

THEOLOGY PROPER (54)

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said of this attribute of God's sovereignty: "There is perfect peace and highest destiny for those who, knowing the will of God, are subject to it. There is distress and anguish awaiting those who, knowing the will of God, disregard it." (Vol.1, p.222)

Arthur Pink, in his book, "The Sovereignty of God", says this attribute should do several things:

- 1) It should cause us to reverence God,
- 2) It should cause us to realize God is the only one serving religiously in obedience to His word.
- 3) It should cause us to realize a works salvation is total heresy for we are saved by God's sovereign elective grace.
- 4) It should cause us to stand totally humbled before God.
- 5) It should cause us to be absolutely secure- we are saved and kept by God's sovereignty.
- 6) It should cause us to comfort in sorrow, knowing our God is in sovereign control.
- 7) It should cause us to want to sweetly submit to the sovereign will of God.
- 8) It should cause us to praise God.
- 9) It should cause us to realize God will sovereignly triumph.
- 10) It should cause our hearts to be stayed on Him.

(Incommunicable Attribute #11) - Unity.

This is the attribute that emphasizes that there is and only can be One God. He is one numerically and as the attribute of simplicity states- He cannot be divided. Many passages stress this.

- 1) Deut.4:35,39 – There is no other God, meaning there is only one God.
- 2) I Kings 8:60 – There is no one else but the LORD God.
- 3) Is.45:5-6 – God states Himself that there is no other God but Him.
- 4) Zech.14:9 – God will reign and will be known as the only One God in the future.
- 5) Mk.12:29-32 – The testimony of Jesus Christ and religious leaders is only One God.
- 6) John 17:3 – There is only One true God who can give eternal life.
- 7) I Cor. 8:4-6 – Paul says there is only One God in the face of polytheism.
- 8) I Tim.2:5 – There is only One true God.

God is a singular God. This attribute unity should us in several ways:

- 1) It should promote a passion within us to know the one and only true God.
- 2) It should cause each of us to want to please the one and only true God.
- 3) It guarantees that we will be judged by the one and only true God.
- 4) It helps support the doctrine of the Trinity, for God can only be One God by this very attribute.
- 5) It should motivate us to carefully study the one book of the one God.

We list eleven absolute or incommunicable attributes of God:

- 1) Eternity; 2) Infinity; 3) Immensity; 4) Immutability 5) 6) Omnipresence;
- 7) Omniscience 8) Self-Existence; 9) Simplicity; 10) Sovereignty; 11) Unity.

There is only One Being who has these amazing attributes- the God of the Bible.

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QUESTION #15 - What are the **Communicable Attributes** of God?

For the sake of systematic analysis, we are examining God's attributes under two separate categories: 1) The incommunicable attributes- those attributes which are found in God and in no other; 2) The communicable attributes- those attributes which are found in God and to a certain extent can be discovered in others.

The communicable attributes most definitely prove the existence of God. For when all is said and done, there can be no other explanation for their existence. The communicable attributes are attributes that characterize God and to a certain extent characterize God's creation. Whoever distributes these attributes to another, must Himself have them in order to distribute them. Such is the case with the communicable attributes of God.

Communicable Attribute #1- Freedom.

This is the attribute of God, which in some respects is incommunicable and in other respects is communicable. The attribute of freedom means that God is absolutely free in His will to do whatever He desires to do and is completely independent from any and all restrictions, He has no dependency on any of His creatures or His creation. When it comes to God, the Bible paints this attribute in the most absolute terms:

- 1) Job 11:10 – There is nothing that can restrain God- He is completely free to do what He wants.
- 2) Job 33:13 – God is completely free and is under no obligation to give any account of anything He does or permits.
- 3) Ps.115:3 – God is absolutely free and does whatever He pleases.
- 4) Prov.21:1 – God is free from any restriction and can turn a person's mind anyway.
- 5) Is.29:16 – God is completely free to do whatever He wants with whomever He wants. This is true even with the most arrogant and godless (10:12)
- 6) Is.29:16 – God is absolutely free and not equal with any other being.
- 7) Is.45:9 – God does whatever He wants and “woe” to any who want to quibble with Him.
- 8) Mt.20:15 – God has total freedom to do whatever He wants because He owns it all.
- 9) Rom.9:15-24 – God has total freedom in determining who is saved.
- 10) I Cor.12:11 – God has total freedom in the distribution of spiritual gifts.
- 11) Rev.4:11 – God is worthy of praise because of His absolute freedom to do whatever He desires.

Clearly the Attribute of freedom is one that is abundantly supported in Scripture. God is free to do whatever He desires to do. Dr. Berkhof said: "God determines voluntarily what and whom He will create, and the times, places and circumstances of their destiny, and uses them for His purposes. And though He endows them with freedom, yet He controls their actions." (p.78) Berkhof hits on many points in this one statement, and one of the points is that God "endows" His creation with a certain "freedom." To a certain extent, the attribute of freedom may be seen in God's creation.

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God did not make His creation a robotic world, but granted His creation a certain freedom to make rational and moral choices. When we say God's creation has been granted a certain freedom, we do not mean freedom in an absolute sense, for in order for one to be free in an absolute sense, one must be free from all influences and accountability, and only God has this level of freedom. However, we do admit that God's creation has been given a certain freedom which enables it to make certain choices, preferring one thing rather than another. Whether in the world of birds, fish, animals or humans, certain freedom of choices may be observed.

All choices fall under the sovereign jurisdiction of God. All choices are influenced by something. All choices have some accountability factor. There is in a limited sense a certain level of freedom of choice that may be seen in God's creation and this level of choice displays the attribute of God's freedom.

This attribute of God's freedom is meaningful in several ways:

- 1) It should cause us to stand in awe of God, the ONLY Being who has absolute freedom.
- 2) It should cause us to be humble before God, realizing that in His absolute freedom of choice, He chose us.
- 3) It should cause us to ask God for wisdom in all choices we make, realizing that we are influenced by many things and very accountable for our choices.
- 4) It should cause us to thank God when we see terrible choices being made by others, realizing apart from God working in our lives, we should have been the one making the same choice.
- 5) It should cause us to carefully think through every choice we make, realizing the freedom to choose is a privilege from God. which means our choices are accountable to God.

Communicable Attribute #2- Goodness.

This is the attribute of God which means God is always infinitely and perfectly good. He has a nature that is good, He will always do good and He is the source of all good. God the absolute and infinite opposite of bad. Everything God **does** is good. Everything God **is**, is good. Everything God **does** is good even the negative. Nothing God can do can ever be classified as being bad. He may authorize bad things to happen, but there are always good reasons and results. God will always do what is good in regard to His Person, His good pleasure, His word and His will. There are many passages which speak of this wonderful attribute:

- 1) Ps.100:5 - God is good and demonstrates His goodness to all people and generations.
- 2) Ps.136:1 - God is to be thanked for His goodness which created all things, destroys all enemies and preserves His people.
- 3) Ps.145:9 - God has been good to all and in His goodness He extends His mercy in every area of his creation.
- 4) Jer.33:11 - God is good to bless His thankful people, and He will give Israel her land.
- 5) Nahum 1:7 - God is good to those who turn to Him in times of trouble.
- 6) Mt.19:17/Mk.10:18 – God is the only Being who is good, and He is the only source of good.
- 7) Rom.8:28 - God works good in all things in a conforming Him to Christ.
- 8) James 1:17 - God's goodness is the cause of anything that is good on earth.