

The Attributes of God - Part 1

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald explores the attributes of God, emphasizing His greatness, omniscience, and intimate care for humanity.

Duration: 39:30

Scripture: Job 26:14, Job 36:26, Psalm 56:8, Psalm 104:32

Topics: "Attributes of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the greatness of God and His ability to behold and count the things in heaven and on earth. The preacher references Psalm 113:6, which states that God humbles Himself to behold the things in the heavens. He also mentions Psalm 147:4, which highlights God's ability to count the number of stars and call them by name. The preacher uses examples from Job and Habakkuk to further illustrate the greatness and power of God, emphasizing that human language can only begin to describe His majesty.

Transcript

It's a joy to be back at Mid-South again after a number of years. Some old friends and a lot of folks I haven't met before, so I hope to get to know you all before the end of the week. You can make it easy by coming and tapping on my shoulder and say my name is, okay? It's also great to be back with Bob Clark.

I remember being here years ago with him. I still remember his messages very vividly, but that's really a test I think of ministry when you can remember what the man spoke on. Really made an impression.

This week I want to be talking to you about the attributes of God. What is God like? And I'd like to read a couple of verses at the outset in the book of Job. Job chapter 36 and verse 26.

Job chapter 36 and verse 26. It says, behold, God is great and we know him not. Neither can the number of his years be searched out.

And chapter 37 and verse 5 says, God thundereth marvelously with his voice. Great things doeth he which we cannot comprehend. The greatest thought that can enter the human mind is the contemplation of God.

I think it's wonderful that God has given us minds with which we can think about his greatness, his majesty, his wisdom, his love, and his power. That's the highest occupation of a human being, the contemplation of God. What do we mean when we speak about God? The shorter catechism years ago, I

suppose it still does, has a very good definition of God.

It says, God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. That's a good definition of God. God is spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in all his attributes.

I often think of some of the scientists and philosophers and the great intellect of this world, and I think how they live and they die without ever bringing God into their consciousness. And I think, what a terrible prostitution of the human mind. It's a terrible thing to waste a mind.

And any mind that has never grappled with the thought of God is a wasted mind. And the more we think about the Lord, the more we become like him. It's a marvelous transformation that takes place in the human life.

We're changed by beholding. It says that in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18. But we all, with unveiled faith, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

Changed by beholding, by gazing upon the Lord himself. Now, we're going to be looking tonight at some verses that deal with the greatness of God. And these verses are a study in human language.

And I'm going to point out to you that as we go along, it's going to seem as if the words bend under the weight of the ideas. And the reason for that is that no human language can fully describe God. And again I say, the words seem to bend under the weight of the ideas.

And there's something else wonderful about this subject that we're going to take up. And that is that God is so great that no human mind can fully comprehend Him. And not all minds of all people who've ever lived or ever will live can fully take Him in.

Because God is infinite, and God is greater than we are. If my mind could fully take Him in, then my mind would be greater than God. So when I come to the Word of God and to the study of God, then I just take it for granted that I'm just going to be like a little boy at the edge of the ocean, and I'm going to dip my bucket into the ocean, and the bucket will be filled, but the ocean won't be emptied.

The ocean won't be exalted. The ocean won't be any poorer than it was before. My bucket will be filled, but the ocean will go on just as it always has.

And that's the way it is with the study of God. We can fill our minds with the most wonderful thoughts about the Lord that we still haven't scratched the surface. Let's look at some verses in the Bible in which the Spirit of God seeks to present to our minds something of the greatness of our God.

The first is in Job chapter 26, and verse 14. And I'm going to read it to you from the Old English Revised Version. Job chapter 26, and verse 14.

Let me just say that in the preceding verses, Job has been giving one of the marvelous descriptions of the greatness and power of God. It seems he's almost exhausted human vocabulary. He has ransacked the alphabet to create in the minds of us, his readers, something of the infinite greatness of this God.

And notice what he says in the last verse of chapter 26. Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways. King James says, Lo, these are parts of his ways.

The Revised Version says, Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways. In other words, when Job had finished describing the greatness of God, he said, look, friends, I've just been in the suburbs. I never got down into the center.

Isn't that wonderful? These are the outskirts of his ways. And how little a portion is heard of him, or how small a whisper do we hear of him, but the thunder of his power, who can understand? He's been describing something of the power of God, and he said, look here, friends, all I've given you is a whisper. And if the whisper of his power is so great, what would the thunder of his power ever be? And he leaves you to answer the question.

Marvelous, isn't it? Marvelous to hear. Let me read the verse again. I love it.

Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways. And how small a whisper do we hear of him, but the thunder of his power, who can understand? The answer is no one can fully understand it, although we'll be thinking about it this week. Psalm 56 and verse 8. Psalm 56 and verse 8. It says in verse 8 of Psalm 56, Thou tellest my wonderings, put thou my tears into thy bottle, are they not in thy book? What does that mean? Well, the word tell there, thou tellest my wonderings, it's the word for count.

In other words, you go into a bank and you go to a teller. The teller counts the money as you give it to him or as you take it from him. He counts it.

That's what a teller is. And God is a teller. And it says thou tellest my wonderings.

Some other versions of the Bible, I think, says tossing. Does your Bible say tossing? No, but I mean the next word, thou tellest my wonderings. What it really means is that when we're on the bed at night and we're tossing in the bed, you know, and you're like a door on its hinges.

Now you're on this side and now you're, you know, you're flailing all over the bed in the course of the night. God counts every such movement. You say, I could care less about them.

All I want is, I know it. All you want to do is sleep. But God counts every one of them.

And he does something else that I think is tremendously comforting. He counts your tears. He puts your tears in a bottle and keeps an accurate count of them.

What a great God he is. And you know, there's an awful lot of people in this world. How does he keep track of the tears of all his people? Some of you here tonight.

You couldn't have an audience of this size without having broken hearts, without having hearts going through times of testing and trial, without having grieving hearts. What a comfort to know that we have a God who enters into all of our afflictions, all of our sorrows, and he puts our tears in a bottle and he keeps accurate count of every one of them. We speak of the omniscience of God, his perfect knowledge of everything.

He counts our tossings and numbers our tears. Psalm 104, if you will please. Psalm 104, and verse 32.

You know, if any of you love literature and good writing, you should love the Bible. We believe, of course, that it is the inspired, infallible word of God. But I'll tell you, it's very hard to find language that's as great as this.

Psalm 104, verse 32, it says, He looketh on the earth and it trembles. He toucheth the hills and they smoke. Now, what does that say? Well, I come from earthquake country, you know, California.

What produces an earthquake? It says here that all God has to do is look on the earth and it'll shake. It's speaking about an earthquake in the first part of that verse, and the second part of the verse speaks about a volcanic eruption. Mount St. Helens, was it? What a tremendous display of the power of God.

He touched the mount. Tremendous explosion and lava flowing all over the place. Tremendous manifestation of the power of God.

It didn't take a clenched fist to do it. It didn't take a flexing of his muscles to do it. All he had to do was just touch it and it took place.

Psalm 113, verse 6. Psalm 113, verse 6. I hope you love the Bible as much as I do. It says, verse 6, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth. It's really great, you know.

How can the Spirit of God describe the greatness of God? Well, it says, He has to bow low to behold the things in the heavens. Mind you, I can't behold them if I stand on my tiptoes. And you can't either.

But God has to stoop to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth. And then I'll always love Psalm 147. Psalm 147, verse 4. Psalm 147, verse 4. It says, He telleth.

There's our word telleth again. It means count. He counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names.

Dear friends, do you know how many stars there are? Well, the fact of the matter is you don't. And neither do I. And neither does any other living person know how many stars there are. Man is working on a telescope now that will penetrate seven times deeper into the universe than he's ever gone before.

Sir James Jeans said that there are probably as many stars as there are grains of sand on all the seashores of the world. Now think about that for a minute. There are probably as many stars in the heavens as there are grains of sand on all the seashores of the world.

It's an interesting thing to me that Sir James Jeans would say that because he brings the stars and the sand together. Did you ever hear that before? Sure. When God told Abraham to come out and promised him that his seed would be as the stars of the heavens in multitude and the sands by the seashore innumerable, God put them together long before Sir James Jeans did.

Remarkable, isn't it? Could I pause here and ask you, why did God make so many stars? I mean, we would have been satisfied with a quarter of the number, wouldn't we? Why did he make so many? I like to think about these things. You know, when Abraham went out that night and looked up at the stars, he saw 2,000 stars. 2,000.

That's all. With just regular vision. With telescopic vision.

Well, let me put it this way. We don't have any words to describe that number. Our language... I don't know what the biggest number we have in language.

I hear people talking about zillions, whatever a zillion is, or a jillion. There's no word to describe the number of the stars. All you can say is innumerable.

Why did he make so many? Do you know why he made them? So you and I would get some idea of what a great God he is. That's why. What a wonderful thing.

Don't ever be too spiritual to go out at night and look up at the stars and adore their creator. I'll tell you, it's really wonderful. I don't know any study that is most calculated to show man his insignificance than the study of the astronomy.

Tremendous, really. I recommend it to you young people. Take up astronomy, among others.

Take it up as a hobby. Get a telescope and see the greatness of God. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

It really does. It really does. And here it says he numbers the stars and he gives them all a name.

We're not that original in naming children, are we? My parents came from the north of Scotland and my father had a sister and she had a large family. Would you believe there are two Marys in that family? The big Mary and little Mary. I mean, she ran out of names quickly.

But God has a name for all the stars and he never repeats himself. We don't have names for all of them. God does.

And we never will. You know, I'd like you to look back a verse. If you think that's wonderful, look back a verse and it says he healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds.

It's a wonderful thing to know that the God of hosts is the God of Jacob too. The God of the heavenly host is the God of the unworthy Jacob. And the God of the telescope is the God of the microscope as well.

And the God who flung all of those constellations into space is the God who comforts the brokenhearted and heals their wounds as well, binds up their wounds. In verse 3, God is intimately nigh. Similarly, in verse 4, God is infinitely high.

You know, only the Spirit of God would ever put two verses together like verses 3 and 4. Isn't that right? Only the Spirit of God would ever do that. You would never do that. But he does it.

To tell you that that great God of the universe loves you, loves me, is vitally interested in us day by day. Isaiah chapter 6, verse 1. I can really get excited about this. Isaiah chapter 6, verse 1. It says, In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.

Notice, And his train filled the temple. His train filled the temple. What does that mean? You know, we read this all the time and you say, Well, everybody else knows what it means and I won't ask what it means because then they'd know I don't know.

But you'll never become a Bible student that way. Ask, what does that mean? His train filled the temple. Well, first of all, when you think about the word train here, think about the train of a wedding dress.

Here's a bride and she's marching down the middle aisle and the train is fluttering along the floor behind her, right? The train. Here it's speaking about the train of the Lord's glory. That's what it's speaking about, the train of the Lord's glory.

And he's saying, the train of his glory fills the temple. Well, if the train of his glory fills the temple, what must his full glory be? That's the argument. It's arguing from the lesser to the greater.

Let me illustrate it. Supposing there was a wedding in Westminster Abbey or in the greatest cathedral you've ever seen. And supposing the bride's train filled Westminster Abbey.

Man, if her train filled the abbey, what must that wedding dress be like? Huh? Well, that's exactly what it's saying here. The train of the Lord's glory fills the temple. And Isaiah leaves it to you and to me to ask, well, if his train fills the temple, what must the full manifestation of his glory be? And then over in Isaiah 40, that marvelous passage, Isaiah 40, and I'm going to read verses 12 through 17.

I'll just comment as we go along. Isaiah 40, verse 12. Of course, this is one of the great passages in the Old Testament on the greatness of God.

His greatness. It says, Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hands? What does that mean? Well, it means the hand of God is so great that it can contain the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Mediterranean, the Antarctic, the Indian Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, all the waters, lakes, ponds of the world. They can all fit in the palm of his hand.

The hand of God. Marvelous, isn't it, to think that that hand was pierced with nails on the cross of Calvary. But that's what it means.

Who has measured the waters in the palm of his hand and meted out heaven with the span? What does that mean? Well, the span is the distance. Here's my outstretched hand. The span is the difference from my little finger, the tip of my little finger, to the tip of my thumb.

That's the span. And that verse says that God measures the heavens with his span. I hold my hand up and it doesn't cover much of the heavens, does it? The span of the hand of God stretches across the heavens and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure.

He took all the earth on this planet. He could just put it on one of his scales. Oh, what must the scales of God be like? And weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance.

Seems so awesome to us. Especially on planet earth. We think we are the people and wisdom will die with us.

And you know, this world that we live on is just a speck of dust in the universe. It really isn't a speck of dust in the universe. Believe me, it's not even a speck of dust.

And if the world that we live on, the planet we live on isn't a speck of dust, what are you and I? We're less than zero. Ah, but he loves us. That's the thing.

Less than zero, but loved by almighty God. Who has directed the spirit of the Lord of being his counselor? When he made all of this, who did he call in for advice? Nobody. Nobody can advise the Lord.

He's above advice from anybody else. With whom took he counsel and instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment and taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding? The answer is no one. God is self-existent and God is self-sufficient.

He doesn't need anything or anyone outside himself. And he's very capable of doing it all without our help. He did it all without our help.

We weren't even on the scene when he did it all. Behold the nations are as a drop of the bucket. You've just washed your car.

You've dumped out the bucket and there's just a drop or two left in it and you don't worry about it at all, do you? Well, that's what the nations mean to him. The nations are as a drop of the bucket and are counted as a small dust of the balance. Now, we're in a drugstore.

The scene changes quickly and the druggist has those scales and he's been weighing some powder and then dumps it out and there's a little dust left on the scale. That's what the nations are. You know, when the Russian bear rattles his saber, the world trembles.

God doesn't tremble. It's like the dust of the balance to him. Mind you, he never says that about the church.

Church is his body, the body and bride of Christ. The nations are just dust and a drop in the bucket to him. Counted as the small dust of the balance.

Behold, he takes up the isles as a very little thing. Australia. Very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn or the beasts are not sufficient to burn. How can you bring a sacrifice that's acceptable to a God like that? And he's saying, look, if you took all the trees of Lebanon and made one huge bonfire and then took all the animals of Lebanon and placed them on top of that bonfire, it wouldn't be a fitting sacrifice. It wouldn't be a fitting offering for such a God as this.

Do you see how the Spirit of God is trying to take our minds and try to influence them to realize something of the greatness of this God whom we have come to know? Lebanon is not sufficient to burn or the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All the nations before him are as nothing. I love it.

And are counted to him less than nothing. How can you be less than nothing? It's minus zero. That's what it is.

I never heard of it before. And vanity, that means emptiness. To whom then will you liken God or what likeness will you compare with him? Marvelous, isn't it? Marvelous picture of the greatness of God.

Nahum. Turn over to the minor prophet Nahum. Jonah, Micah, Nahum.

Nahum chapter 1 and verse 3. Nahum. Do you find it? Jonah, Micah, Nahum. Habakkuk.

Verse 3. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power and will not at all acquit the wicked. Notice. The Lord has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

Oh, it's great. The Lord has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm. You know, when that whirlwind, that tornado and the storm come, we're kind of helpless.

We just go down the cellar and wait until it's all over. But God doesn't do that. William Cooper in that marvelous poem says he plants his footsteps on the sea and rides above the storms.

Boy, that's great, isn't it? He rides above the storms. He controls the storms. They are his servants.

And that's beautiful, you know. The clouds are the dust of his feet. Did you ever fly in a plane and just as he's going up through the clouds, I mean, they're mountainous, those clouds.

They're what? They're mountainous. They're just dust to God. Spirit of God, using these tremendous pictures of greatness to show us what a wonderful God we have.

He plants his footsteps in the sea. Habakkuk, the very next book, Habakkuk chapter 3, verse 4. And here again, Habakkuk is giving a marvelous picture of the glory of God. I mean, human language is marvelous here in describing His majesty and His radiance.

And it says in Habakkuk 3, 4, and His brightness was as the light He had raised coming forth from His hand and there was the hiding of His power. The hiding of His power. It doesn't say the manifestation of His power.

I mean, Habakkuk has just finished describing a marvelous demonstration of the hiding of His power, of the display of His power. He just calls it the hiding of His power. I think that's really great.

Then, of course, in Matthew 10, we don't have time. He marks the sparrow's fall. Boy, when you think of that insignificant English sparrow, and it says not one of them falls to the ground without your heavenly Father.

Ironside said God attends the funeral of every sparrow. And I want to tell you, if He attends the funeral of every sparrow, you mean a lot more to Him than many sparrows. The great God of the universe interested in you and in me.

Luke chapter 12, verse 70 numbers the hairs of our heads. 500 million people in India alone. More than that now.

Imagine. Imagine a God who's intimately concerned with every individual in the world tonight. He made us with no two faces alike.

No two voices alike. No two gates alike. We all walk differently.

Our fingerprints are different. Think of how God is hearing prayer in so many languages tonight. Huh? So many languages.

I don't know how many are. Do you? In dialects? And people praying to Him. He filters it all out.

He knows just what they're saying. Colossians 1, 17 tells us He not only created all things, but He upholds them. How? By the word of His power.

By the word of His power. Not by His strong outstretched arm. By the word of His power.

He created all by a word. And He upholds it all by a word. He's the God who stills the storm.

He's the God who takes that gulf stream down in Mexico and He starts it across the Atlantic Ocean. A stream of warm water going through the frigid Atlantic and it comes over by the west coast of Ireland and England and it's still there. A stream.

Try to do that in your bathtub. You try to get a gulf stream. If you can't do it, it's all going to merge and it's all going to be water of the same temperature that God can do it.

What a great God He is. Listen. And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.

That on the cross my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin. Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, how great Thou art. How great Thou art.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7737.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/the-attributes-of-god-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net