelling of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; God loves himself supremely.
 - c. The believer's unworthiness of God's love makes God's love all the more lovely to them.
7. God's mercy.
 - a. Mercy and grace vs. sin and misery.
 - b. Temporal mercy vs. eternal mercy.

Questions:

1. What is *God's wisdom*, and how is it displayed?

2. What are the two parts of *God's holiness*? What does each refer to?

3. In what things do we see *God's divine justice* displayed?

4. Who is truth? How do we know that from the Scriptures? How does *God's veracity* relate to his faithfulness?

5. Which book of the Bible speaks the most about *God's divine goodness*? Where do we see his goodness displayed?

6. In what ways do we see *God's divine love* displayed in the Bible? What doctrinal truths about love can we draw from the Bible?

7. Why should mercy and grace be held together? What two problems do they respond to? How does temporal mercy differ from eternal mercy?

III. Polemical Exposition

Objection 1: *How can God remain just and declare the guilty to be not guilty?*

Objection 2: *Truth is relative. What is true for you may not be true for me; what is right for you may not be what is right for me.*

Objection 3: *I have my own way of defining what love is. I want to express love in my own way.*

Questions:

1. Is there a disconnect or opposition between God's justice and his redemption? How does Psalm 85:10 answer the first objection? *"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."*

2. Why must we reject the notion of relativism? What does the Bible tell us about God's truth, and about God's Word being truth? What is the basis for all truth?

3. What is true biblical love? How does Scripture define true love? How is biblical love best expressed? Can love ever be expressed by immorality?

IV. Practical Exposition

1. God's wisdom:
 - We must exercise much humility and patience in submitting to God's wisdom.
2. God's holiness:
 - Separation and purity correspond to our twofold sanctification or growth in Christian maturity.
3. God's justice:
 - Divine justice is necessary to uphold God's moral government of the world.
4. God's veracity:
 - God's truth strengthens our faith in God, and in his infallible Word.
5. God's goodness.
 - It leads us to repentance and to the enjoyment of his goodness.
 - We are to pursue and bring forth good works.
6. God's divine love.
 - We are to love God with our whole being, to love him for who he is and what he does.
7. God's mercy.
 - God's mercies are tender, plenteous, rich, abundant, everlasting.
 - God's mercy fills us with praise and love, and motivates us to show mercy to others.

Questions:

1. How does the revelation of God's wisdom affect us in our daily lives?

2. Who should be our role model or pattern for holiness? What has God given to us to cause us to conform to God's holiness?

3. What is the biblical definition of grace? Can an appeal to God's love uphold God's justice? How does God provide grace to sinners while upholding his justice?

4. What are the Christian's obligations regarding truth and error?

5. How should the doctrine of *God's goodness* affect the life of a believer?

6. What is the sum of the law of God, as stated in this lecture? How can the believer experience and show forth God's love in this world?

7. What are some practical applications of God's mercy that we can see in the Scriptures?

V. Self-Reflection

Read and meditate on Exodus chapter 34. Here, Moses is a model for us, showing how we should respond with humble adoration to the revelation of God's attributes. Let us therefore fill our mouths with praises, and focus our minds in worship, not for ourselves and our experiences, but upon who God is. It would also be profitable to meditate on how each of these attributes of God are displayed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.