

Review:

Did you gain any insights as you read through the Gospel of Luke 1-12?

Last week we discussed that God is Holy, meaning he is morally pure and completely set apart from creation. When we stand before his holiness we become shamefully aware that we are sinful and finite (limited by our humanity), yet it is also comforting to know that God can never do anything that is wrong or evil.

Are there any questions with regard to God's holiness that have been raised in your mind as a result of last week's study?

We have discussed the holiness of God but there are also a few other characteristics that we want to look at in order to help us better understand our relationship with him.

1) God is Just

Psalms 9:8 (NIV)

He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.

What does it mean to say God is just?

If God is just, then what are the implications with regard to our sin?

Job 10:14 (NIV)

If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished.

What is a proper response to sin from God's perspective?



Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

Genesis 2:16-17 (NLT)

¹⁶But the Lord God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden... ¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."

Romans 6:23 (NIV)

For the wages of sin is death,

God is HOLY Good News:

Bad News:

God is JUST Good News:

Bad News:

How do you respond to these truths?

Fortunately there are other characteristics of God that come into play that bring us hope. God is not simply HOLY and JUST, he is also LOVE.

2) God is Love

How is God's love different from our love?

What is God's love based on if it is not based on our performance?



1 John 4:10 (NLT)

This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:8 (NIV)

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

What sort of things might I do that would cause God to love me less?

What can I do to ensure God will continue to love me, or to love me more?

How do you feel about the fact that you can't increase or diminish God's love for you?

There is one more characteristic of God we want to quickly touch on.

3) God is Sovereign

Daniel 4:29-33 (NIV)

²⁹Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" ³¹The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. ³²You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes." ³³Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.



After 7 Years Nebuchadnezzar repents and acknowledges the sovereignty of God

Daniel 4:34-35 (NIV)

³⁴At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

What do we mean when we say God is sovereign?

In what ways might it bother us to confess that "God is sovereign"?

One of the great challenges to belief in God is the question, "If God exists, why does he not do something about all the evil in the world?"

This perspective raises a tension between his character and what appears to be:

God's inability to do something about the evil	His sovereignty
God's acceptance of evil	His holiness
God's unwillingness to stop or judge evil	His justice
God's indifference to people's suffering	His love

Which of these attributes of God do you find you struggle with the most?

Which of these attributes do you find the most reassuring?

The goal of this series is to show you that God does have a plan, he is working it out, and that you are a part of it. God is approaching things the way he does *because* he is holy, just, loving, and sovereign.

In what ways is it comforting to know God is in control?



Romans 8:28 (NLT)

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

If God is truly sovereign and in control, how might that affect how you approach this next week?

HOME STUDY:

Read: The Gospel of Luke: Chapters 13-24