

THEOLOGY PROPER (37)

QUESTION #14 - What are the Incommunicable Attributes of God?

When we speak of an incommunicable attribute, we are speaking of an attribute that only is found in God. No created being has any of these attributes, for they are found solely in God.

(Incommunicable Attribute #1) - Eternity.

This is the attribute that means that God is unlimited in Time. Nothing God does is conditioned by time, nor by limited by time. God, very often, chooses to work in time (i.e. Gal.4:4), but God may also move and work in and out of time in any way He chooses (Gen.18:14). Since God is not limited by time, He is able to take an Apostle like John into the future and let him see things that will factually take place. God is involved in all of time and he is involved in that which is outside of time = eternity. He is the “Eternal God”. Many passages emphasize this attribute:

- 1) Gen. 21:3- God is the “Everlasting God”. He is endless and infinite when it comes to time. He has no beginning nor ending, he is the Everlasting god.
- 2) Is. 57:15- God is the High and Holy God who “lives forever”. This means God is the eternal being without beginning or end. As Dr. Harris said- “Existence limited in time must have a beginning and may have an end. These limitations are denied of God.” (Vol.1, p.216)
- 3) Lam. 5:19- God is the sovereign ruler “forever”. This simply means God ruled before there was such a thing as time, and He rules throughout all of time. The fact that He does rule forever means He has existed forever, which is a concept no finite mind may fully grasp. This is one of the attributes that makes God, God!
- 4) I Tim. 1:17- God is eternal. This verse is clear that the only God is the **only** Being who is eternal, honorable and glorious “forever and ever.”

These are just a few of the passages that establish the attribute of God's eternity or eternality. God is the only being who transcends time. He is the author and controller of all of time.

There are several meaningful ways in which this attribute may be viewed:

1. This attribute should cause us to stand in awe of the Majesty of God.
2. This attribute cause us to realize how limited we are and how unlimited God is.
3. This attribute should cause us to find comfort that God is involved in every moment of time working out His will.
4. This attribute should cause us to find comfort that God controls all things at all times.
5. This attribute should cause us to realize that since God is apart justify a man like Abraham by looking forward to the cross and can fully justify us by looking back at the cross. Time is no barrier to God.
6. This attribute should cause us to realize that God permitted us to be born in a specific moment in time and realize God will permit us to die at a specific moment in time.
7. This attribute should cause those saved to realize that in one moment in time they were touched by the God who is beyond time. Since God is eternal, so is His salvation.
8. This attribute should cause one to realize only God can take one into "Eternity" for it is His Attribute .

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Eternality truly means "history" is "His Story." One of the attributes that makes God, God is the attribute that establishes He is the God of the past, the present and the future and He is the God who exists outside of the past, the present and the future. When all is considered concerning this attribute, it is, as Dr. Chafer said: "...too vast for human thought." (Vol.1, p.216) It is this very point that, in part, makes God, God.

(Incommunicable Attribute #2) - Infinity.

This is the attribute that means God is not limited by Anything. He is not limited by time or space. God transcends all limitations. The fact that God is Infinite means antithetically that He cannot be finite. This attribute means all other attributes are without limitation or termination. God cannot be confined or limited by anything. Even the limitations God places on Himself, have infinite application to His Person (i.e. Titus 1:2 God cannot ever lie. Nothing can ever be a circumstance or limitation that can cause God to lie.) This attribute is clearly Biblical:

- 1) I Kings 8:27 - Nothing can contain God, He cannot be confined or limited by anything.
- 2) Job 42:2 - There is nothing God cannot do. By virtue of the fact that He can do "all things", He cannot be limited by anything.
- 3) Is. 66:1-2 - God is infinite in space. Notice the majesty of God compared to the earth and notice the type of person the Infinite God will choose to bless (v:2).
- 4) Gen. 18:14 - There is nothing too difficult for God. This practically means there are no limitations to what God can do.
- 5) Luke 1:37 - There is "nothing" that is impossible for God and with God. This means there are no limitations that can prevent God from doing what He desires to do.
- 6) Acts 17:24-28 - Certainly the point of Paul to the Athenians is that God is Infinite and in need of nothing or no one.

No finite human mind can ever grasp the Divine attribute of Infinity. The fact that we are not infinite makes it impossible to fully grasp what it is to be infinite. The quality of being without limits is something to which no human can relate for we are all limited in everything. As Hodge wrote: "Although God reveals Himself as a personal Being capable of fellowship with man, whom we can worship and love, and to whom we can pray with the assurance of being heard and answered; nevertheless He fills heaven and earth; He is exalted above all we can know or think" (Vol.1, p.380) Hodge further observes that we cannot even begin to form the concept of something infinite in our minds and need to allow the attribute to stand in the integrity of the Scriptures that God is without limitation (Ibid., p.381) This is what in part makes God, God! Some ways this attribute is meaningful to us:

1. It should cause us to stand in awe of the Majesty of God.
2. It should cause us to realize how limited we are. Proper application is Isaiah 66:1-2.
3. It should encourage us to know our God is not limited by any force, power, person or thing.
4. It should encourage us to pray, knowing God is capable of doing anything.
5. It should encourage us to know when we find ourselves limited or hindered, we are related to God who is not limited or hindered.
6. It should cause us to truly believe "nothing is impossible" for our God.