

The Attributes of God
Attribute #16 – Good

Part 1

1. Good - Jesus said that no one was good except God (Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19). Goodness, in the Scriptural sense of the term, includes benevolence, love, mercy, and grace.
 - A. Benevolence = the disposition to promote happiness
 - B. Love = includes complacency, desire, and delight
 - C. Mercy = kindness exercised towards the miserable, and includes pity, compassion, forbearance, and gentleness
 - D. Grace = love exercised towards the unworthy
2. The goodness of God is threefold:
 - A. Perfect goodness – indicating there is nothing evil or perverted in the character of God; it refers to the perfection of His nature (1 John 1:5)
 1. 1 Chron.16: 34
 2. Psalm 25:8; 86:5; 106:1
 3. Acts 14:17
 - B. Benevolent goodness – indicating that God shows mercy to the righteous as well as the unrighteous
 1. Matt.5: 45
 2. Luke 6:35
 3. Acts 14:17
 - C. Character goodness – indicating that God is the source of all virtue and morality
 1. Gal.5: 22-23
 2. James 1:17
 3. 2 Peter 1:3-9
3. The goodness of God is not derived; it is the essence of His eternal nature. As God is infinite in power from all eternity, before there was any display of it, so He was eternally good before there was any communication of it, or to any creature to whom it was to be imparted.
 - A. The first manifestation of His goodness was in giving being to all things.
 1. Psalm 119: 68
 2. Genesis 1: 31
 - B. Scriptural representations of the goodness of God.
 1. It is the great design of Scripture to present God as good.
 - a. Exodus 34: 6 – notice 7 expressions versus 1
 - b. Psalm 108: 4
 - c. Rev. 4:3 – rainbow was an emblem of mercy
 2. God is inclined to goodness more than wrath.

- a. Micah 7:18
 - b. Isaiah 27:4; Isa. 28:21
 - c. Lam. 3:33
 - d. Jer. 44:22
 - e. Isa 7:20
 - f. Psalm 103:8-13; 86:5
 3. There is no condition in which some mercy doesn't exist.
 - a. Lam. 3:22
 4. God's goodness makes Him appear amiable and lovely.
 - a. Exodus 33:19
 - b. It's the balance between His holiness and justice
 5. Even the worst of God's enemies experience His goodness.
 - a. Psalm 145:9
 - b. Ezek. 18:4
 6. Goodness we receive because of a covenant is the sweetest mercy.
 - a. Lev. 26:4-6, 12
 7. All our goodness is derived from God.
 - a. 2 Cor. 1:3
 - b. Matt. 5: 7
 8. As God's goodness makes us happy, it should also make us humble.
 - a. Job 10: 15
 9. One act of God's goodness results in other acts of goodness.
 - a. Romans 8: 29-30
 10. God's goodness delays the execution of God's justice
 - a. Ezek. 18: 4
 - b. Ezek. 38:18
4. God's goodness is described as: preventing, sparing, supplying, guiding, accepting, healing, quickening, supporting, forgiving, comforting, delivering, and crowning.
- A. God's goodness is free.
 1. To set up merit as a reason is to destroy goodness
 2. We may force God to punish us, but not love us.
 3. Hos. 14:4; Eph. 1:4; Romans 3:24; Titus 3: 5
 - B. God's goodness is infinite and overflowing.
 1. Psalm 86:5, Eph. 2:4; Psalm 51:1
 2. Lam. 3:23; Psalm 42:8
 3. God has mercies under heaven, which we experience, and mercies in heaven, which we hope for.
 - C. God's goodness is eternal
 1. Psalm 103:17
 2. Psalm 136 – "love (mercy) endures forever", repeated 26 times.
 3. Psalm 103:9 – God's anger last a while but His goodness forever

Part 2

1. Theodicy – the origin and purpose of evil contrasted with the goodness of God.
 - A. All of creation is good because the Creator of all creation is good.
 1. Good in Scripture is not an abstract quality, nor is it a secular human ideal; ‘good’ means first and foremost what God is (‘He is good’, Ps. 100:5), then what He does, creates, commands and gives, and finally what He approves in the lives of his creatures.
 - a. Psalm 86:5
 - b. Psalm 119:68
 - c. Jer. 33:11
 2. They define good in terms of God; not vice versa. Accordingly, the biblical position is that God, and God alone, is good without qualification.
 - a. Mark. 10:18
 - b. James 1:17
 3. God’s creation is mutable (changeable) whereas He in His essence is immutable.
 - a. Objects of creation can be increased or decreased, get better or get worse.
2. The Nature of Evil
 - A. Both philosophy and Christianity describe evil as the diminution or decreasing of that which is good.
 1. The lack or loss of goodness is evil; it is defined as privation or negation and is understood in terms of the background of good.
 2. Evil is a lack of goodness or the negation of goodness
 - a. Evil cannot exist in itself because it has its source in that which is good.
 - b. The parasitic nature of evil is that it depends upon a host in order to derive its life.
 - c. Evil depends upon the good in order to exist.
 - B. The idea of “pure good” is conceivable because it has no lack: it is not missing something.
 1. Evil is defined in negative terms and the idea of “pure evil” is inconceivable.
 - a. If you have total privation or total negation you have nothing.
 - b. To talk about evil one must have some idea of the good.
 - c. Evil depends upon good for definition but good does not depend upon evil for definition.
 - 1). There can be good without evil but there can be no evil without the good.
 - 2). Evil can only exist where there is good.
 - d. Evil is defined in terms of “the negation of good”; requires a previous knowledge of the good.
 1. Justice – injustice

2. Holy – unholy
3. Righteousness – unrighteousness
4. Godliness – ungodliness, godlessness
5. Christ – Anti-Christ

3. The Problem of Evil

A. There is a problem with evil only if there is good

1. One of the supreme tenets of Christianity is the goodness of God.
 - a. The ultimate goodness of God makes relative goodness a reality.
 - b. Evil reality points to the reality of the good and the reality of the good points to the reality of God.
 - c. The problem of evil, then, proves the existence of God.
2. If good and evil are mere illusions, are societal conventions or group preferences, and then you have an amoral society.
 - a. The pagans have two problems – they have to explain both good and evil.

B. The presence of evil ultimately enhances creation.

1. Although evil is bad, it is good because of God's goodness.
 - a. If it were bad that evil is bad, then the problem would be with the goodness of God.
 - 1). But God defines goodness, so the problem is with evil not the goodness of God.

4. The Scriptural Doctrine Regarding Evil

A. The glory of God is the end to which the promotion of holiness, the production of happiness, and all other ends are designed.

1. The self-revelation of God, the revelation of His infinite perfection is the highest possible good and is the ultimate end of all His works in creation, providence, and redemption.
2. God manifests His benevolence to us daily but there would be no manifestation of His mercy without misery, grace without justice, if there were no sin.
3. The grand plan of redemption is to manifest the glory of God (Eph. 3:10).
4. The knowledge of God is eternal life (John 17:3) and is for us the highest good, and the promotion of that knowledge is the highest end of all His works (Romans 9:22-23).
5. Sin (evil) is permitted that the justice of God may be known in its punishment, and His grace in its forgiveness.
6. God aims at the greatest possible amount of happiness in the universe; thus, He permits evil because the admission of evil produces in the end a greater amount of happiness (joy) than its exclusion would have done.

B. While evil may be a mystery, there is no mystery as to the destiny of evil; it will be vanquished by the goodness of God.