

Transcendence and Self Sufficiency of God

Introduction: How is God different from us? When studying God's attributes, we find that there are essentially 2 kinds: "communicable" and "incommunicable." *Communicable* attributes are attributes that God shares or communicates with us (love, knowledge, mercy, justice, ect.) *Incommunicable* attributes are those that God does **not** share or communicate with others. (eternal, infinite, unchanging, and self-sufficient) These attributes transcend all human capacities and comprehension. They should cause us to magnify (make much of) Him in our mind and heart.

"To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare unto Him? (Isa.40:18)

" Oh, the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33)

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

"To whom will you compare me or who is my equal?" says the Holy One." (Isaiah 40:25)

- I. **God is Transcendent**- He is far "above" the creation in the sense that he is greater than the creation and he is independent of it.
- A. **God is Uncreated**- *"in the beginning God..."* Gen.1:1 God had no origin, no beginning, and no end. There was never a time when He did not exist. He is eternal and everlasting. This is impossible to illustrate because He is unlike anything and anyone else in the universe. He made it all. He made us all. *"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."* Col.1:17 He is called Eternal and Everlasting-(1Tim.1:17; Isa.9:6)
 - B. **God is Infinite**
 - 1. Infinite in Presence (Omnipresent) *"Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? Declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? Declares the Lord."*-Jer.23:24 (1Ki.8:27; 2Chr.2:6; Ps.139:7-10; Pr.15:3; Mt.18:20; Acts 17:24,27-28; Eph.4:6
 - 2. Infinite in Knowledge (Omniscient) *"Great is our Lord, and of great power; His understanding is infinite"*- Ps.147:5 (1Ki.8:39; 1 Chron.28:9; Job 37:16; Job 42:1-2; Ps.94:7-10)
 - 3. Infinite in Power (Omnipotent) *"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?"*-Jer.32:27 (Job 42:2; Ps.89:6-8; Jer.10:6-7,10,12; Mt.28:18-19; Rev.6:13-17)
 - C. **God is Immutable**- God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations. (Ps.33:11,102:25-27; Mal.3:6; James 1:17; Num.23:19; 1Sam. 15:29)
 - D. **God is Spirit** (Jn.4:24; Ps.139:7-10) *"Spirit is bodiless, invisible reality."*-W.A. Pratney

II. **God is Self-Sufficient and Self-Existent-**

- A. **Self-Sufficient-** God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify him and bring him joy. He has life in himself (-John 5:26) and he is not served by human hands- "The God who made the world and everything in it, being lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."—Acts 17:24-25
1. "The word *necessary* is wholly foreign to God. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away."—A.W. Tozer
 2. He is the source of all life. (Jn.5:26) Nothing returns to him that he did not first give. "Father" means "Source!"-*Kephale- Greek*
- B. **Self-Existent-** "I AM WHO I AM."-(Ex.3:14; Jn.8:58) "Father glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made."-Jn.17:5,24
- C. **Eternally Satisfied With Himself-** "There was no heaven where His glory is now particularly manifested. There was no earth to engage His attention. There were no angels to sing His praises. There was no universe to be upheld by the word of His power. There was nothing, no one, but God; and that not for a day, a year, or an age, but "from everlasting." During a past eternity God was alone—self-contained, self sufficient, in need of nothing."—A.W. Pink (Jn.17:5,24)

III. **God is Immanent-** The literal meaning of the immanence of God is "to be within" or "near" in relation to God's creation. Immanence is closely related to God's omnipresence, in that God is always present within the universe, though distinct from it. God is 'within' the universe in that God is its sustaining cause. Though God is transcendent, he is also immanent!

- A. **Immanent through Christ-** (Incarnation)"*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" (Phil.2:6-8)
- B. **Immanent through the Holy Spirit-** "*and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."* (Mt.3:16)

IV. **Common Unbiblical Philosophies: God fashioned in "man's" image**

- A. **Materialism-** Denies the existence of God altogether. The material universe is all there is. Only material things are real.

Transcendence and Self Sufficiency of God

- B. Pantheism- The Greek word “pan” means “all” or “every.” It holds the ideas that everything, the whole universe, is God, or is part of God. Most eastern religions such as Buddhism are pantheistic systems of thought. Because the whole universe is God, then God has no personality. God is also constantly changing because the universe changes. God is not holy, because the evil in the universe is also part of God. Pantheistic systems deny the importance of individual personalities: since everything is God, the goal of an individual should be to blend in with the universe and become more unified with it, thus losing his or her individual distinctiveness.
- C. Dualism- God and the material universe have eternally existed side by side. God and matter become the only forces in the universe. Dualism indicates an eternal conflict between God and evil aspects of the material universe. Most “New Age” religion is dualistic. Will God ultimately triumph over evil in the universe? We cannot be sure, because God and evil have apparently always existed side by side. The series “Star Wars” is a modern example of dualism in our culture that claims the existence of a universal “Force” that has both good and an evil side. There is no concept of one holy and transcendent God who rules over all and will certainly triumph over all.
- D. Deism- God created the universe and is far greater than the universe. God is “transcendent” but not “immanent.” Deism denies God’s present involvement in the world, thus leaving no place for His immanence in the created order. Many modern Christians today are, in effect, practical deists, since they live lives almost totally devoid of genuine prayer, worship, fear of God, or moment by moment trust in God to care for needs that arise.