

Capitol Commission - AL



"Ut omnes cognoscant Christum"



2025 Bible Study – Out-of-Session

Last month we looked at God’s essential attributes that defined what He is (sovereign, simple, incorporeal, & stable), as revealed in Scripture. Recall His essential attributes are not shared with His creatures. This month we will inspect more of these to determine what God is like—and again, He is not like us in most respects! (If you need to catch up with any previous lesson you can find it at my website: <https://capitolcom.org/bible-studies/alabama/>).

LESSON 2. Essential Attributes (What God Alone Is Like).

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 learning these things there is great blessing. This month we will inspect three I’s: how God is invisible, impassible, and immutable.

Invisibility. We spoke in our June lesson about how God was *incorporeal*, or without a body. Being unseen follows on with that fact. In the Old Testament, God would often exhibit His shekinah (glory) as a special manifestation of His presence. Moses asked to see that glory and God had to hide him in a rocky alcove to protect him, “for man shall not see me and live.” (Exodus 33:23).

No one has ever seen God...

John 1:18

Clearly it is in our best interest that God conceals His full glory from our mortal senses.

But we should also appreciate what having an invisible Creator means. He does not bowl us over with His glorious power but instead reveals Himself gradually through His creation and by His special revelation of spoken words, written down for us as Scripture. God created everything by *speaking* it into existence and He identifies His Son, Jesus as the very Word of God (John 1:14). Then by His Spirit conveys meaning to us today via the Holy Bible.

Quick aside: Instead of videos or pictures, God chose words because those convey a precise message. When He says, for example, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (in 1 Peter 1:16) God communicates a requirement for us to become holy (set aside, owned by Him), which is a requirement only met by the “precious blood of Christ” as he says later in verse 19. In this way He communicates that there is only one way to approach Him, by Christ’s sacrifice, which makes us holy.

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).

Impassibility. Means “unable to suffer.” Did I just say God is unable to be or do something? Well yes, as in the sense God cannot commit wrong, either. Another way of saying He can’t suffer is nothing can harm Him—He is in total control of all His creation. He is not subject to attack, and if He was the lesson 1 attribute of *simplicity* would mean any attack would have to affect Him totally (and He could not be God as we understand it) or, as is the case, He would be totally unaffected, or impassible.

But a critic might say, “How can God then understand the human condition, which involves suffering at every turn?” Remember that the cause of our suffering in the world today is sin, and the evil that follows our fallen state. God **does** understand the situation and God has done something about it, by sending His Son into our world (John 3:16), born as a human baby and fully capable of suffering.

God faced an issue: How to introduce us to the persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to relate to us in a new covenant way (through the Son’s suffering and death on a cross), without diminishing their divine natures. The full answer is a mystery, but how amazing that He somehow solved the dilemma being unable to suffer by sending Christ to be our substitutionary sacrifice (atonement) and take the wrath we deserved? Only the God/man Jesus could be divine, yet human, and suffer what He did for us.

Immutability. Has to do with being unchanging, as stated in Malachi 3:6, “Because I, the LORD, have not changed, you descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed.” In His essence, in His attributes, and in His counsel, God is permanently the same. Unlike us, who are always learning, developing, and experiencing new things, God is already perfect and complete. There is no advanced level for Him to develop to—He is perfect already; there is zero unrealized potential in God!

This is a comfort to His people, that His truths, promises, and prophecies are thus utterly dependable. Unlike many man-made religions, we do not have a capricious god figure who is ever changing and swinging in moods (like us), one who must be appeased. Our God is constant. Even when He revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush event (Exodus 3), He said His Name is “I AM who I AM” in verse 14. This literally means “He exists because of Himself.” No one else can say such a thing—we all exist because of God giving life through our parents. This points to His eternity as the one who is and will be. Thus, He defined Himself to us as the One unchanging factor in our entire existence. And “Great is His Faithfulness”!

Alternatively, if one rejects God’s lordship over themselves, they will face an unchanging judge who has already revealed Himself as One who yields a swift sword and promises to avenge His children (Romans 12:19). It is very important to understand there is not a God of the Old Testament who differs from the God of the New Testament. He has always been, always will be 100% loving, merciful, & just, among other qualities.

Applications to Us.

1. As we discuss these attributes, do you find yourself encouraged that God is not like us?
2. Has it ever been your impression that the God of the OT was harsh and judgmental but then Jesus showed up in the NT to reveal God as a new, more loving version? This lesson should assure you God has not changed through the Bible but revealed more about Himself in a continuous pattern of increasing revelation. He intended to save us by Jesus’ sacrifice from the time of Eden (see reference to the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15) and then purposed to deliver us from sin’s enslavement to freely live with Him. Christianity was not God’s “Plan B”!

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.

Contact me:

ron.comoglio@capitolcom.org

334-476-9333

capitolcom.org/state/alabama/