

THE CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Attributes of God

Banska Bystrica, 26th May 2019

<p>כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל־יִתְהַלֵּל חָכָם בְּחַכְמָתוֹ וְאֶל־יִתְהַלֵּל הַגִּבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ אֶל־יִתְהַלֵּל עָשִׂיר בְּעֶשְׂרוֹ כִּי אִם־בְּזֹאת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמִּתְהַלֵּל²³ הַשָּׂפֵל וְיָדַע אוֹתִי כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בְּאֶרֶץ כִּי־בְאֵלֶּהָ הַפְצַתִּי נְאֻמֵי־יְהוָה</p>	<p>Jer 9:23-24 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his <u>wisdom</u>, let not the mighty man boast in his <u>might</u>, let not the rich man boast in his <u>riches</u>,²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and <u>knows me</u>, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.</p>
<p>ὅτι ζῆλον θεοῦ ἔχουσιν ἀλλ' οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν</p>	<p>Rom 10:2 ...they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge</p>
<p>μάτην δὲ σέβονται με διδάσκοντες διδασκαλίας ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων וְהָיָה יִרְאָתָם אוֹתִי מִצְוֹת אֲנָשִׁים מִלְּמֹדָה</p>	<p>Mt 15:9 ...in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Isa 29:13 ...their fear of me is a commandment taught by men</p>
<p>Τεκνία, φυλάξατε ἑαυτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων</p>	<p>1John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.</p>
<p>εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν κηρύσσει ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν, ἢ πνεῦμα ἕτερον λαμβάνετε ὃ οὐκ ἐλάβετε, ἢ εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε, καλῶς ἀνέχεσθε</p>	<p>2Cor 11:4 For if someone comes and proclaims <u>another Jesus</u> than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a <u>different spirit</u> from the one you received, or if you accept a <u>different gospel</u> from the one you accepted, <u>you put up with it readily enough</u></p>

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0. INTRODUCTION

- read: Ps 66:1-8
- **2Chron 15:3** For a long time Israel was without the true God (לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֶת)

0.1. THE PURPOSE OF THE SERIES

- **Ps 143:6** I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land (פָּרִשְׁתִּי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי נַפְשִׁי כְּאֶרְצֵי-עֲוֹפָה לֵךְ)
- Better personal acquaintance with God...

0.2. THE PRACTICAL USE OF THEOLOGY PROPER

- **Against idolatry: Phil 3:18-19** For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly (ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία), and they glory in their shame (ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν), with minds set on earthly things.
 - type of “gods”: (→ FEUERBACH) anthropocentric “gods” →
 - (1) the god who follows rules of logic/mind (Hegelian)
 - (2) the god who follows natural laws (physics; evolution; cybernetics) (EINSTEIN)
 - (3) the god who is plausible to our sensitivities, emotion (psychotherapy; psychotheology) (JUNG)

Western philosophy is, in the proper sense, an odyssey, a venturing forth solely for the sake of an ultimate return ... (David Bentley Hart *The Beauty of the Infinite*, p. 76)

- **The God as he has revealed himself in the Bible, in Jesus Christ** → the safeguard for our thoughts
 - Thomas MANTON:¹

5. Because our affections answer our understanding. If we understand not, how can we believe? If we believe not, how can we love? If we love not, how can we do? Knowledge, persuasion, affection, practice, these follow one another, where the faculties of the soul are rightly governed, and kept in a due subordination. Indeed, by the fall the order is subverted: Titus iii. 3, ‘Serving divers lusts and pleasures.’ Objects strike upon the senses, sense moveth the fancy, fancy moveth the bodily spirits, the bodily spirits move the affections, and these blind the mind and lead the will captive. But a true understanding makes us more steadfast.

0.3. OMITTED THEMES

0.3.1. THE CORRECT NUMBER OF GOD’S ATTRIBUTES(?)

- AQUINAS: (1) Simplicity, (2) perfection, (3) goodness, (4) infinity, (5) ubiquity, (6) immutability, (7) eternity, (8) unity
- Wikipedia:² (1) Aseity, (2) Eternity (3) Goodness (4) Graciousness (5) Holiness (6) Immanence (7) Immutability (8) Impassibility (9) Impeccability (10) Incomprehensibility (11) Incorporeality (12) Infinity (13) Jealousy (14) Love (15) Mission (16) Mystery (17) Omnipotence (18) Omnipresence (19) Omniscience (20) Oneness (21) Providence (22) Righteousness (23) Simplicity (24) Sovereignty (25) Transcendence (26) Trinity (27) Veracity (28) Wrath
 - CHARNOCK *The Existence and Attributes of God* (11 attributes)
 - TOZER *The Knowledge of the Holy* (19 attributes)
 - PINK *The Attributes of God* (±45 attributes)
 - 100 qualities of God (Internet <https://findcommunity.com/blog/100-qualities-of-god/>)
 - 953 names of God (<https://christiananswers.net/dictionary/namesofgod.html>)

¹ MANTON *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton VI*, London : James Nisbet, 1872, p. 351

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attributes_of_God_in_Christianity (25-11-2018)

- “infinity” (BAVINCK); “wrath” (PINK); “truth” (Th. WATSON **Dt 32:4** a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he (אל אמונה ואין עול צדיק וישר הוא); “patience” (CHARNOCK **Nahum 1:3** The LORD is slow to anger [אָרְךְ אַפַּיִם]); “jealousy” (Ex 20:5); “
- Jewish tradition *The Thirteen Attributes of God* (**Ex 34:6-7** "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.") → Kabbala³

1. ל-א / G-d — mighty in compassion to give all creatures according to their need;
2. רחום / *rachum* — merciful, that humankind may not be distressed;
3. וחנון / *ve'chanun* — and gracious if humankind is already in distress;
4. אָרְךְ אַפַּיִם / *erech apayim* — slow to anger; (once, to the righteous)
5. אָרְךְ אַפַּיִם / *erech apayim* — slow to anger; (repeated again for the wicked)
6. ורב חסד / *ve rav chesed* — and plenteous in kindness;
7. ואמת / *ve'emet* — and truth;
8. נצר חסד / *notzer chesed* — keeping kindness
9. לאלפים / *laalafim* — unto thousands;
10. נושא און / *noseh avon* — forgiving iniquity;
11. ופשע / *vafeshah* — and transgression;
12. וחסאָה / *vechata'ah* — and sin;
13. ונקה / *venakeh* — and pardoning.

0.3.2. THE NAMES OF GOD

- names → attributes

[BAVINCK] The names of God are designations of his excellences, mighty deeds, praises (ἀρεται, 1Pt 2:9). The church's calling is to proclaim God's "virtues," that is, to honor him for the glory (δοξα) manifested in all his works.

- Some of the names of God:⁴

[יהוה אלהים] **Genesis 2:4** the LORD God made the earth and the heavens

[אל עליון] **Genesis 14:22** the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth,

[אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה] **Genesis 15:2** But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me

[יהוה אל עולם] **Genesis 21:33** the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God

[יהוה יראת] **Genesis 22:14** The LORD will provide

[יהוה רפואך] **Exodus 15:26** I am the LORD, your healer

[יהוה נס] **Exodus 17:15** The LORD is my banner

[אני יהוה מקדשכם] **Exodus 31:13** you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you

[יהוה שלום] **Judges 6:24** Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD is Peace

[יהוה צדקנו] **Jeremiah 23:6** 'The LORD is our righteousness.

[יהוה שמה] **Ezekiel 48:35** the name of the city ...shall be, The LORD is there.

[שם-יהוה עליון] **Psalms 7:17** the name of the LORD, the Most High

[יהוה רעי] **Psalms 23:1** DAVID. The LORD is my shepherd

0.3.3. GENITIVE EXPRESSIONS: "THE GOD OF..."

- (15x the God of hosts [אלהי הצבאות];
- **Gn 24:3** God of heaven and God of the earth [אלהי השמים ואלהי הארץ];
- **Ps 29:3** the God of glory [אל-הַכְבוֹד];
- **Mt 22:32** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob [ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ ὁ θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ ὁ θεὸς Ἰακώβ]

³ https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3609722/jewish/What-Are-the-13-Attributes-of-Mercy.htm?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz6PnBRCPARIsANOTcW1MMWI2HIYWiFNiI1UKy_ohu_yNqj_T-finwHyYs9JW40_eLN010aAuzvEALw_wcB (25-May-2019)

⁴ <http://www.mcsonline.org/missiontheology/ron/100blag-dtf.pdf> (25-May-2019)

- **2Cor 13:11** the God of love and peace [ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης];
- **1Thes 5:23, Phil 4:8** God of peace [θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης];
- **Rom 15:13** God of hope [θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος];
- **2Cor 1:3** God of all comfort [θεὸς πάσης παρακλήσεως];
- **1Pt 5:10** God of all grace [θεὸς πάσης χάριτος,];
- **Rom 15:5** God of endurance and encouragement [θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως]
- **Rev 16:11** the God of heaven)

1. GOD IN HIMSELF

- the danger of “expelling” the true God (2Chr 15:3) from our experience
 - transcendence at the expense of immanence → God as THE TRANSCENDENT STRANGER
 - immanence at the expense of transcendence → God as THE IMMANENT SLAVE

1.1. UNAPPROACHABLE

- **Ecc 5:2** Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.
- **1Tim 6:16** ...who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see

1.2. UNIMAGINABLE

- **1Cor 2:9-10** "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"- ¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.
- **1Cor 8:2-3** If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. ³ But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. [εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὐπω ἔγνω καθὼς δεῖ γινώσκειν· ³ εἰ δέ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ]

2. GOD IN HIS WORK

- genitives (“the God of...”)
- God active in history

2.1. THE GOD OF ISRAEL

- **Gn 33:20** There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)

2.2. THE GOD OF SALVATION

- **Ps 68:20** Our God is a God of salvation (אֱלֹהֵינוּ מוֹשְׁעוֹת), and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death (וְלַיהוָה אֱדָנִי לְמִנְתַּחְצוֹת)
- **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- **Hebrews 1:1-4** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 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. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

2.3. THE GOD OF JUDGMENT

- **Is 30:18** For the LORD is a God of justice; (כִּי־אֱלֹהֵי מִשְׁפָּט יְהוָה)

3. GOD AS EXPERIENCED

3.1. "ABBA" FATHER

- **John 14:22-23** Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my **Father** will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (Λέγει αὐτῷ Ἰούδας, οὐχὶ ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης· κύριε, [καὶ] τί γέγονεν ὅτι ἡμῖν μέλλεις ἐμφανίζειν σεαυτὸν καὶ οὐχὶ τῷ κόσμῳ; ²³ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονήν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα.)
- **Rom 8:15** you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, **Abba! Father!** (ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν· αββα ὁ πατήρ)
- **Gal 4:6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, **Abba! Father!** ("Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κράζον· αββα ὁ πατήρ)

3.2. MY EXPERIENCE OF GOD

3.2.1. BY OBSERVATION

- **Gn 24:12, 27, 42** "O LORD, God of my master Abraham... ()
- **Gn 31:5** the God of my father has been with me...

3.2.2. BY CIRCUMSTANCES

- **Gn 16:13-15** So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," (וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמֵיְהוָה הַדֹּבֵר אֵלֶיהָ אֵתָה אֱלֹהֵי רֹאִי) for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me." ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi (בְּאֵר לְחַי רֹאִי); it lies between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

3.2.3. BY THEOLOGY

- **2Ki 19:15** And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: "O LORD the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth."
- **Ps 76:7** But you, you are to be feared! Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused? (אֵתָה נִרְאָה אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם וּמִי־יַעֲמֹד לְפָנֶיךָ מֵאִז אֲפָדָה)

3.2.4. BY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

- **Ps 42:8** a prayer to the God of my life (תְּפִלָּה לְאֵל חַיִּי)
- **Ps 43:2** ...you are the God in whom I take refuge (כִּי־אֵתָה אֱלֹהֵי מְעוֹזִי)
- **Ps 28:1** To you, O LORD, I call; my rock (צוּרִי)
- **Ps 9:9-10** The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed (מְשֹׁבֵב לְדָדָה), a stronghold in times of trouble. ¹⁰ And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you
- **Ps 31:3** For you are my rock and my fortress (כִּי־סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי אֵתָה); and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me (תְּנַחֲנֵנִי וּתְנַהַלֵּנִי)
- **Ps 109:1** O God of my praise! (אֱלֹהֵי תְהִלָּתִי)

4. TO REMEMBER

- Beware of idolatry! The only acceptable worship is based on God's own revelation.
- The attributes are checkpoints of our relationship with God.
- The true knowledge of God always leads to praise and worship and the communion with God.