

THEOLOGY PROPER (72)

Communicable Attribute #10- Veracity.

Veracity is the attribute of God which means it is not possible for God to lie! God must, by virtue of His own character, always be true and always tell the truth. Every word which God says must be true and everything God does will always be consistent with His perfect truth. It is not possible for God to ever do anything contrary to truth and therefore it is not possible for God to lie. God will always be the source of truth and Satan will always be the source of lies.

There are many passages in the Bible that speak of the veracity of God:

- 1) Num.23:19 - God is a God of His Word, He cannot lie and always do exactly what He has promised
- 2) Deut.32:4 - The law of God clearly declares that God is "a God of faithfulness" which means He will always be faithful and true to His Word, not deceitful in any way (v.5).
- 3) II Sam.7:28 - God's words are true words. Everything God says and promises will be fulfilled.
- 4) Ps.33:4 - All the words of God and all the work of God are in the context of veracity, His words are upright and He is faithful to His word and work- He is a true God.
- 5) Ps.146:6 - God keeps "faith"- "truth" forever. He will always be faithful to His promises. In this context this means that the one who trusts in the Lord for salvation, rather than in the works of mortal man will be blessed forever (v.3).
- 6) Rom.3:4 - God is at ultimate level of truth, to which no human has ever reached.
- 7) Titus 1:2 - God, is a God who "cannot" lie- God does not have the capability of possibility of every distorting or twisting truth,
- 8) Heb.6:18 - It is an impossibility for God to lie.

This attribute is meaningful to us in several ways:

- 1) It should give us the assurance that God will always keep His word and never go back on any promise He has given to us.**

Consider just some of the promises of God:

- A. "Whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."(John 3:16)
- B. "and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." (John 10:28-29)
- C. "And through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses." (Acts 13:3 9)
- D. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." (Acts 16:31)
- E. "And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3)
- F. "Therefore...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15:58)

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G. "for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." (Heb.13:5)

God's veracity means He will always keep these and all other promises to us.

2) It should give us a great confidence that God's word will always prove itself to be absolutely true.

When facing the skeptic or scoffer or debater, when facing the evolutionist, the atheist or agnostic, we may find great confidence in the fact that regardless of what anyone says or thinks, God's word will always and must always be true because of God's attribute of veracity. It is impossible for God's word not to be true. His nature demands the truthfulness of His word. We may confidently stand on the Word of God in the face of anything. If you know what God's word says and someone is saying something contrary to what it says, always stand on what God's word says, for it will prove itself to be true.

3) It should motivate us to be truthful people.

Proverbs 12:22 says "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD." Deceit and dishonesty are never marks of people right with God. In fact, lying is Satanic for Satan is the father of lies. People who are developing in the character and quality of true godliness will be truthful people. They will love truth, they will seek truth and they will speak truth.

Veracity is a communicable attribute. It is an attribute that should be clearly evidenced in God's people.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote: "The attributes of God form an interwoven and interdependent communion and forces which harmonize in the Person of God. An omission or slighting of any of these, or any disproportionate emphasis upon any one of them cannot but lead to fundamental error of immeasurable magnitude. A mighty task is committed to the student of theology to discover these attributes and exhibit them according to truth." (Vol.1, p.223)

Chafer cites Dr. Morris Roach in saying, "Full and complete character cannot be ascribed where only a portion of the attributes of God are considered. Character in God is the product of all His attributes in their objective relationship one with the other." (Ibid., pp.223-224)

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QUESTION #16- How is the sovereignty of God connected to the purpose and plan of God?

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote: "When weighing the facts of the sovereignty of God in the execution of His eternal purpose, problems arise--problems more difficult than those encountered when weighing the truths concerning, God's person and attributes. In the latter instance, knowable realities are projected into infinity, but without the element of seeming contradiction. In the former instance, or when contemplating divine sovereignty as seen in the control by God over a universe into which sin has entered and in which there is said to be the freedom to act on the part of beings other than the sovereign God, conflicting relationships arise. Some of these problems cannot be solved in this world; they never have been solved here, nor will they ever be. (Foreknowledge) must now be approached in the light of divine purpose and permission. When this issue is reduced to its lowest dimensions, there remain two general overtures: either (1) that God is sovereign and all that ever has existed or will exist is within his plan, or (2) that He is not sovereign and there is more or less in the universe which exists in defiance of his holy character and over which he has no authority. ...too often some modification of divine sovereignty is adopted as a supposed release from the burden which the problem of sin in God's universe imposes. No modifications of divine sovereignty can be allowed without challenging the worthiness of God. Much that is revealed belongs not at all to those regenerate because of their immaturity or carnality can receive only the 'milk of the word'. Unregenerate men are not burdened with the necessity of ascertaining whether they are elect or not. It is the student of theology to whom God's deeper revelation is addressed." (Vol. 1, pp.226-227)

When contemplating this matter of does God's sovereignty relate to the purpose and plan of God in of what is happening in this world, there are certain Biblical terms we need to know:

Term #1- Election- basic meaning to make a choice or selection (Smith, p.139).

There are many passage that teach that God makes sovereign choices:

- 1) Mk.13:20 - God calls Israel His elect "whom He chose" and this choice prompts Him to do certain things- in this case keep the days of the Tribulation short.
- 2) Acts 1:24 - The selection of an Apostle was assumed to be an elect choice
- 3) Acts 13:17 – Paul teaches that God's selection of Israel is the basis of their existence.
- 4) Eph.1:4 - It is the reality that God chose us that enables us to praise Him.

The truth of election is that either we accept the fact that God chooses, or we leave things to sinful men, an accident, chance or blind fate. Who was it that decided we would be born in this country or born in a jungle in Africa? Who was it that decided our color? Who determined whether we would be a human being, an angel or an animal? Who was it that enabled us to understand the gospel in a world which most don't understand? The God of the Bible.

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Many struggle with the doctrine of election, but it is one clearly found in God's word. We must always remember that we are finite and proud. All three of these things war against a complete understanding of this doctrine. We never be in a position, in this life, to make a perfect choice or selection as God does, for we are not perfect. God can elect and choose from a perspective of infinite love, wisdom, holiness, grace, mercy, justice and righteousness. Because of this, God's elective decisions will always be right and God has the right to make elective decisions.

A central key in honoring God is not that we have the ability to completely understand this doctrine, it is that we do not reject this doctrine. Election is a Biblical doctrine. It is to be believed and it does bring honor and glory to God.

Term #2- Foreknowledge.

The basic meaning of this word is to know beforehand (Smith p.379). It means to have advanced knowledge prior to the event. **When it is used in a theological context, it means that God knows beforehand everything that will happen and everything He is going to do.** He has complete advanced knowledge of everything, including the Divine plan He intends to execute.

The difference between foreknowledge and omniscience is that omniscience has to do with God knowing all things, whereas foreknowledge has to do with God knowing all things that He, Himself, is Personally going to do, concerning every being, every issue, every situation and every program.

The Bible is with passages that clearly deal with the subject of God's foreknowledge;

1) Jer.1:5 - It is very evident from this verse that the foreknowledge of God is much more than just knowing something beforehand. it also includes the idea of forming and carrying out His specific plan. This had a profound effect on Jeremiah (1:7).

2) Acts 2:23 - It is clear that the foreknowledge of God was involved in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It was the Sovereignty and foreknowledge of God that put Jesus Christ on Calvary. In Christ's testimony before Pilate, he was careful to point out that his (Pilate's) authority to sentence Christ to crucifixion was because of the Sovereign work of God, not because of the authority of Pilate (John 19:8-11a). Clearly Christ viewed His own death as a of the Sovereign plan of God connected with the foreknowledge of God. We learn from this that God's foreknowledge does not eliminate suffering and death and in fact does include it.

3) Rom.8:29 - It is stated that God's foreknowledge is involved in who He predestines to be saved. Keep in mind that foreknowledge is not God knowing what a person will do with God, it is knowing what God will do with the person. God knew what He was going to do with us, long before we had any concept of Him.

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4) I Pet. 1:2 - In this text, it is specifically stated that election is according to or face-to-face with the foreknowledge of God. In other words, foreknowledge is continually a basis for His election. The clear emphasis of this passage is that this work of God is that which should cause us to bless Him and praise Him (I Pet. 1:3). The idea here is not that He knew how we would turn out (all are unrighteous), but that He knew before it ever happened what He would do with us. God has chosen us and incorporated His sovereign, eternal plan in our sinful, finite lives and that should cause each of us to praise Him.

Foreknowledge, when properly understood, brings great glory to God for it testifies of the fact that God knows everything he is going to do long before He does it.

Term #3- Predestination.

The word literally means to predetermine or foreordain (Smith, p.382). **It carries with it the idea of both seeing and setting the boundaries.** When it is used theologically, it means God sets boundaries for everything. God predetermines what He will permit to happen. This is true for the angelic world, for the human world, for human history and even for individual salvation. Many passages clearly set forth this theme:

1) Acts 4:28 – Here is one of the most vivid pictures of predestination in all of the Bible. Peter and John had been testifying of Jesus Christ, specifically concerning His resurrection (4:2,13,19-20). When Peter and John were finally released, they reported all these things to the other believers (4:23) and when they did, notice carefully the theological admission of all the believers- "O Lord, it is thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them." (4:24) In the same context, these faithful believers totally united in their theology, "with one accord" (4:24), to testify that it was God who predestined the crucifixion and murder of Jesus Christ. This group even names groups and individuals who were specifically involved in carrying out the predetermined plan of God (4:27-28).

From a human perspective, the facts surrounding the death of Jesus Christ are inhumane. Christ is the "holy servant" who lived perfectly. He never sinned and therefore He does not merit the death penalty, which is God's penalty for sin (Gen.2:17; Rom.6:23). This innocent Jesus is hauled into court, given several hearings and sentenced to die the worst death possible, the death on a cross. This is undoubtedly the most diabolical misuse of justice in all of history and yet we read: "to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur." (4:28)

God predestined and predetermined this whole episode, including the participants. He predetermined and foreordained and set the boundaries for this entire scenario. This reality did not cause the early believers to question God, it caused them to praise God and to ask God for the boldness to proclaim these kinds of realities (4:24,29,31). There was no crime more godless or ruthless than the murder of Jesus Christ- yet it was predestined by God.