GOD'S ATTRIBUTES · STUDY NOTES

Study 2: God is glorious

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

God is Spirit

How can God be described?

The Bible does not have a chapter or a book describing what God is like, with headings and summaries, as you might find in a textbook. But by reading the whole Bible we learn everything God intends us to know about Himself. We learn how He relates to the world He created, and how He deals with people as part of His creation.

He does not tell us everything. That would be impossible, as we shall see. But what He tells us is what He wants us to know. God does not offer Himself to us as an object of study, or to satisfy our curiosity. He reveals His glorious being to us so that we might worship Him, love Him and serve Him. Indeed, much of what we learn about God also teaches us who we are – how small, sinful and unworthy we are. So, with this in mind, what does God teach us about Himself?

God is Spirit

God is different from us. That is part of what we mean when we call Him God.

1 **Look up Isaiah 40:18**

To whom, or to what, can God be compared?

We are used to thinking of everything and everyone as having substance. Humans are made of flesh and blood. We, and all the world around us, are made of atoms and chemicals that scientists can describe. But God is Spirit. We cannot think of God as made of anything physical that can be measured or analysed. In this respect He is not like us at all.

2 **Look up John 4:24**

What does Jesus say God is?

3 **Look up Acts 17:24–25**

Does God need anything from us? What does He give?

This means we will never fully understand God's being. For example, because He is Spirit, He is not confined to one place at a time. He is not subject to any of the limits we face as human beings. He does not need to eat and drink as we do.

4 **Look up Psalm 121:3–4**

What will the Protector of Israel never do?

But saying God is Spirit does not mean He is not personal. We will come back to this later.

PART 2

Infinite, eternal, unchanging

God is infinite

Being Spirit means God is free from some of our most obvious limits. We can only be in one place at a time. God is everywhere, all the time: He is "omnipresent".

5 **Read Psalm 139:7–10**

What does verse 7 ask?

6 **Look up 1 Kings 8:27**

What cannot contain God?

It follows that He knows everything that happens anywhere in the world, in the universe and in worlds unseen. We call this "omniscient". Nothing that happens surprises Him or catches Him out.

It also means that everything we will say later about God – His love, His truth, His holiness, His wisdom, His justice – He has in infinite measure. He is love. He is truth. He is perfect holiness and perfect justice. We can never exhaust His riches; there is always more of Him to know and experience (read Romans 11:33–36).

See also: Romans 11:33–36.

God is eternal

Again we face the immense difference between God and us when we realise that God is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. There was never a time when He did not exist, and there never will be.

7 **Look up Isaiah 46:9–10**

What does God declare from the beginning?

This also means that God is not limited by time. We live one moment at a time; the past is behind us and the future ahead. To God, yesterday is as today, and the future is no different from the past. He knows what will happen in the future as He knows the past. In fact, one of

the names God uses for Himself is "I am". By this name He tells us that He is the source of all things, created by no one and dependent on no one.

8 **Read Exodus 3:13–14**

What did God say about Himself?

9 **Read the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:7–8**

What does verse 8 say?

The future holds no uncertainty for God. He sees it all from the vantage point of eternity.

God does not change

God, being Spirit and having every power and virtue in infinite measure, does not change: He is "immutable". He cannot improve Himself, and He will never make Himself worse.

10 **Look up Malachi 3:6**

What does God say about Himself?

11 **Look up James 1:17**

What does this New Testament writer say about God?

Nothing ever happens in the world to make Him change His mind or alter His will. He does not make mistakes, and never needs to go back over the same ground. He never has to apologise

or make amends. He cannot change, and He never needs to.

PART 3

All-powerful and personal

God is all-powerful

We are also right to say that God is all-powerful: "omnipotent". Whatever He wills, He is able to do. He had the power to create the world and the universe. He has power over life and death, and power to do anything in keeping with His will, consistent with His own perfect love, justice and holiness.

12 **Look up Psalm 66:7**

For how long does God rule, and by what?

13 **Look up Psalm 145:5**

On what will the psalmist meditate?

Yet there are some things God cannot do. He cannot lie.

14 **Look up Titus 1:2**

What can God not do?

Nor can He deny His own nature.

15 **Look up 2 Timothy 2:13**

What does God remain, even if we are faithless, and why?

And God, in His infinite holiness and purity, cannot look on sin and wickedness with approval.

16 **Look up the first part of Habakkuk 1:13**

What are God's eyes too pure to do?

God is personal

If God cannot look on sin, how can He look on sinners? How can God show mercy to sinners? Every member of the human race is a sinner. Bearing in mind how different and how mighty God is compared with us, we could easily conclude that God would want nothing to do with us and our evil world. But that is not true. Let's see why.

God is also a Person, in a wonderful way. He makes plans, has desires and has a will. His will is so powerful that no one can stop Him doing what He wishes.

17 **Look up Ephesians 1:11**

By what does God work out everything?

He also has pure, settled and holy emotions, which include, very importantly, a love for His truth and a love for this world. And, as we shall see later, God shows infinite mercy to sinners through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is much more we could say about how different God is from us. But remember, this is not information for information's sake. We are treading on holy ground. God is far greater than we are, and we must be very careful how we think about Him.

See also: something to read and consider: Psalm 147; Psalm 150.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What have your thoughts about God been until now? How do they need to change in the light of the Bible?

2. How does this teaching differ from what you have heard from other people and sources?

3. What does it mean for you, and for the world around you, that God is like this?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 2

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES · STUDY 2 · MEMORY VERSE

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow."

James 1:17

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

"I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You." (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Isaiah 40:18** *To whom will you liken God? To what image will you compare Him?*

2 **John 4:24** *God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth."*

3 **Acts 17:24–25** *24The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands. 25Nor is He served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.*

4 **Psalm 121:3–4** *3He will not allow your foot to slip; your Protector will not slumber. 4Behold, the Protector of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

5 **Psalm 139:7–10** *7Where can I go to escape Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? 8If I ascend to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, You are there. 9If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle by the farthest sea, 10even there Your hand will guide me; Your right hand will hold me fast.*

6 **1 Kings 8:27** *But will God indeed dwell upon the earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain You, much less this temple I have built.*

7 **Isaiah 46:9–10** *9Remember what happened long ago, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. 10I declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and all My good pleasure I will accomplish.'*

8 **Exodus 3:13–14** *13Then Moses asked God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' What should I tell them?" 14God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

9 **Revelation 1:7–8** *7Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him—even those who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen. 8"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and was and is to come—the Almighty.*

10 **Malachi 3:6** *"Because I, the LORD, do not change, you descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed.*

11 **James 1:17** *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow.*

12 **Psalm 66:7** *He rules forever by His power; His eyes watch the nations. Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah*

13 **Psalm 145:5** *the glorious splendor of Your majesty. And I will meditate on Your wondrous works.*

14 **Titus 1:2** *in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.*

15 **2 Timothy 2:13** *if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.*

16 **Habakkuk 1:13** *Your eyes are too pure to look upon evil, and You cannot tolerate wrongdoing. So why do You tolerate the faithless? Why are You silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?*

17 **Ephesians 1:11** *In Him we were also chosen as God's own, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything by the counsel of His will,*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 2: God is glorious

> **Memory verse:** “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow.” (James 1:17). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- Learn from the Bible what God is like: Spirit, infinite (everywhere, all-knowing), eternal, unchanging, all-powerful and personal.
- Respond with reverence and worship: we are on holy ground.

Suggested timing (about 75 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (3 min); Isaiah 40:18, John 4:24, Acts 17:24–25, Psalm 121:3–4.
- **25 min** Part 2 video (4 min); Psalm 139:7–10, 1 Kings 8:27, Isaiah 46:9–10, Exodus 3:13–14, Revelation 1:7–8, Malachi 3:6, James 1:17.
- **20 min** Part 3 video (3 min); Psalm 66:7, 145:5, Titus 1:2, 2 Timothy 2:13, Habakkuk 1:13, Ephesians 1:11.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer.

Tips

- Explain the long words simply: omnipresent (everywhere), omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), immutable (unchanging).
- Keep bringing the group back to worship rather than speculation.
- "God cannot lie" is not a limit on His power but a mark of His perfection.

Answers to watch for

- **Isaiah 40:18:** God cannot be compared with anything.
- **John 4:24:** God is spirit.
- **Acts 17:24–25:** God doesn't live in temples or need anything; He gives life and breath.
- **Psalm 121:3–4:** He neither slumbers nor sleeps.
- **Psalm 139:7–10:** nowhere is beyond His presence.
- **1 Kings 8:27:** the highest heavens cannot contain Him.
- **Isaiah 46:9–10:** He declares the end from the beginning.
- **Exodus 3:13–14:** "I am who I am."
- **Revelation 1:8:** the Alpha and the Omega, who is, was and is to come.
- **Malachi 3:6:** "I, the LORD, do not change."
- **James 1:17:** with Him there is no change or shifting shadow.
- **Psalm 66:7:** He rules for ever by His power.
- **Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:13:** God cannot lie; He cannot deny Himself.
- **Habakkuk 1:13:** His eyes are too pure to look upon evil.
- **Ephesians 1:11:** He works out everything according to His will.