

Dartmouth

Bible Notes



Notes from the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Who is God/Who God Is Lesson 7

Scripture: Psalm 139 and Hebrews 1:3, etc.

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The Three O-d God

Psalm 139:1-8 (ESV) O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

Hebrews 1:3 He [God's Son] 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.

Introduction Pretty regularly I feel a little nervous just talking *about* God or some basic aspect of who He is, because I feel like either you already know the thing or you, the body, want something more practical. You want preaching that tells you how to live the Christian life, step-by-step. And people tell me I'm more academic than they like or I'm less inspirational than they like. And still my mind goes back to who God is. Yesterday I spoke in tandem with Nate Hall about evangelism and discipleship. We had about 30 people listening to us up in Freetown (from a fairly liberal denomination with which neither of us is affiliated), but folks from all over the place south of Boston. I don't go looking for gigs like that but when they come to me I almost never say "no". But these were people who wanted to take their beautiful Saturday morning even, be in-doors and hear about evangelism and discipleship. Both Nate and I had some tales to tell but basically each of us were happy to just talk about leading people to Christ, and working with them one by one to help them become disciple-makers themselves. It was very basic as is my burden this fall is to get back just to Who God is...

Let me put before you a bit of a riddle. If there is only one God (and we have said this—that God is solitary), and if He is, omnipresent and omnipotent, how could there be any other god? It seems logical to me that you could not have two gods who both possess **omniscience**, **omnipresence** and **omnipotence**? I suppose you could theoretically have one God who possesses the "three O's" and another (or more) gods who are *less* knowledgeable, present or powerful but I should think that soon *they* might grow discontent. So IF you're going to assert that there is one God, one God only, and only one God it seems OK (logically speaking) that

this God would be all kinds of awesome: omniscient even, and omnipresent and omnipotent...

This three-itemed list today is the place where many theologians *begin* actually, when they seek to describe the God of the Bible as to His attributes. And I am not only offering these three attributes as true but exciting—because of the world in which we live, where these three attributes of God are doubted, ignored and even scoffed at. It has become far less popular to assert God as singularly awesome, and use these three words. And like *trinity* and other words that we use, the words omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence are not easily found in the Bible itself. *But* let's consider a few Bible passages:

Psalms 139 – in this place David prays to God as a God who is everywhere. There is nowhere that God is not. What kind of God are we reading about here?

Genesis 1:1 – In this very famous thing that Moses said, God is the Creator. He speaks and all kinds of things come into being. Only when we get to the creation of Adam does God use something that is already existing (dirt). In this verse we read

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
וַיֵּצְאֵהוּ אֱלֹהִים, בְּרֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁמַיִם, אֶת הָאָרֶץ;
Beresheet bara Elohim et hassamayim wuh-et ha-ah-réts

And I would ask again, what kind of God are we reading about, who can create out of nothing?

In John 1:1-5 we read from John, the apostle of Jesus, ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*** When it comes to Jesus, are we sensing something awesome about Him? Is He described as having been limited in any way, or over on the bench when God made the world?

Back to the Old Testament where we have from ISAIAH the prophet (40:21-26) ***Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who***

created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Does Isaiah seem to bring God down to size, make Him equal with other royal beings? Is His nature simply comparable to any other ancient gods?

Back in the New Testament Luke gives us in Acts 2:38,39 **Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”** Does Peter seem to indicate that the mission of Jesus would be limited just to the first century and just to those who actually met Him? And is there any sense that God will offer to, but not actually engage people by drawing them to Himself?

And finally in a later New Testament book—the other passage from our reading this morning, Hebrews 1:3 **He [the Son] is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven** noticing that according to this writer, Jesus sustains all things by His powerful word. He just speaks and stuff holds together. All things hold together. If His speaking ceased for just a millisecond, everything that is would fly apart!

Unlike God’s attribute of holiness, which is plainly just spoken out, or His attribute of love—which is also simply stated plainly and clearly in the Bible, the three O’s are more *embedded* all through the Scripture. None of these three words is IN the Bible... But the ideas are clearly there. And I would suggest to you that through all of Israel’s and the Church’s history in the Bible, the people of God (and therefore WE)

Need God to be “3 O’d”.

- We love that there is nothing He does not know
- We love there is nowhere that He is not
- We love that there is nothing He cannot do

If you want evidence of this craving among us, look at **OUR SONGS**. Consider how we sing on Sunday mornings. The omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God are woven and laced throughout our songs. Listen to K-LOVE radio and I bet within five minutes you can identify at least one of the O’s being praised or adored or referenced.

Consider **HOW WE PRAY!** Do you hear us saying, “Well Lord, since You’re only around some of the time, please accept my request today while I have Your attention”? Do we pray, “Lord please save up some of Your power for this

situation where I need You to show up, since You might get tired and worn down”?

We are saying that the Three O'd God

- CAUSES SOME THINGS TO HAPPEN
 - He **Knows** about all the ins and outs of everything that happens, all the tricky, complicated interactions, how the time-line works (and commands it), **discerns** the implications of this not happening if that doesn't happen, **appreciates** the factoring in of us participating or not, **completely gets** how His ancient decrees jive with human responsibility, **values** those things that Christians voluntarily contribute—very possibly done at risk, in sacrifice and in love for Him, **plans** that His will is accomplished even IF not everyone goes along with it, **laughs** at the devil, **fully enjoys** when His will IS obeyed by little creatures, and **blazes** in glory all the while, **applauded** by the angelic host, worshipped by the saints and **bowed down** to by all who have opposed Him. He cannot be out-figured, out-manuevered, out-thought, exhausted or defeated. Ever.
- ALLOWS SOME THINGS TO HAPPEN
 - HE is smart enough to know how evil will be reckoned with by His own great sense of justice. No one will be gipped. Evil will not be able to say, “you didn't give me a full chance—the game was rigged by you shutting it down early; therefore your glory is a sham.” His greatest honor will be plainly seen by all when all justice is fully vindicated and at precisely the right time. (I think that when we see this, we will be utterly amazed at the righteousness and brilliance of His timing!)
- WILL BRING TOGETHER ALL THINGS TO HIS OWN GLORY.
 - This may not impress you now because you want your loved one to get healed today. You want your abandoned sister-in-law to get her day in court. You want your favorite impoverished country to get first-rate health care NOW. You want your Mom's rapist brought to full prosecution, and sooner than later. You want that terrorist mowed down in a hail of inescapable and deadly projectiles. Whether God gets the honor or credit or glory, well, maybe that's not your great concern. But that is **Michael's** concern. And that is **Gabriel's** concern. And that is the **seraphim's** concern. And that is the **cherabim's** concern—and they're all far smarter and older than we are. And that is the concern of all the **saints** who are in glory today! And that is the **Son's** concern and the **Holy Spirit's** concern and the **Father's** great concern. He is God. There is none other. And glory is His 24 hour/day, 365¼ day per year OCCUPATION. Your very life and

purpose are not just to bring you pleasure or success or esteem. It is to bring Him glory.

The three O's accommodate His glory, allow for the fitting together of the things He DOES and the things He allows to exist. That He **knows** everything, is **present everywhere** in the universe (not just on planet Earth), and is **inexhaustible in power** and always HAS been all three of these things—gives me immense comfort. Because I (and everyone I know) am so limited in what I know, so limited to being in one place at one time and so easily worn out, it gives me joy actually to know that I look forward to meeting this God.

My mind goes back to a passage we read recently (John 14:8,9):

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip?" Three years into their walk with Him, the disciples still were not really getting Who Jesus was. Jesus and the Father were One. They still are. "I'm sorry, Judaism. You can't have God without having Jesus." There is one God. And He is three persons. And Jesus of Nazareth was the Son. And still is.

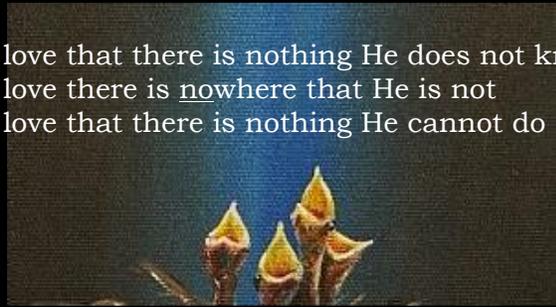
Our God knows everything. Our God is all over the place and there is nowhere that He is absent. Our God is incalculably powerful and holds all things together just by His Word. He never wears out. He never forgets. He never is NOT right there next to you. He is awesome, I tell you! You must believe me!

Let's do this verse again from our opening hymn this morning:

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.¹

¹ Walter Chalmers Smith c 1876.

PPTs 8,9,11 + Challies “Attributes”



- We love that there is nothing He does not know
- We love there is nowhere that He is not
- We love that there is nothing He cannot do

We are saying that the three O's God:
 • causes some things to happen
 • allows some things to happen
 • will bring all things to His own glory

Omniscient
 Omnipresent
 Omnipotent

