

## **Attributes of God (Outline)**

### **Knowing God to Participate in His Divine Nature**

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“His divine power has given us ...Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” 2 Pet. 1:3-4

#### **Introduction**

This morning I want to start a new series on a very important theme, “The attributes of God”, meaning, the character of God! I remember, talking with an old preacher, few years ago, who was very upset with someone who preached on the ‘attributes of God.’ His argument was that it is too solemn, a sacred subject that we human beings are not supposed to talk about! I understood his argument – it was like the Jewish people who refused to spell out the name ‘Yehova’; because it was considered, irreverential; so, they pronounced, ‘YHW’ without the vowels!

I personally believe that there is nothing wrong with looking into the Bible to discuss the attributes of God. In fact, I believe that it is essential that we discuss the attributes of God. We are living in a world which questions and even denies the existence of a God. Even among those who believe in the existence of a God, many are uncomfortable to accept the idea of a personal God; at best, they’ll settle for an impersonal, emotionless Supreme Being which is in control of the Universe, out of necessity, without which the universe will be in chaos! However, the God whom we find in the Scriptures is not an impersonal God, instead, a very personal God, who is perfect in his character, a small portion of which is that we human beings possess, because we were created in his image. Therefore, I believe, we must discuss, study and even emulate his attributes in our lives so that the One True God will be recognized and glorified in our generation and the generations to follow!

This is how the great preacher and author, Charles Spurgeon explained the need of studying ‘the attributes of God,’ “The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the doings, and the existence of the great God which he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can comprehend and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go on our way with the thought, “Behold I am wise.” But when we come to this master science, finding that our plumbline cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought “I am but of yesterday and know nothing.”

In other words, (in simple language) ‘while the lack of proper knowledge of God makes us shallow, prideful and self-content; the true knowledge of God makes us wise, humble and more dependent on God!’ This is exactly what the Holy Spirit spoke through saint Peter in the first century. That is what we read this morning from 2 Peter chapter 1, “His divine power has given us ...Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (read) The sum total is this: ‘It is through the knowledge of God that we participate in his divine nature.’ The ultimate purpose of our call – every Christian’s call is to participate in

his divine nature, ‘and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.’ The process of participating in the ‘divine nature’ began when we first got saved and invited Christ into our hearts. At that very moment, we were also given the divine power to live a victorious and godly life. However, this divine power is invoked in us only through the knowledge of him who called us. It is not the knowledge about God; it is the knowledge of him – knowledge of his goodness, his holiness, his love, his mercy, his immensity, his infiniteness, his faithfulness and all his divine nature – divine attributes! The more we know of his divine nature, the more of his divine power will be operational in our life that we will attain victory over the ‘corruption in the world caused by evil desires!’ That is the reason why this study of the nature of God - the attributes of God is so important.

You and I were created in the image of God – with the nature of God! Although sin has corrupted this nature within us, though Christ we regained the divine power to be restored to the divine image and nature! Our restoration and conformity to the divine nature began when we accepted Christ as our savior. As we increase our knowledge of God through the Word of God our divine nature increases or in other words, day by day, we become ‘more mature to the whole measure and fullness of Christ’ as we read in Eph. Chapter 4:13. In 1 Jn. 3:2 we read, “...but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” That is our ultimate hope.

### Conclusion

Let me try to conclude here. The ultimate purpose of our call is to participate in the divine nature of Christ. This begins when we join with Christ in our personal salvation. It continues as we grow in our knowledge of Christ. The more we know Christ, the more victorious we will be in overcoming the temptations of the world and to participate daily in his divine nature!

### Questions for Discussion:

1. Is it wrong to study God, considering who God is and who we are?
  2. What does Spurgeon recommend that the study of God would do for us?
  3. What is the purpose of knowing the attributes (nature of God) according to 2 Pet. 1:3-4?
  4. How can the knowledge of God help us to escape the corruption in the world?
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