

Capitol Commission - AL



*"Ut omnes cognoscant Christum"*



## 2025 Bible Study – Out-of-Session

*I am grateful for the interactions and opportunities from the legislative session just completed. I was able to make a personal contact with nearly every member, staffer, and even several lobbyists during this, my first session representing Capitol Commission to the Alabama Legislature. Encouragingly, many members expressed interest in continuing the Bible Study of the Gospel of Luke, even if they were unable to personally attend. We will return to Luke in the 2026 Session, picking up where we left off in Luke 7.*

For the “offseason”, I would like to entertain the question, **“Who is God?”**

This may seem a very basic question, however, if we do not appreciate how great God is, how unlike us, AND how we are in some ways like Him, we may not fully understand our relationship to Him and what occurs as we approach Him with prayers and requests. As Professor Gerald Bray put it, “God is the Lord above and apart from us, but he has determined to be with us.” Seeing that God has *essential* attributes which He shares with no other being and also has revealed *relational* attributes to us (which He shares with His children) reveals His heart. Along the way I will introduce some theological terms, but don’t worry I will define them in normal English. Ready? Let’s jump in!

First of all, **your God is too small!** Can I say that? No matter what you already know or suspect about Him, it does not go far enough to capture Who God is—this is the issue as we finite beings contemplate the infinite!

Secondly, **He is not like us!** “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.” Isaiah 55:8. So here we go, looking at what we can know about the One true God:

### LESSON 1. Essential Attributes (What God Is).

We know God is spirit and exists outside of the created realm. Everything we can know about Him has to be revealed by Him. But in that is great blessing.

**Sovereignty.** Theologian A.W. Pink defined God’s sovereignty as “the exercise of His supremacy”. Since there is no one above Him, God is the supreme being. There is no higher office to which He must account so the words, precepts, commands, and decisions He makes

*Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. Psalm 115:3*

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for all those working in state capitols. The Bible studies are hand distributed to each legislative office, available by email, and shared across the Capitol Commission community. This ministry is an extension of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message and help believers mature through Biblical expositional instruction. Prayer is foundational to this ministry, consistent with proper submission to governmental authority (Romans 13:1-7) and obedient to the command to pray for our appointed leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts. Capitol Commission is a non-political and non-lobbying 501(c)(3).

are by definition right. This is of course a divine attribute in which we shall never share since we, as created beings, will eternally be held accountable to our Creator.

This great amount of power and decree usually brings up the question of the free will of the creature. Theologians debate this in every generation, usually by assuming the extremes, divine sovereignty and free will are mutually exclusive. However, God is sovereign yet allows us to be responsible for decision making. How does this work? I don't know, but what is clear is God is supreme without forcing people's choices.

**Simplicity.** When using the word "simple" I do not mean God is simple-minded or uncomplicated. In fact, the term means His essence cannot be broken down into parts. He is fully Who He is. Bray states it this way: "Divine simplicity means that whatever we say about God applies to the totality of His being." Take any of His attributes and you have them all, in the fullness of Himself. He is not part this or that, nor is He a compound which can be constructed (or deconstructed!). When we say He is righteous, He is fully righteous. He is not 40% loving and 60% justice—He is 100% both! This becomes important when considering the nature of Jesus: He was not divine adding a human component, but fully God and fully man. (Don't worry if this causes a headache, it does to me, too!)

**Incorporeality.** This 50-cent word simply means God has no body, and therefore no limits and infinite. All created beings, even spirits (angels or demons) have a body—in fact, we are really embodied spirits ourselves. Jesus possesses a glorified human body in heaven today. Only God is truly formless, and boundless, which is why He spoke so strongly against making idols and the sin of idolatry. He truly cannot be contained or captured by anything we can imagine. This factor will play into the attribute of *omnipresence* later.

**Stability.** Our world and our lives seem to fluctuate and change constantly. We can therefore fall into the trap of thinking that God also changes with the times. As James wrote, "[God] with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." (James 1:17) This is an error to think the Creator is subject to what happens in His own creation. Rather, He is outside of the entire span of what we can see or imagine. We respond to Him, not vice versa. This attribute forms the very basis of our own ability to trust Him. Not only is He stable, He is permanent. We will expand on this when we consider His *immutability* in the next lesson.

### Applications to Us.

1. At some time in our lives, something unfortunate happens, something we wish had not. An unexpected loss of a loved one, or a debilitating injury or illness befalls us. Insurance companies even call accidents "acts of God." We are then tempted to question God's actions and doubt whether He is right in His judgment. When (not "if") this happens to you, recognize the truth that God is sovereign and always does what is best, for His glory and the good of those who love Him. Romans 8:28.
2. Meditate on Colossians 2:9, where it states, "For in him (Jesus) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." We can appreciate the specialness of the incarnation of Jesus in the light of God's simplicity and incorporeality. Although a human, Jesus was (and is) also God with us.
3. You can trust Jesus, the Son of God, who "is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8

### References:

Gerald Bray, *The Attributes of God: An Introduction*, Crossway, 2021.

Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, Baker Book House, 1975.

John MacArthur, Jr., *None Other: Discovering the God of the Bible*, Reformation Trust, 2017.

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