

# The attributes of God

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev W.Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] We shall now turn to the book of Job, chapter 11, and our text for this evening is verse 7.

Job, chapter 11, and verse 7. Canst thou by searching find out God?

Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? Canst thou by searching find out God?

Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? Is it possible by searching to find out God? Is it possible to discover him unto perfection?

How great our God is. You cannot put limits upon him. He is unsearchable and indescribable.

[ 1 : 08 ] You cannot look at God through a telescope and describe his features. You cannot take him and put him under a microscope and note his characteristics.

You cannot in any way dissect him or analyse him. God is too great. He is too glorious. He is too high and lifted up.

He is unsearchable. And yet, he is not unknowable. Because he has revealed himself to us, it's possible for us to know him.

Of course, we can't know him totally. Because, again, God can't reveal himself to us totally.

Because you and I have just finite, limited minds.

There is only a limited amount of material that we can cope with in our minds. And God is so great, so immense, so enormous in all his attributes and characteristics.

[ 2 : 09 ] It's impossible for us to grasp. But only a small fraction of the character of God and the glory of God. We can only see, as it were, the hem of his garment.

The fringes. The outline. The idea. Our duty, though, is to search.

To seek to discover more and more of God. God has given us a revelation of himself. He's given us the Bible, which sets before us, clearly, the kind of God he is.

And sets before us so much about himself. And our duty is to search the scriptures daily. To find out more about God. To see into God's word so that we will get more of a vision of his glory.

And the more we discover of the greatness and glory and majesty and profundity of God. The more we will worship. The more we will adore.

[ 3 : 21 ] The more we will glorify and enjoy this great God. Our duty is to glorify him. And there's pleasure, enjoyment in glorifying him.

And the way to glorify God. Is to search the scriptures. And find out more and more about God.

And praise and worship and honour and obey. This great God of heaven. Tonight I would like us to think somewhat.

As the Lord enables us. On the greatness of God. And on the characteristics or the attributes of God.

As these are revealed to us in scripture. And these Sunday nights we are drawing themes out of the confession of faith.

[ 4 : 21 ] Last week we looked at scripture. The Bible. Which is dealt with of course in the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Tonight I would like us to think about the character of God. The greatness and glory of our God. Which is the subject of the second chapter in the confession.

The first thing I want us to notice about God. Is that he is a spirit. A spirit. He doesn't have a body like you and me.

You can't feel him. Or touch him. Or hold him. Or see him. Or hear him. With your ordinary ears. He doesn't have a substance as you and I have.

His substance is spiritual. We have a body. With hands. With head. With arms and feet. You can divide our body into parts.

[ 5 : 23 ] But you can't divide God. God is indivisible spirit. Pure spirit. He doesn't have parts. There are no bits to God.

He is unity. And he is perfection. He is spirit. Of course. The scriptures talk about God. As having hands and arms and ears.

The arm of the Lord stretched out to save us. The ear of the Lord bowing down to hear our cry. The eye of God upon us wherever we go. Whatever we do.

The scripture talks in that way. Because the scripture bows down to our low intelligence. Our low ability to understand God.

And so uses anthropomorphisms. In talking about God. It uses a human way of talking. A figurative way.

[ 6 : 23 ] Talking of God as if he were like us. He's not like us. He's spirit. He lives in a different realm from us. He is not subject to our senses.

We cannot pick him up with our senses. But yet in order to talk in a meaningful way of God. We have to think of him. Somewhat in terms of ourselves.

We can only think in human terms. And so the scriptures talk about the arm of the Lord reaching down to pick us up. His ear to listen to us. His voice speaking to us and so on.

Talking of God as if he were a man. And yet God is spirit. God is a spirit.

And they that worship him. Must worship him. In spirit. And in truth. Man by searching cannot find God.

[ 7 : 23 ] We cannot reach to him. He is so mysterious. He is so glorious. He is so different from us. He dwells in another realm. He is spiritual. We are so physical.

So earthly. So tied down to the world. And the things we see. And we feel. And we eat. And all these are the things that seem to mean so much to us. But God is spirit.

God is in a different realm. Man by searching cannot find God. And yet praise God. God has revealed himself to us.

He has not left us in darkness. He has not left us like the animals. Without any knowledge or understanding. But he has created us in his own image. And placed a sense of God.

And knowledge and consciousness of himself within us. He has made us aware of himself. So that even the darkest heathen. Have a sense of religion. Have a conscience.

[ 8 : 21 ] Have that deep down understanding. That there is a great spiritual God. To whom we are responsible. Man by searching.

Cannot find God. But God reveals himself to us. And praise God that we have the Bible. That sets before us. Him.

Who is a spirit. The second thing I want us to notice about God. Is that he is self-existent.

Self-existent. We are creatures. Dependent upon God. We came into existence due to God. We are dependent each moment upon God.

Our origin was in the hand of God. As he took the dust of the ground. And shaped it into a man. And breathed into it the breath of life. But not just our origin.

[ 9 : 22 ] Each day of our lives. Our existence is dependent upon God. We need God to give us life. We need God to keep our bodies in operation.

We need God to uphold us. To sustain us. To give us the breath of life. To give us food. To give us existence. The God of providence keeps us in being.

We are dependent upon him. And when we die. We go immediately to stand before him. To give account. He is the one. On whom we have. On whom we are dependent.

But God himself is independent. He is self-existent. How often little children. When you try and teach them the story of creation.

How often they'll turn to you and say. But who made God? Who made God? Nobody.

[ 10 : 19 ] God made himself. God is self-determining. Self-existent. His existence is in himself.

He was always there. And he is dependent upon no one. And when there was nobody but God.

When there was nothing but God. God was there. And God was existing. And God was happy.

God is self-existent. How different from you and me. Man by searching cannot find God. God is so high and lifted up.

So exalted. God is so dependent. And you and I grovel around. Down here below. You and I are so dependent each moment. We might despise God.

We might blaspheme him. We might swear and curse at God. But yet. We are in God's hand. Held up each moment. God is but to say the word.

[ 11 : 21 ] And we are crushed by him. We are cast by him. Into that pit of shame. Praise God. He sustains us. Praise God for his mercy.

And his kindness to him. The God who is so great and glorious. The self-existent God. Oh that we would worship him. We who are his creatures.

So dependent upon him. For every moment of our existence. Oh that we would worship him. Fall down on our knees before him.

And give him the place. That is his due. The third attribute of God. That I would like to bring before you.

Is his eternity. Each of us have a beginning. But God had no beginning. Some of you are young.

[ 12 : 21 ] Six, seven years old. Eight years old. Others of you are old. Sixty, seventy. Maybe eighty years old.

Yet we all have a beginning. No matter how old we are. There is a day. That is our birthday. There is a day that we can.

Think back to. A day when we come into our existence. And this world around us. Is an old world. It looks very old to us.

Scientists. Scientists. Some of them. Claim that the world. Is four thousand.

Million years old. They claim that this universe. Where we live. Is ten thousand. Million years old.

They don't know that God.

[ 13 : 23 ] Has created the world. And God created the world. Not so long ago. But even the unbelieving scientist. Has to admit.

That the world is not eternal. Even those who reject. The idea of a creator. And a God. Who made all things. Out of nothing. Even they must admit.

That this world. Couldn't have been there. Forever. It is a dying world. It is a decaying world. An ageing world. And they can go back. Yes. Thousands of millions of years. But there is.

A point beyond. Which they cannot go back. And they cannot say. That the world is eternal. And even the universe. Which they say. Is ten thousand. Million years old. They cannot go.

Go back any further. No. There comes a point. When they say. This universe. Must have come into existence. How they don't know. But it must have come into existence.

[ 14 : 17 ] It's not an eternal universe. But there is one who is eternal. There is a God. Who always was there.

And always will be there. The Alpha. The Omega. The beginning. And the end. The first. And the last. Dependent on no one.

Created by no one. Creator of all. Uncreated God. Oh that you and I would worship him.

That we would glorify him. That we would realize how temporal we are. How we are here just for a few fleeting moments.

In the eternity of God. One day is with the Lord. As a thousand years. And a thousand years is one day. And what are you and I. So dependent on him.

[ 15 : 21 ] Given these few years in this life. In order to serve him. What use do we make. Out of our days. And our years here. Man by searching.

Cannot find God. Man cannot understand eternity. We try and draw. For ourselves. Illustrations of eternity.

Think of a little bird. Picking a grain of sand. From a shore in Britain. And taking it to Ireland.

Dropping that grain of sand in Ireland.

Think of a different bird doing that. Once. Every thousand years. Taking one grain of sand. How long would it take. An innumerable number of birds.

To take all the grains of sand. From that shore to Ireland. Or from every shore in Britain to Ireland. If only one grain was being transported. Every thousand years.

[ 16 : 28 ] And yet even if we could think of. That enormous span of time. That it would take for that. To take place. That would only be. But a moment.

In eternity. Never ending. Going on. And on. And on. And on. Friend remember.

Although you're not eternal. In the way God is eternal. You have a beginning. God didn't. Your soul. Is eternal. In the sense.

That it will never die. Here. For these few years. But then. The never ending eternity. In front of us. As the tree falls.

So shall it lie. As you die. So you will spend your eternity. Without a second chance. In heaven. Or in hell.

[ 17 : 28 ] Oh to seek the Lord. Oh to redeem the time. Because the days are evil. To make use.

Of our opportunities in life. The fourth attribute of God. Is his immensity. How large God is. How great he is. There are no bounds upon him. God reaches everywhere. God is here. In Glasgow. God is down in London.

God is in New York. Or Moscow. Delhi. Or Melbourne. God is all over. And all over at the same time. God is in this world. God is at the.

Outermost star. Of the universe. God is in heaven. God is in hell. God is everywhere. Everywhere at once.

[ 18 : 30 ] How great. Man by searching. Cannot find God. We are limited. Just to. This little piece. Of ground. Where we are here. This. This building here.

How difficult it is. For us to think of somebody. Who is here. Who is there. Who is miles away. Millions of miles away. Light years away. And yet.

God is everywhere. At once. And more than that. God is. God is. In his totality. Everywhere. At once.

So that it's not. A little bit of God. That's here. And a little bit of God. That's in France. And a little bit of God. That's in Russia. And a little bit of God. That's in Australia.

And a little bit of God. That's in heaven. God is everywhere. In his fullness. God is here. The person.

[ 19 : 27 ] The living God. Is here tonight. In his fullness. And God is in the Baptist church tonight. In his fullness. God is. God is where his people meet together to worship him.

Tonight. God is there. Not a part of him. But the fullness of God. And if you're a Christian tonight. God the Holy Spirit lives in your heart.

Dwells there. Not just a bit of the spirit. But the fullness. The Holy Spirit. In his wholeness. He lives in me.

He lives in you. He isn't limited by space. He is everywhere at once. And everywhere. In his fullness. How immense.

How great. How difficult for you and I to understand. How can we grasp. A God who is so immense. A God who is everywhere. At once.

[ 20 : 31 ] Because God is everywhere at once. There's nowhere that we can hide from him. Ascend I in heaven.

Lord our death. There in hell I lie. Take I the morning wings. And dwell in utmost parts of sea. Even there is God.

You can go nowhere. But God is there. And God is seeing. God is watching. God is assessing. And if you are one of God's people.

God is supporting and helping you. That leads us on to another attribute of God. The fact that he is the all knowing God.

He is omniscient. He knows everything. He is of infinite intelligence.

[ 21 : 40 ] Everything is obvious to him. At once. If you and I want to learn something. You have to start studying. Some of you here are students.

And you know how hard it is to study. You have to spend hours reading today. You have to spend hours reading books. And listening to lectures.

And doing practicals. And writing out this. And studying that. And walking it over in your mind. And gradually you build up knowledge. you forget this and then you have to relearn it and so it goes on and you struggle towards attaining this knowledge but not so with God God knows everything at once he knows everything that there is to know there's no knowledge but God knows it when you and I are studying in a sense you could say we are studying the mind of God we are coming to grips with a little portion of what God knows discovering something that God already knows we are walking in his footsteps coming to grips with the knowledge that he gives to man the all knowing God who knows everything who knows the secrets of our hearts there's God who sees everything that takes place who sees not just outwardly like an eye looking down from heaven like a satellite that keeps an eye on everything in the world no this God sees right in to the brains of every man

and woman to the innermost recesses of our thoughts our minds how great he is man by searching cannot find God you cannot find out the almighty unto perfection you can only find out a little about God it passes our knowledge we cannot grasp this a God who is so great so glorious so immense so all knowing so intelligent and we so finite and so limited and so small how dare we be proud how dare we boast of our achievements how dare we think that we are clever or bright or intelligent or anything else we are nothing in comparison to the great and glorious and all knowing God sixth attribute of God is his justice his justice and his perfect justice frightening for the sinner because the sinner shall not go unpunished he is just terribly just he will punish every sinner the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that obey not God he is just terribly just the all seen God who knows everything about us and who assesses all our actions and all our relationships and every thought passing through our minds he is just that he will punish sin so just that he has prepared a hell for the devil and his angels and those who go on ignoring him and rejecting him they shall be cast into hell along with the wicked one or the devil a God who is so just that not only did he make a hell but he also made a cross for his son and when his son carried our sins and stood in our place his son had to die on the cross so just that he couldn't pardon even his own son when he carried the weight of our sin and the son of God had to die paying the wages of sin receiving the wages of sin had to die on the cross of Calvary ah yes a God who is so just that everyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved and no sinner no matter how sinful who accepts Christ as saviour can possibly end up in hell because God is just and the justice of God is our great comfort if we are God's people for there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus praise him we cannot be condemned because Christ was punished in our place and if Christ was punished for our sins

God's not going to demand double punishment for the sins punishing Christ and then punishing us if we have Christ as our saviour if we trust in him and have received him and put our hope and confidence in Christ then we are saved God is so just that no Christian will ever end up in hell you cannot possibly end up there the devil says you're doomed the accuser of the brethren he points to all the things you do wrong and he and he tries to make you feel miserable but friend God is just he's not like the devil a liar he's just and because of his justice you who trust in Jesus will enjoy the eternal inheritance that Christ has purchased for you in heaven oh you say how can God be just when recently we have seen this terrible earthquake in Mexico and we've seen good and bad righteous and wicked suffering together little babies crushed in the rubble how can God be just and allow such a terrible earthquake to take place with all the suffering that it involves let us remember what Christ said about certain people on whom the tower of Siloam fell and they were killed he said do you think that they were greater sinners than others no I tell you in no way but except you repent you shall all likewise perish the Mexican earthquake shows us the justice of God because it shows us that God punishes sin not that these

[ 29 : 43 ] Mexicans were bigger sinners than others but we're all sinners and we all deserve an earthquake and one day every sinner who does not receive pardon for their sins will get much worse than an earthquake an eternity in hell why does the earthquake take place it takes place as a warning to you and me as a foreshadowing of the judgment to come a showing forth of what is yet to take place it's as it were a signal from God that there is such a thing as justice on high good and bad suffer in Mexico ah yes but let's remember that there is none good no not one we're all sinners and we all deserve the wrath and curse of God and unless we repent one day we too will experience an earthquake a terrible earthquake an earthquake when this world will shake and everything that is in it will shake and will shake until it shakes out of existence and you and I if we do not repent will be shaken into that pit of hell to suffer there forever more the earthquake is a warning to us the seventh characteristic of God is his holiness and how holy he is the God who gives us the law and he doesn't act outside the law himself the law of God is an expression of his nature that tells us the kind of God he is he is pure he is holy he keeps the law himself he is the law giver but he hates sin he is so holy that sin is abhorrent to him it's vile in his sight he cannot stand it how we ought to fear the Lord holy holy holy is the Lord

God of hosts and Isaiah cried woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips the holy Isaiah the godly man the evangelist the prophet woe is me I am undone for I am a man of unclean lips and who spoke better and holier things than Isaiah spoke and yet I am a man of unclean lips holy is the Lord pure hating sin oh that we would understand something of the holiness of God that we might respect him and fear him man by searching cannot find God we cannot find out the almighty to

perfection only in such a limited way can we understand his holiness and yet even in that limited way we can see that he is a consuming fire against sin how that ought to affect our conduct we who claim to be the people of God let us show the nature of our father let us display his holiness let us not bring shame upon them let us live holy lives be ye holy for I am holy says the Lord an eighth characteristic of God is his power he is omnipotent all powerful no limit to his power remember at creation the power of God's word

God said let there be light that's all he just said let there be light just a word let there be light and suddenly the darkness was dispelled and the light shot he said let there be a sky a firmament a division between the waters and the clouds and those down below and it happened he said let there be land and it came into existence let there be animals let there be fishes and it happened what power this God has we think of the power of the atom bomb nuclear power how destructive these bombs could be we are told how they could devastate this world and blast it to pieces yet God is more powerful than the atom bomb because God is the one who at the very beginning created the nucleus of the atom brought together these particles and bound them together in the atom yes every atom that is in this world brought together by the force of God the all powerful God that holds the universe in his hand how great how glorious how amazing how indescribable is the power of God and yet puny little man defies his maker and God says do not commit adultery and puny little man goes and wallows in his own filth and God says do not steal man goes and steals and God says do not break my holy day and man goes and breaks it and God says do not lie do not covet and yet how silly man is rejecting

God the great the powerful the glorious the almighty God little man spits in the face of his creator the ninth characteristic attribute of God is truth God is almighty all powerful and yet there's something God cannot do there's one thing we're told in scripture that God cannot do almighty all powerful as he is there's one thing he cannot do God cannot lie he cannot lie God is truth his threats he will carry out and just as surely his promises shall be fulfilled his covenant stands forever sure and steadfast his word remains in heaven settled fast unto all generations his faithfulness doth last the mountains shall be removed shall be removed the hills out of their place but God's word God's covenant stands forever how great our God is we're such deceitful creatures full of pretense and hypocrisy and lies but God his word it stands and finally the tenth attribute of God is his goodness his goodness how good he is how good he is first of all to all his creatures he feeds the ravens as we're reading together in that chapter that displays the greatness of God in comparison to the smallness of man that chapter in Job he feeds the young lions he feeds the sparrows the fowls of the air they don't sow or gather into barns and yet

[ 39 : 37 ] God feeds them he looks after them and then we come to man and even the wicked the righteous and the wicked God causes the rain to descend of the righteous and the wicked causes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust and his providence and his providence he blesses all his creatures and then we come to his own people the Lord's people and how good he is to them them whom he has loved from all eternity them for whom he gave his son to die how good God is being merciful to the miserable how good he is pardoning the sinner how good he is long suffering towards them that are constantly angering him with their sins bearing him bearing with them day after day a stiff necked and rebellious people how often you have tormented

God and angered him with your own sins and yet you're still here today on mercy's ground the goodness of God his mercy his love his kindness how great is his love who knows the height of God's love who knows its depth who knows its length and its breadth it is unsearchable it is indescribable who by searching can find out God who can find out the almighty unto perfection his amazing love his mercy his pity his compassion how wonderful it is his amazing grace and I wonder what is your response to God's amazing grace do you love God do you trust in him do you obey him or do you reject his love and push him away and say no I'm quite happy the way I am no I don't want Jesus

Christ I don't want the saviour don't want him interfering in my life just now don't want him upsetting things tomorrow will do for seeking the Lord not today is that the way you deal with the love and kindness of the Lord or are you rather seeking the Lord while he may be found putting your trust in him while he is near God calls on you tonight in his mercy in his love and compassion calls to you and he says put your trust in me look to me and be saved all ye ends of the earth no matter where you are no matter who you are let us pray O Lord our God we pray that thou would help us to see and to understand and to appreciate the greatness and the glory of our God how wonderful thou art

in all thy ways how indescribably great oh that we would fear thee  
O Lord oh that we would respect thee help us we pray thee to bow the knee to thee to give thee the  
place that thou shalt have to worship thee and glorify thee to search the scriptures and to come to  
know thee better and as we come to know thee more and more that we would lift up our voices to  
praise the living God to exalt the God of heaven O help us we pray thee and leave us not in our  
darkness and in our sin for Jesus sake Amen Amen