

- I. Session 56: The Goodness of God Part 1: God's Goodness in the Old Testament
- a. Purpose: In this session we shall explore the attribute of the goodness of God as taught in the Old Testament and also draw implication for the Christian life as a result of our study.
  - b. What is the goodness of God? The words in the Old Testament:
    - i. *Tob, Tub*
      1. Most common word translated as "good."
      2. Many aspect to the meaning of this word: "They are: 1) practical, economic, or material good, 2) abstract goodness such as desirability, pleasantness and beauty, 3) quality or expense, 4) moral goodness, and 5) technical philosophical goodness. In the last sense, it refers to the highest good..."<sup>1</sup>
    - ii. Hebrew verb: *yatab*
      1. Basic meaning: "do, good, to be good, be pleasing."<sup>2</sup>
      2. "In relation to God, it refers to God's beneficent attitude toward and dealing with his people."<sup>3</sup>
    - iii. *Rason*: Three major meaning with "the main sense is God's 'favor' or 'good will. The second sense focuses on the 'delight' or 'acceptance' of an individual. The third is 'desire' or 'pleasure' in the specific sense of God's will."<sup>4</sup>
    - iv. Summarizing definition:
      1. John Frame: "But by far the most common meaning of goodness in Scripture is 'benevolence.' A good person is one who acts to benefit others."<sup>5</sup>
      2. John Feinberg: "When we look at the biblical concept of divine goodness, one major idea stands out. It is that God is concerned about the well-being of his creatures and does things to promote it."<sup>6</sup>
  - c. What does the Bible in the Old Testament teaches about the goodness of God?
    - i. God's being is described as Good
      1. "Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; Sing praises to His name, for it is lovely." (Psalm 135:3)
        - a. We are not surprised to find that in the book of Psalms, which is a book of songs to worship God, we would find God's attributes listed.
        - b. Thus we see one of God's attributes mentioned Here is the fact the fact that the Lord is good.
        - c. Because He is good, that should drive us to worship Him: "Sing praises to His name, for it is lovely" (v.3b)

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<sup>1</sup> John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 365.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 366.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> John Frame, *Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002), 410.

<sup>6</sup> John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 366.

2. *“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.” (Psalm 136:1)*
    - a. States clearly that God is good: *“for He is good”*
    - b. God’s goodness is the reason and basis for why believers *“Give thanks to the Lord.”*
  3. *“All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the Lord, saying, ‘Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting.’” (2 Chronicles 7:3)*
    - a. The context is Solomon dedicating the Temple He has built to God and the Shekinah Glory of God has just descended.
    - b. The response of the people is captured beginning in verse 3 and the first thing they confessed in worship is *“Truly He is good.”*
    - c. Note that in experiencing God they knew He was good.
- ii. Since God is good therefore His actions are good
1. Because God is Good, when He created the World God declared His creation as good (**Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25**)
  2. *“If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you.” (Joshua 24:20)*
    - a. The context is Joshua’s speech to Israel before He was going to pass away.
    - b. Note Joshua stating *“He has done good to you.”*
    - c. What are the things *“He has done good to you?”* That’s described **v.2-13**.
      - i. The goodness of God towards them begins with the history of Abraham.
      - ii. The goodness of God towards them as told by Joshua ended with the present state of Israel’s blessing in the promise land and the victories God gave them.
    - d. The blessing of God’s goodness should not be taken as a license to sin according to this verse.
  3. *“Now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant.” (2 Samuel 7:28)*
    - a. The context is David’s response to God decreeing the Davidic Covenant.
    - b. Earlier in the other verses we have seen, we have seen God’s goodness as told from the past tense. Here is David’s acknowledgment of God’s promise is God’s goodness in the future!
    - c. We must add that the Davidic Covenant’s goodness is also part of the Covenant that the Messianic King of David

would come from, so God's goodness is for our salvation as well!

4. *"For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up."* (Jeremiah 24:6)
  - a. The context is Jeremiah's predication of the Babylonian captivity and yet how God will still be good to the exiles.
  - b. Again this is a prediction and a promise of God's goodness into the future from the time of when the author spoke.
  - c. Part of that goodness is that some will continue to know God even captivity (v.7)
  - d. We must not forget that knowing God is a display of God's goodness.
- iii. Recipients of God's goodness
  1. We often think of God's people (the nation of Israel and the church).
  2. But also: *"Your creatures settled in it; You provided in Your goodness for the poor, O God."* (Psalm 68:10)
  3. *"The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works."* (Psalm 145:6)
- d. Implications
  - i. When was the last time you thought about God's goodness? Have you ever meditated on this truth of God's attribute?
  - ii. Do you worship God because He is good? Remember what we saw earlier:
    1. Sing to Him because He is Good (Psalm 135:3)
    2. Give thanks to Him because He is Good (Psalm 136:1)
  - iii. We can pray to Him because He is good, so do you regularly pray to Him?
  - iv. Do you take advantage of God's goodness to sin? That ought not be!
  - v. Just as God is good, we too strive to do good by God's grace.