

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

The Attributes of God

Banska Bystrica, 27th May 2018

<p>διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους</p> <p>Ps 36:6 יהוה בהשמים חסדך אמונתך עד-שחקים</p> <p>Ps 138:1-2 אוֹרְךָ בְּכָל-לְבַי נִגַּד אֱלֹהִים אֲמַרְךָ אֲשַׁתְּחֶה אֶל-הַיְיֹכֵל קִדְשֶׁךָ וְאוֹרְהָ אֶת-שִׁמְךָ עַל-חֲסִדְךָ וְעַל-אֱמַתְךָ כִּי-הִגְדַּלְתָּ עַל-כָּל-שִׁמְךָ אֱמַרְתָּךְ</p>	<p>2Cor 5:7 we walk by faith, not by sight</p> <p>Ps 36:5 Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds</p> <p>[NKJV] I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods I will sing praises to You. ² I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.</p>
<p>לֹא אִישׁ אֵל וְיִכְזֹב וּבְרִיאָדָם וְיִתְנַחֵם הֲהוּא אָמַר וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה וְדַבֵּר וְלֹא יִקְוֶמָהּ</p>	<p>Nu 23:19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?</p>
<p>וְיִדְעַתָּ כִּי-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֲסֵד לְאַהֲבָיו וּלְשִׁמְרֵי (מִצְוֹתָיו) [מִצְוֹתָיו] לְאַלְף הַיּוֹם וּמְשַׁלֵּם לְשִׁנְאָיו אֶל-פְּנֵיו לְהַאֲבִידוֹ לֹא יֵאָחֵר לְשִׁנְאוֹ אֶל-פְּנֵיו יִשְׁלֹם לוֹ</p>	<p>Dt 7:9-10 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, ¹⁰ and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.</p>

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. THE FAITHFULNESS AND THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

- (1) “God’s essential nature → immutability” (2) “God keeping the word” → faithfulness
- **Dt 32:4** "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice (כִּלְדָּרְךָיִי מִשְׁפָּט). A God of **faithfulness** (אֱלֹהֵי אֱמוּנָה) and without iniquity, just and upright is he.
- faithful in mercy AND faithful in judgment

0.2. FAITHFULNESS AND TRUTH

- **Isa 65:16** ...he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of AMEN (אָמֵן בְּאֱלֹהֵי)
- **Ex 17:12** ...Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady (וַיִּהְיֶי יָדָיו אֶמּוּנָה) until the going down of the sun.
- “amen” → an international word ([BOTTERWECK&RINGGREN] Up to the present time, it has not been authenticated with certainty in Akkadian or in Ugaritic or Canaanite-Phoenician; thus, at-present the Hebrew examples are the earliest.)
- the Word of God → creative word (description vs. prescription)
 - → **Rom 4:17** ...the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and **calls things that are not as though they were** (NIV) (καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα).

0.3. THE WORD OF GOD AND THE BIBLE

- What is *my* “Bible”? → tradition? denomination/confession? experience? inherited book? favourite text/teaching/doctrines? underlined promises?...

0.3.1. THE DANGER OF IGNORANCE

- the history of *Mariology* (Leonardo Chirico) *lex orandi* → *lex credendi* (the law of praying [is] the law of believing) (from practice to theory; from plausibility to worldview; from desire to truth)
- → the Reformation (Luther, Calvin...)

0.3.2. THE DANGER OF INCORRECT INTERPRETATION

- **2Tim 3:6-7** burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷ always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.
- letter ↔ spirit [λόγος ῥῆμα γραφή]
- the importance of the *Scripture* → **John 10:35** Scripture cannot be broken (οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή)
- a “memorial” of God’s speaking in the past → “incarnated” in the **Scripture** (material) **Jn 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are **spirit and life**.
 - illustration: reading a sheet music page and listening to an interpretation
- → Evangelical revivals (Wesley, Whitefield, Moody)

0.4. THE INWARD EARS TO HEAR

- **Mt 11:15** He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- **Eze 33:32** ...you are to them like one who sings lustful songs (כְּשִׁיר עֲנָבִים) with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument (וַיִּפְהוּ קוֹל וְנִמְשָׁב נְגִן), for they hear what you say, but they will not do it (וְשָׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבָרַיִךְ וְעָשִׂים אֵינָם אוֹתָם).
- **Mk 4:24** "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. (βλέπετε τί ἀκούετε. ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν καὶ προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν) → serious; consequences; commitment...

1. THE WORD OF GOD REPRESENTING GOD

- **John 1:18** No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known ... **1 John 4:12** No one has ever seen God... **1 John 4:20** ...he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen
- **2Cor 5:7** ...we walk by faith, not by sight

1.1. ENCOUNTERING GOD IN THE WORD OF GOD

- **Rom 10:6-8** But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"(that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ or "'Who will descend into the abyss?'"(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim)
- **Dt 30:10-14** If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. ¹¹ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off. ¹² It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? ¹³ Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? ¹⁴ But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

1.2. TOTAL TRUST IN THE WORD OF GOD

- the "NAME" → the ATTRIBUTES → the *WORD* [faithfulness]
- Ps 138 You have **magnified Your word above all Your name.**

2. THE WORD OF GOD AS PROMISE

- **Heb 10:36** For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.
- **Eze 36:22** "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came

2.1. THE GOSPEL AS THE WORD OF PROMISE

- **Gal 3:22** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe
- faith in the future → hope

2.2. FAITH AS VIOLENCE

- **Eze 20:44** ...I deal with you for my name's sake (יְהוָה שְׁמִי), not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds...
- **Mt 11:12** From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered **violence**, and the **violent** take it by force (ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται καὶ βιασταὶ ἀρπάζουσιν αὐτήν).
- **Luke 11:8** ...because of his impudence (διὰ γε τὴν ἀναίδειαν) he will rise and give him whatever he needs

3. THE WORD OF GOD AS POWER

- **Acts 6:7** And the **word of God** continued to increase (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἤξανε καὶ ἐπληθύνετο) ... **Acts 12:24** But the **word of God** increased and multiplied (Ὁ δὲ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἤξανε καὶ ἐπληθύνετο) ... **Acts 19:20** So the **word of the Lord** continued to increase and prevail mightily (οὕτως κατὰ κράτος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ λόγος ἤξανε καὶ ἴσχυεν).

3.1. THE POWER FOR JUDGMENT

- → Josiah!
- **Jer 23:29** Is not my word like fire (כַּאֵשׁ), declares the LORD, and like a hammer (וּכְפֹטִישׁ) that breaks the rock in pieces?
- **Hos 6:5** Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets (הַצִּבְּתִי בְּנְבִיאִים); I have slain them by the words of my mouth (הִרְגֵתִים בְּאִמְרֵי־פִי), and my judgment goes forth as the light (וּמִשְׁפָּטִיךָ אֹרֶחַ יֵצֵא).
- **Heb 1:3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by **the word of his power** (φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ).
- **Ps 119:105** Your word is a lamp (נֶר־לְרַגְלִי) to my feet and a light to my path (וְאוֹרֶה לְנַתִּיבֹתַי).

3.2. THE POWER FOR SALVATION

- **1Cor 1:18** For the word of the cross is folly (μωρία) to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (δύναμις θεοῦ).

3.3. THE POWER FOR LIVING

- **2Pt 1:3-4** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his **precious and very great promises**, so that through them you may become **partakers of the divine nature** (γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως), having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

4. TO REMEMBER

- Be sure the God you know and worship is known through his Word in the Bible enlivened by His Holy Spirit
- Train yourself to rely on the promises of God in Jesus and made to you personally in the times of trouble
- Rely on the Word of God and apply it intelligently and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your daily life, prayer and spiritual work.