

Subject: *A Biblical Picture of God – Part 2*

Scripture: *Psalm 145:1-21*

David wrote 75 out of the 150 psalms, and this is the last psalm of David in the book. If we are to have a clear and accurate picture of God in our hearts and minds we must understand the character of God. We call these character qualities attributes or perfections. As we consider another in the series, What We Teach, this is our fifth sermon on the nature of God.

We often separate and study His attributes one at a time, but we should keep in mind that God these attributes are not like body parts. In other words, God is not part holy and part mercy, part great and part good. He is all holy, all mercy, all great and all good. This is called the simplicity of God.

Something else to remember is that all of God's attributes work together in perfect harmony and balance. He is holy and loving at the same time. He is great and good at the same time. We know that all people have strong qualities and weak qualities, but not God. People have good qualities and bad qualities, but not God. We know that people can change from bad to good and good to bad, but not God. He all good and he does not change at all. He is perfect.

One of the ways we can begin to understand God better is to think in terms of his greatness and his goodness, just as the prayer that begins, "God is great; God is good." As you worked your way through Psalm 145 last week over and over again you must have noticed that God reveals Himself in this way. He is great and He is good. Let's walk through this psalm again.

Vs. 1, 2 – The psalm begins with the David's commitment to exalt, bless, and praise God.

Vs. 3 – His greatness calls for great praise.

Vs. 4 – His acts are mighty acts.

Vs. 5 – David speaks of God's majesty and wondrous works.

Our word "majesty" comes from the Latin word for greatness. J. I. Packer said, "When we ascribe majesty to someone, we are acknowledging greatness in that person, and voicing our respect for it."

Vs. 6 – His acts are mighty and awe-inspiring.

Vs. 7 – David focuses God's great goodness and righteousness.

Vs. 8 – Four things are mentioned (He is gracious, compassionate, patient, and merciful).

Vs. 9 – God is good to all creatures and merciful over all His works.

Vs. 10 – This calls for all God's works and all God's saints to praise Him.

Vs. 11-13 – God's saints will speak of God's glorious kingdom and His power. The more we see and understand God's glory and kingdom, the more we will talk about it and make it known to others. There is way too much complaining about human government when we ought to be praise God and His government.

Vs. 14-16 – David praises God for his help for those in need and his goodness to provide the needs of all his creatures.

Vs. 17 – God is righteous and holy (both are aspects of his goodness).

Vs. 18-19 – God is good to draw near to all who call on Him sincerely.

Vs. 20 – God preserves those who love him and destroys all the wicked.

Vs. 21 – The psalm ends with David's commitment to praise God and a call for all people to praise God. Based on what David knew about God, he wanted all people to praise this God! If we put all that David has said about God in two categories, we see that God is great and God is good. I want us to focus on God's greatness for the rest of our time.

J. B. Phillips wrote a book entitled, “Your God Is Too Small.” I believe when he wrote that book he had all people in mind. God is greater than we think He is. Martin Luther wrote to Erasmus: “Your thoughts of God are too human.”

J. I. Packer said: “Today, stress is laid on the thought that God is personal, but this truth is so stated as to leave the impression that God is a person of the same sort as we are—weak, inadequate, ineffective, a little pathetic. But this is not the God of the Bible! Our personal life is a finite thing: it is limited in every direction, in space, in time, in knowledge, in power. But God is not so limited. He is eternal, infinite, and almighty. He has us in His hands; but we never have Him in ours. Like us, He is personal; but unlike us, He is great.”

What does the Bible say about God’s greatness?

1. God’s greatness is declared in many ways

We use the word “great” to describe everything from a meal to a ballgame to a worship service. The word has all but lost its meaning, especially as it applies to God.

The Bible tells us that God’s name is great. His name stands for His complete character. God’s power is great. God’s knowledge and wisdom are great. The Bible speaks of God’s great goodness, His great mercy, His great works, His great love, His great glory, His exceeding great and precious promises, and His great wrath.

2. God’s greatness is beyond human understanding

Psalms 145:3 *Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.* The word “unsearchable” means beyond measure or our ability to comprehend.

Job 26:14 *Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?*

Job 36:26 *Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.*

Spurgeon said: “If we could understand God, he would not be God, for it is a part of the nature of God that he should be infinitely greater than any created mind.”

John Owen, considered to be “prince of the Puritans,” said, “We may speak much of God; talk of Him, His ways, His works, His counsels; but the truth is, we know very little of Him. Our thoughts, our meditations, our expressions of Him are low, many of them unworthy of His glory and none of them reaching His perfections.”

3. God’s greatness is beyond all limits

He is greater than any limits of time. He is the eternal God. He is before and after time and above and beyond time. We are limited by time, but not God.

Psalms 90:1-2 *¹ Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. ² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

He is greater than any limits of space. He is the ever-present, omnipresent God. We are limited by space, but not God.

2 Chronicles 6:18 *But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!*

4. God's greatness is beyond all comparisons

A. He is greater than all created things

Isaiah 40:25-26 ²⁵ *To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.* ²⁶ *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*

B. He is greater than all nations

Isaiah 40:15-17 ¹⁵ *Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.* ¹⁶ *And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.* ¹⁷ *All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.*

C. He is greater than all false gods

Psalms 96:4-5 ⁴ *For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.* ⁵ *For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.*

Psalms 135:5 *For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*

D. He is greater than all people

Isaiah 40:22-23 ²² *It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:* ²³ *That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.*

E. He is greater than all our needs and burdens

Isaiah 40:28-31 ²⁸ *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.* ²⁹ *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.* ³⁰ *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:* ³¹ *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

F. He is greater than all our enemies and threats

Romans 8:31 *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

God is great and God is also good. Just think if God was only great, but not good. We would be afraid and intimidated by his greatness, wouldn't we? Just think if God was only good, but not great. We would lack the confidence that He could really help us, wouldn't we? How wonderful to know the God who is great and good. He is able and willing to help us. Let this rest upon your heart... **1 Peter 5:6** *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*