

Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture.

Topic 2 - The Doctrine of God

Lesson 24 - The Attributes of God: Spirituality and Invisibility

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture taken from the New King James Version.
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Incommunicable Attributes

- How is God different from us?
- God's attributes, or perfections, are identical to His essence.
- We must not consider these perfections without consciously thinking about how they integrate with, compliment, and qualify each other.
- These perfections are directed first toward God before anything or anyone outside Him.
- These perfections are defined and understood according to their presentation in Scripture, as the special revelation by God of Himself to us.

Incommunicable Attributes

- Independence
- Immutability
- Immortality
- Immensity and Omnipresence
- Indivisibility - Oneness and Simplicity
- Omnipotence - Power
- Omniscience - Knowledge

Communicable Attributes

- How is God similar to us?
- The incommunicable attributes are unique to God, the communicable attributes are transferrable to us. In these ways we either are like God or can be made like Him.
- The attributes are not completely like human characteristics, or God would not be greater than man in every characteristic.
- For example: concerning God's love, we have a partial picture revealed to us in Scripture but we do not know God's love for Himself in the Trinity, nor do we know exhaustively (comprehensively) what God's love for people is like.

Spirituality and Invisibility

- God's spirituality (God is Spirit, John 4:24) and invisibility describe His perfect lack of material in the Divine essence, so that His essence cannot be perceived by the physical senses. - MacArthur, pg. 179
- What is God made of? God is Spirit and therefore does not consist of created matter and cannot be confined or limited to a spatial location. - Grudem, pg. 187
- We are forbidden to think of God's Being as similar to anything else in the physical creation. Exodus 20:4-6; Deut. 4:15-19
- God's Invisibility means that all of His spiritual Being and essence will never be able to be seen by us in all of its fullness, yet God still shows Himself to us through visible, created things.

Spirituality and Invisibility

- Exodus 20:4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- Deut. 4:15 “Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, 16 lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, 17 the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, 18 the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. 19 And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.

Spirituality and Invisibility

- God does not have a physical body.
- God is not made of any kind of matter.
- God is not merely energy.
- God's Being is not even exactly like our spirits, for ours are created things that apparently are able to exist only in one place in one time.
- God is eternal, omnipresent, and invisible (Psa. 90:1-2; 139:7-12; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:15-16; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27)

Spirituality and Invisibility

- Rom. 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,
- Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
- 1 Tim. 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
- Heb. 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Spirituality and Invisibility

- Though God does have an essential form, His form is not seen because it is not physical (Deut. 4:15; John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12, 20).
- God is present in His creation in a spiritual manner.
- Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- Once glorified, we will not be limited by our mere physical senses and perceptions and are promised that we will see God.
- Job 19:26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God.

Spirituality and Invisibility

- Once glorified, we will not be limited by our mere physical senses and perceptions and are promised that we will see God.
- Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.
- Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- 1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.
- Rev. 22:4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

Spirituality and Invisibility

- How is this a communicable attribute?
- We have a spirit that we cannot see. (We consist of body and spirit - material and immaterial).
- Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life; and man became a living being (person).
- In order to see God, we must see Him by means of a Mediator, who is also a Man.
- John 14:7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” 8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”