

II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

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*“What we have to understand is **the gospel primarily has to do with the attributes of God**, not just the sin of man. You see the sin of man wouldn’t be a problem if God was like us, **but God is not like us.**” Paul Washer*

*“Nadia Bolz-Weber says, ‘**we need to take everything we’ve believed [about biblical sexuality] for the last 2000 years and burn it to the ground.**’ She defines the word holiness to mean something more like unity, being together. This is why she can give an example of someone having a one-night stand **and call it holy.**” Alisa Childers*

GOD IS _____: He is separated from _____, other, _____.

1. Do your best to describe the holiness of God. Visit 1 Peter 1:14–16 and consider cross-referencing Leviticus 11:44, 19:2, and 20:7. (Also see 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1) Explain how the apostle Peter applies the holiness of God to Christians.

*“Whenever sinful man is in the presence of holy God, he becomes **painfully aware** of his own unholiness.” Steven Lawson*

*“[God is forgiving but will punish the guilty]
How does that go together? That’s the tension.
I call that the riddle of the Old Testament.” Mark Dever*

GOD IS _____ : God is _____, fair, _____, virtuous.

2. Record which Psalms are given in this section. What is important about God being just? What does ultimate justice look like according to the Bible? (See Revelation 6:9-11, 7:17, 20:11-15)

*"In my lilly-white suburb **you could get away with the sovereignty argument.** You can't have a God who's in charge of everything if you're in the inner city and **still end up liking Him.**"* Bart Campolo

*"If I could get those years that [Katherine] suffered back and allow her to be happy and healthy in those years, **I wouldn't.** Because I can see how God, **in His sovereignty, led us closer to Him.**"* Russell Berger

GOD IS _____ : God is in _____ & does all that He _____.

3. Do you believe God is sovereign? Read at least three of the following: Psalm 115:3, 135:6, Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 10:23, John 1:12-13, Acts 17:24-28, and Romans 9:16. Does the Bible teach God is sovereign? What does sovereignty mean?

4. Bart Campolo says he considers the idea of a sovereign God to be reprehensible, but at the same time Katherine Berger testifies that it was *that very attribute*

of God which gave her peace. Summarize both Bart’s reasoning for rejecting sovereignty and Katherine’s reasoning for embracing it. Which understanding better aligns with scripture?

*“We also have to be honest to realize: if God is going to purge the world of all evil, get rid of all the sin and brokenness in this world, just a little bit of self-examination and self-reflection would lead us to realize: Uh oh! **Our longing for justice would come back against us!**” Trevin Wax*

*“God’s wrath and God’s love are **not in opposition** to one another, but **the one explains the other.**” Alistair Begg*

GOD IS _____ : God intensely _____ ALL _____.

5. Consider the doctrines of God discussed so far in this chapter to answer the following questions: If you had to watch someone murder your loved one, what emotion would you respond to that murderer with? Why? Which doctrine of God does this relate to? Now consider God’s response to sin. How is God obligated to respond, and what concerning God’s response needs to be addressed for the sinner to be forgiven? (Exodus 32:33-34; Psalm 2:12; Isaiah 48:9; Romans 1:18, 5:9)

*“I refer to it as **the payment model** of the atonement. Did God kill Jesus? **I don’t think God killed Jesus, I think God died on the cross.**” Bart Campolo*

*“Did God kill Jesus? **Yes.** Did Jesus go to the cross **unwillingly?** **No.**” Voddie Baucham*

GOSPEL ESSENTIALS: Penal _____.

6. If the Bible does, in-fact, teach that God the Father killed His Son on the cross, does that mean it was divine child abuse? Read these verses: John 10:11-18 (read verse 18 carefully), 6:40, 8:28, 17:22-26. Do these verses indicate God was abusing the Son?

*“The problem with penal substitution is that **it puts God under, or beholden to, some transcendent version of justice**, that even God has to live **under that umbrella**, and say, ‘Well I can’t just forgive these people, someone needs to pay the debt! Someone needs to pay the penalty!’” Tony Jones*

*“There are all sorts of attributes of God, and one of the ones that the church used to talk a lot about and it’s forgotten is called **the simplicity of God**, which doesn’t mean that God is a simpleton, but it means that **whatever God has God is.**” Kevin DeYoung*

The _____ of God: God without _____. God’s being = His _____.

7. The simplicity of God is a *necessary truth* based upon *all the other truths* that God has revealed about Himself in His word. There must be a harmony of understanding of who God is, He is all His attributes at once in their fullness: Jeremiah 10:10; 23:6; John 1:4-5, 9; 4:24; 14:6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16. God’s simplicity is derived from His *aseity* (God’s unique self-existence; Exodus 3:14;

Psalm 36:9; John 5:26; Acts 17:25), *transcendence* (Isaiah 57:15, Colossians 1:15-16), *infinity* (Revelation 21:6, 22:13), and God's *being* in contrast to all creation. No one gives to God, He is the *sole giver* of all that exists: Job 35:7, Romans 11:35, Isaiah 40:14 and Hosea 14:4. What does it mean if God is less mercy and more wrath or ten percent justice and ninety percent love? In other words, what does it mean if God is *made of parts*? What do parts need in order to be put together?

“Surely, it’s within God’s power to say, ‘It’s just love! We don’t need justice anymore! I’m going to wipe the slate clean, I’m going to forgive the sin. Nobody has to die!’ That is surely within God’s power. I’m saying, if God chose to, He could have love without justice—if God chose to.”
Tony Jones

“If God were able to change why should we trust Him? Why should we believe the bible? Once you start to redefine God like that, you have a different one. We’re no longer talking about the same god...” James from Detroit

8. Can God override His justice in demonstration of His love? Can God change from a just God into an unjust God in order to forgive? Why not? Explain your answers using scripture. For help, see Exodus 34:7, Isaiah 13:11, John 15:13, Romans 2:14-16, Titus 1:2, and Hebrews 6:18. What is the helpful courtroom illustration that Russell Berger uses to explain the failure to punish crime?



RESOURCES TO FURTHER YOUR STUDY

Was this chapter helpful in your understanding of the attributes of God? Consider these resources for further study on who God has revealed Himself to be from the scriptures:

- ▶ *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* by John MacArthur & Richard Mayhue
- ▶ *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* by Michael Horton
- ▶ *None Greater: The Undomesticated Attributes of God* by Matthew Barrett
- ▶ *All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* by James Dolezal
- ▶ *The Sovereignty of God* by A. W. Pink

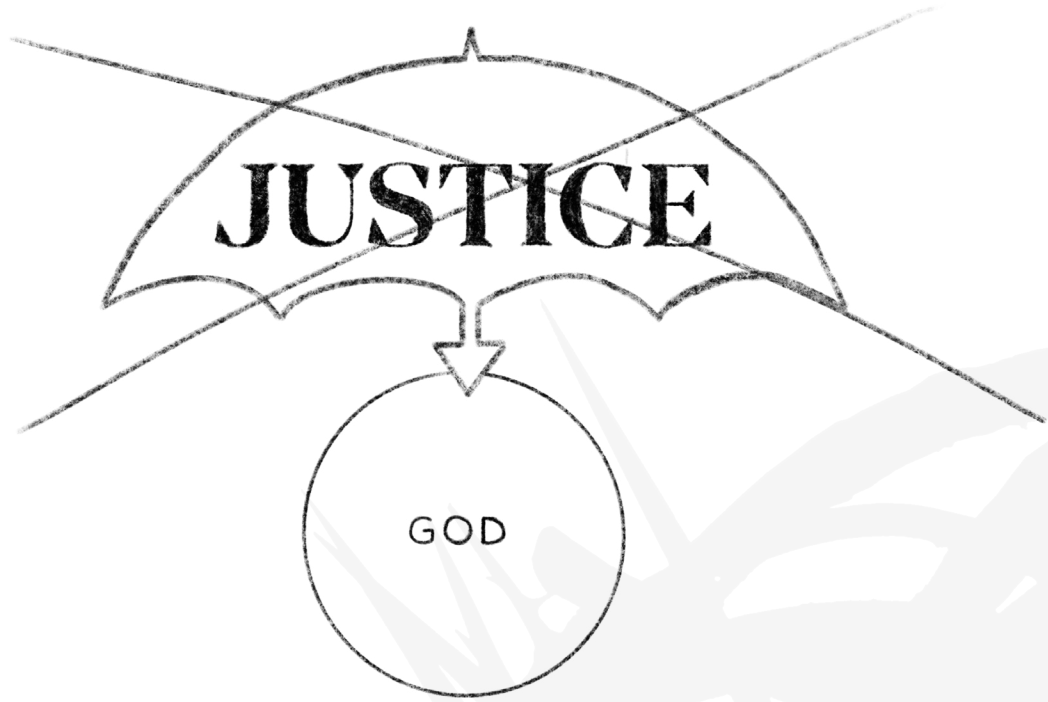
CHALKBOARD ILLUSTRATIONS

REDEFINING WORDS:

HOLY

Love vs. Wrath







LOVE



JUSTICE
(BREAKING THE LAW)
(INJUSTICE)

LOVE JUSTICE

(UNLOVING = INJUSTICE)

"God broke the law for love!"

(sinned)

God cannot lie. God is truth.

God cannot sin. God is holy.

God cannot be unrighteous. God is righteous.