

Sermon by Bob Brown on Sunday AM 8/23/09
"Attributes of God 1"

As we begin this series on the attributes of God I want you to realize that I will be using some big words. Don't be alarmed though, I will also define them in terms that we can all understand. I also want you listening and those reading these words to understand that I will be relying heavily upon the work of Herman Bavinck's, The Doctrine of God published by Baker Book House, (1979), for the formulation of ideas in this series. So learn with me as we grow deeper in our understanding of our Great God.

For you and me to understand about the attributes of God we must know Him and His nature. We cannot know God or His nature until we know His names. We can't know His names until He reveals them to us, through His written Word.

I am going to begin from the premise that the majority of you listening to my voice or reading this on-line know God. If you don't know the Lord, I know that you really do want to. Each one of us has a desire to know that we are not alone and that Someone somewhere is in control. So, with that in mind we go back to the beginning, Genesis 1:1. Genesis means, "beginning. In the first verse of the first book of the Bible we read: *"In the beginning God"* in Hebrew that is "bereshith Elohim". We begin with the name of God, the name by which He chose to reveal Himself.

Elohim, means "powerful, strong, or forerunner." This name is used to refer to God as "The Almighty," the Creator of the universe and Lord over nature and mankind in general. The name Elohim is a designation of relationship, to tell us that God is closer than we think.

It is very important that we know whom we are serving and that we are serving the One who knows us. But we can't pretend to put God in a nice neat little box and say that we understand Him. We may know Him, love Him and even serve Him, but we can never fully understand Him.

God is the absolute Sovereign One who treats each of His created ones with absolute fairness, even though before Him we have no rights. Christianity is not a matter of rights. Actually, it is the exact opposite, religion and rights oppose each other. It is wrong for us to try to view God's justice and His grace as being contrary to each other.

Religion is a moral relationship and Christianity is the perfectly spiritual and absolutely moral religion. God's relationship to man is neither that of a master toward his servant, nor that of a government toward its subjects; it is that of a father toward his children. It is a relationship that is, throughout the Bible explained in the family. God therefore, must be seen by each of us as love.

There are two basic categories that we look at as the attributes of God, the Natural and the Moral—the comprehensible and the incomprehensible.

The natural attributes of God are: Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Eternity.

The Moral attributes of God are: Holiness, Righteousness, Faithfulness, Mercy and Loving-kindness, and Love.

Let's look at them in the order in which I've just listed them. We begin with the Omniscience of God. We define this word like this: "God knows all things and is absolutely perfect in His knowledge".

As we read through the Scripture, we get a general sense that people knew of His Omniscience. Let's look at a few verses of Scripture together.

Job 11: 7-8 *"Can you fathom the mysteries of God?" Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens - what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know?"*

Job 37:15-16 *"Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes the lightning flash? Do you know how the clouds hang poised, these wonders of Him who is perfect in knowledge?"*

Psalms 147:5 *"Great is our Lord and mighty in power, his understanding has no limits."*

Isaiah 40:28 *"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom."*

Romans 11:33-34 *"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out. Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has ever been His counselor?"*

1 John 3:19-20 *"This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything."*

In the Old and New Testaments, we get the sense that the prophets and the followers of Jesus all knew the same thing we know, that God is there and that He is not silent. That He is searching us out, presenting Himself to us and letting us find Him.

God is there, for those who seek Him. Among those in intellectual, humanistic circles, who are known to be skeptics, atheists and agnostics, there is a desire to know that we are not alone and that there is someone in control. When Ingersoll was accused of being an atheist, he indignantly refuted the charge saying: "I am not an

atheist; I do not say that there is no God; I am an agnostic; I do not know that there is a God."

We are the light of the world that people who do not know there is a God will see, and when convinced that we are real, will want to know Him.

Many of us were raised on a religion of moral control: Do this, don't do that. And all around us is a religion of self-help. You can feel better, you can get out of debt, overcome your fears or six easy lessons to get rid of lust. When they don't work, we feel betrayed. The incomprehensible, immutable God was not the focus of self-change, so many feel it isn't real. Let's get real. The life of sanctification is real, it is work, but it is real.