

## Theology and the church

### 1. Knowing and \_\_\_\_\_ God

Attribute defined: a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or \_\_\_\_\_ part of someone or something.

These attributes are either \_\_\_\_\_ (for believers to grow in) or incommunicable (only of God).

#### **Thomas Aquinas**

*“Theology proceeds from God, teaches us about God, and leads us to God.”*

This answers: what is theology, why theology exists and what theology does?

#### **Martyn Lloyd Jones**

*“Theology is ultimately the knowledge of God, the more theology I know, the more it should drive me to seek to know God.”*

Right theology moves from knowing God, to \_\_\_\_\_ God, to \_\_\_\_\_ God.

A Christian’s growth in theology is by the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, through the power of God the Holy Spirit, so to worship God rightly and for God’s \_\_\_\_\_!

**David Clarkson** (mid-late 1600’s, colleague of John Owen, replaced him as pastor after Owen’s death)

*“The divine attributes are the pillows and grounds of our faith”.*

*“Study the attributes of God. Labor to know them distinctly and effectually. The more we know, the more we trust.”*

*“These bring a divine influence unto the soul and fill it with heat and light and leave deep impressions of God upon the heart. Those who have known much, have believed much: much in contemplation - strong in faith.”*

## **2. 1689 London Baptist Confession**

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God and the Holy Trinity, Chapter 2

1. The Lord our God is one, the only \_\_\_\_\_ and true God.<sup>1</sup> He is self-existent<sup>2</sup> and infinite in being and perfection. His essence cannot be understood by anyone but him.<sup>3</sup> He is a perfectly pure spirit.<sup>4</sup> He is invisible and has no body, parts, or changeable \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>a</sup> He alone has immortality, dwelling in light that no one can approach.<sup>5</sup> He is unchangeable,<sup>6</sup> immense,<sup>b,7</sup> eternal,<sup>8</sup> incomprehensible, almighty,<sup>9</sup> in every way infinite, absolutely holy,<sup>10</sup> perfectly wise, wholly \_\_\_\_\_, completely absolute. He works all things according to the counsel of his own unchangeable and completely righteous will<sup>11</sup> for his

own glory.<sup>12</sup> He is most loving, gracious, merciful, and patient. He overflows with goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and \_\_\_\_\_. He rewards those who seek him diligently.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, he is perfectly just and terrifying in his judgments.<sup>14</sup> He hates all sin<sup>15</sup> and will certainly not clear the guilty.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>a</sup>passions      <sup>b</sup>transcends all space

<sup>1</sup>[1 Corinthians 8:4, 6](#); [Deuteronomy 6:4](#). <sup>2</sup>[Jeremiah 10:10](#); [Isaiah 48:12](#). <sup>3</sup>[Exodus 3:14](#). <sup>4</sup>[John 4:24](#).

<sup>5</sup>[1 Timothy 1:17](#); [Deuteronomy 4:15, 16](#). <sup>6</sup>[Malachi 3:6](#). <sup>7</sup>[1 Kings 8:27](#); [Jeremiah 23:23](#). <sup>8</sup>[Psalm 90:2](#). <sup>9</sup>[Genesis 17:1](#).

<sup>10</sup>[Isaiah 6:3](#). <sup>11</sup>[Psalm 115:3](#); [Isaiah 46:10](#). <sup>12</sup>[Proverbs 16:4](#); [Romans 11:36](#). <sup>13</sup>[Exodus 34:6, 7](#); [Hebrews 11:6](#).

<sup>14</sup>[Nehemiah 9:32, 33](#). <sup>15</sup>[Psalm 5:5, 6](#). <sup>16</sup>[Exodus 34:7](#); [Nahum 1:2, 3](#).

## 2.2

2. God has all \_\_\_\_\_,<sup>17</sup> glory,<sup>18</sup> goodness,<sup>19</sup> and blessedness in and of himself; he alone is all-sufficient in himself. He does not need any creature he has made, nor does he derive any glory from them.<sup>20</sup> Instead, he demonstrates his own glory in them, by them, to them, and upon them. He alone is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all being, and everything is from him, through him, and to him.<sup>21</sup> He has absolute sovereign rule over all creatures, to act through them, for them, or upon them as he \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>22</sup> In his sight everything is open and visible.<sup>23</sup> His knowledge is infinite and infallible. It does not depend upon any creature, so for him nothing is \_\_\_\_\_ or uncertain.<sup>24</sup> He is absolutely holy in all his plans, in all his works,<sup>25</sup> and in all his commands. Angels and human beings owe to him all the worship,<sup>26</sup> service, or obedience that creatures owe to the Creator and whatever else he is pleased to \_\_\_\_\_ of them.

<sup>17</sup>[John 5:26](#). <sup>18</sup>[Psalm 148:13](#). <sup>19</sup>[Psalm 119:68](#). <sup>20</sup>[Job 22:2, 3](#). <sup>21</sup>[Romans 11:34–36](#). <sup>22</sup>[Daniel 4:25, 34, 35](#). <sup>23</sup>[Hebrews 4:13](#).

<sup>24</sup>[Ezekiel 11:5](#); [Acts 15:18](#). <sup>25</sup>[Psalm 145:17](#). <sup>26</sup>[Revelation 5:12–14](#).

Week 2

Attributes to consider: **Psalm 90:1-4**

### **Aseity**

“A se” : from himself or of himself. He exists in and of himself. Self-existent

He alone has aseity.

(Story of the two boys talking about creation)

This goes deeper than an attribute. Some call it “the essence of God in His being”.

He is necessary. We are contingent.

### **John 5:25-26**

God is not reliant on causes. We are reliant on causes. We are creature. He is Creator.

He is near to us as Giver not as Getter.

He is not dependent on anything because if He was, we would need to depend on something more fundamental than God.

Why important? God is not like us. Very important...idolatry. We worship a false god.

### **Acts 17:22-31 (25)**

### **Page 265 quote from George Swinnock**

He is not needing of anything or anyone. We are in need of all things.

He does not need our praise or obedience or us as his friend (evangelist thought)

This might lead some to think that God is distant and aloof from his creation.

But scripture tells us otherwise **Acts 17:22-31 (28)** “in him we live and move...”

-Typically coupled with Aseity is the idea of the simplicity of God.

Not the idea that God is simple and easy to understand but that God is not made up of parts.

When we think of certain things, they are made up of parts that are necessary for the whole of what they are added to.

Example: steering wheel is not a car, a petal is not a flower.

So to sum this up God doesn't have existence, essence and attributes as part of His being... He IS his existence, essence and attributes.

God is truly being (IS and self-existent), while mankind is truly becoming (changing and dependent)

### **WSC #4 Catechism**

What is God?

God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

*James Dolezal, Aseity and Simplicity, Tabletalk, May 2022, pages 5-7.*

“Divine simplicity does not merely assert a harmony among God's attributes - that could be said about the attributes of holy angels - but rather claims that each attribute, though variously disclosed and understood by us, is really nothing but the simple God himself.

God is love. The wisdom by which he is wise, the power by which He is powerful.

*Joseph Lanier, Doctrine in the Local Church: Aseity*

“This is the beautiful mystery of the one true and living God. In His absolute self-existence, He is incomprehensible yet knowable, inaccessible yet immanent, indescribable yet self-revealing. In His pure, self-existent activity, there is no shadow of change. There is no beginning nor end. He is timeless and immutable. This is the thrust of divine aseity: His fullness of being, His plenitude of life, His absolute self-existence.”

This ought to have great effect on us: God is greater and more than I understand, He is faithful and trustworthy and able to care for me far better than, many times, I believe He can.

We can choose 1) praise and gratitude towards God 2) Grow in virtue and love towards others and 3) show confidence and hope in God’s word

### **Omnipotence and Merciful**

*David Clarkson*

*“where there is but one attribute to describe God's power there are many titles that prove his willingness: mercy, goodness, bounty, grace, love, compassion, patience, and long-suffering.”*

Know God. Know ourselves.

The trouble: do we love God or do we love the benefits of knowing God (being known by God)?