

RELISHING THE ESSENCE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Part II: The Attributes Of God

F. Treasuring The Goodness Of God

(James 1:13-17 with Psalm 34:8-10 and Genesis 1-3)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the key questions voiced by those who wonder about the existence of God is this: "If a **GOOD** God truly exists, how can there be so much pain, injustice and destruction in this world?"
- B. God is revealed as being a **GOOD** God in Scripture, and that against the backdrop of **sin** in the world of which He is **NOT** the **Author!** How God's goodness is seen and provided for man in the face of the calamity that sin produces is seen in passages like James 1:17 with Psalm 34:8-10 in view of Genesis 1-3:

II. Treasuring The Goodness Of God, James 1:13-17 with Psalm 34:8-10 and Genesis 1-3.

- A. The Bible reveals God is "Good" in creation in Genesis 1-3 in the sense that He is **wholesome**:
 1. When God created the universe in all its complexities and balance, a creation that exhibited His nature (Romans 1:19-20), it was a thing of beauty, balance and helpfulness for all of its parts, Genesis 1:1-30.
 2. Thus, God saw that His creation was "very good," Genesis 1:31, and the word, "good" there is the Hebrew word, *tov* that pictures all that is beneficial, pleasing and wholesome [Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, p. 92-93]. We thus know God is "Good", that He is wholesome, providing beauty, balance and helpfulness to all of His creatures.
 3. However, Genesis 3:1-6 tells of the fall of man into sin against God's righteous character, and that such sin disrupted the wholesome order in man's relationships (Genesis 3:6, 7-13) and brought him spiritual and physical death, 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Romans 8:20-22 NIV.
 4. In response, God in **GOODNESS** sought to limit the expressions of the sinful insubordination of the serpent and Eve toward Adam and God in the fall, and to limit Adam's failure to lead his wife; God did so by doling out punishments designed to check these respective destructive disorders, Gen . 3:14-21.
 5. Furthermore, in **GOODNESS**, God left the door open for **REDEMPTION through CHRIST** that He might save man from sin so man might eat of the Tree of Life, Genesis 3:22-24 with Revelation 22:1-3.
- B. Thus, **WHILE** God is *currently* in the **process** of **working out** man's **SALVATION** from **destruction producing SIN**, passages like James 1:13-17 and Psalm 34:8-10 reveal that He is **WHOLESOME** or **GOOD** in **contrast** to the errant views of sinful, deceived man to the contrary (as follows):
 1. In Psalm 34:8-10, king David encouraged his listeners to "taste and see that the Lord is good," that "blessed is the man that trusteth in him", and David revealed how wholesome the Lord had been to him against the backdrop of his own errant misdeeds that had threatened his welfare (as follows):
 - a. David had faced the pressure of having to flee Israel's king Saul for his life, 1 Sam. 20:1-21:10a.
 - b. However, David had fled into Philistine territory, a move that landed him in more potential trouble as the Philistines, enemies of Israel, considered killing David when he arrived, 1 Samuel 21:10b.
 - c. Afraid of the Philistines, David pretended to be insane before his foes, a move that led the Philistine leader, Achish to drive David from his presence, 1 Samuel 21:11-22:1; Intro. notes to Psa. 34.
 - d. David credited his respect of the Lord for God's gracious involvement to help him, Psalm 34:6, 8b.
 - e. Having praised God, David called on his listeners to "taste and see that the Lord is *good*," that God loves to preserve His creative order and help people like David if they trust in Him, Psalm 34:8a!
 2. James 1:13-17 counters the errant claim by some that one is tempted to sin under trials (James 1:2 NIV, ESV) because he is tempted by God; such an error implies that God is less than perfectly good, James 1:13. To the contrary, James 1:14-17 reveals the true cause of temptation to sin is man's own sinful lusts. Indeed, God is **good**, and gives *only wholesome* gifts, cf. James 1:16-17!

Lesson: God is **GOOD**, or the Cause of all that is **WHOLESOME** in our existence. Thus, all that is **UNWHOLESOME** is not from Him, but arises from sin and/or its effects.

Application: (1) May we **RELY** on God's **CHARACTER** as being **WHOLESOME** no matter how unwholesome our experiences in life may be. (2) May we then view all unwholesomeness as caused **NOT** by **GOD**, but by **EVIL** itself, and live for Christ's coming reign in faith in His **GOODNESS!**