

God's Communicable Attributes, Part 1

Definition of "communicable"

When something is communicable, it is shared. The attributes of God to be discussed are those that man shares. For comparison, God is immutable (unchangeable) - this is an incommunicable attribute, for we change in improvement and decline. But the love of God is a communicable attribute, as we can also love (and is called to love as God loves).

Spirituality

1. Read John 4:19-26. What does Jesus say God is in nature and what does this mean? How did Jesus say we are to worship God and what do the methods mean?

- v24: God is spirit by nature. He is not physical by nature, although He has appeared numerous times in visible forms (Theophany) to His people in the OT. God is not physical, but comprises of personality and character. The definition of "not physical" is unsatisfying, and fittingly. Christ tells us plainly that God is spirit, and it is fitting that we cannot understand the nature of God. The key is that God is not physical and not limited by space and geography.
- v21b: Not at a particular place w/ physical rituals (no need for the temple Jerusalem so no need for Jerusalem, physical sacrifices or the priestly office of human mediator)
- vv23-24: The meaning of spirit is non-physical and something from which character and personality is derived. Therefore, to worship in spirit means our praise of God is to come from what is inside.
- v24: we are to worship in truth. Truth is the actual state of the matter. The object of our worship is God, and we are to worship the actual God, not god according to our perception. It includes acknowledging the nature of God (spirit), and the character and personality of God. True worship is in accordance with God.

2. Read Exodus 20:4-6. What is an idol? Have you made one before? (See Ps 50:21)
 - An idol is made of something in the created world - the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below (v4) meant to represent God (v5 - bow down to and worship).
 - The modern day idol is to make God as one self. (Ps 50:21 ESV - "you thought that I was one like yourself", or using the footnote "you thought that I AM was one like yourself"). It includes false conceptions of God, such as a good God would not "...", or a loving God would want me to be happy, etc...
3. How do idols conflict with how Jesus calls us to worship? What do you think is God's reason for the second Commandment? (See also Ex 3:14).

- Idols are a projection from its maker of who God should be. It is a great insult to God to think of Him untruthfully. For example, open-theism to say God does not know the future from the past.
- Idols are downward comparison to God (i.e. golden calf to represent God's strength, but a calf is but a brutish animal). It receives significant unduly, and steals glory that rightfully belongs to God.
- Jesus calls us to worship God in spirit and in truth.
- To worship God in spirit and in truth is to have a right view of who God is (the attributes of God). God says "I AM who I AM". He does not depend on anything to be the person He is. Anything in the created world is a false and inadequate representation of God. The false representation of

anyone or anything is an insult to the misrepresented, and to falsely represent God, is to insult Someone who deserves to be most highly regarded.

4. What is the clearest way that God revealed Himself? (See Heb 1:1-3a, Jn 1:1,14,18 & 14:6-9, Col 1:15-16) Why would He choose to reveal Himself in this way? (See Heb 2:14-18, Heb 4:14-16) **Why is Jesus unique and worthy of our worship?**
 - (Heb 1) God used to communicate to us through prophets. Today, in the last days, He speaks to us through Jesus, who is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, including God's character (holiness, righteousness, wisdom, grace, love, mercy, etc.)
 - (John 1) In Jesus, we see and know the glory of the Father and in Him is the clearest way to know God
 - (John 14) If you really knew Him, you would know His Father as well. From now on, we do know him and have seen him. Anyone who has seen Him has seen the Father.
 - (Col 1) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. He is the Creator, fully divine.
 - (Heb 2) It is remarkable for God to condescend and come down to us incarnated as a man. A human Savior was necessary, because human beings (children) are in need of a propitiatory sacrifice (v. 17) and a sympathetic high priest.

5. How is one supposed to worship? (See Mk 12:28-34) Is "spiritual worship" purely "non-physical"? (See Rom 12:1 and Eph 5:1-2ff)
 - Our worship is spiritual from our "inside" (Rom: holy, Eph: imitation of God's love) and that flows to physical obedience to live for God.
 - Rom 12: Spiritual worship is to offer our bodies in living service of God as a holy sacrifice.
 - Eph 5: To imitate God; to live a life of love as Christ; to offer our lives as a sacrifice to God. (For example, vv3-5 – sexual immorality / impurity / words / greed equals idolatry! Vv22-25 – Husband and wife. Eph 6 – children and parents, slaves and masters, and day to day living.)

Jesus said clearly "God is spirit". While we do not and cannot fully understand God's nature, we are told that we are to worship in "spirit" and in "truth". Spiritual worship does not require physical locations and physical rituals. Jesus commended the scribe who got worship right – it's not about offerings, but to love God and your neighbor. Spiritual worship is from the inside, which then drives your actions on the outside. Spiritual worship very much involves your physical body and how you live your life. Truth is to not misrepresent God by projecting God in the way we may think He should be. That is the root of idolatry. The studies of the attributes of God aim to give us a proper view of God, thus allowing us to relate to God appropriately, that is through our Savior Jesus Christ alone.

Our response should be the same as David: "I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom." (Ps 145:1, 3)