



PROCLAMATION CONFERENCE 2022

**THE
ATTRIBUTES
OF GOD**

SEEING AND SAVORING OUR MAKER

September 23-24, 2022

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Conference Schedule

FRIDAY EVENING

- 6:30 - 7:00 pm – Arrival and Registration (Bookstall Open)
- 7:00 - 7:15 pm – Introductions and Singing
- 7:15 - 8:45 pm – **Beholding the God of Merciful Holiness**
- 8:45 - 9:00 pm – Closing Song and Dismissal
- 9:00 - 9:30 pm – Bookstall Open

SATURDAY MORNING

- 9:00 - 9:30 am – Arrival and Coffee (Bookstall Open)
- 9:30 - 9:45 am – Introductions and Singing
- 9:45 - 11:15 am – **Beholding the God of Self-Sufficient Fullness**
- 11:15 - 11:30 am – Closing Song and Dismissal to Lunch

LUNCH BREAK

- 11:30 - 1:00 pm – Lunch and Fellowship
- 12:30 - 1:00 pm – Bookstall Open

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

- 1:00 - 1:05 pm – Transition and Opening Song
- 1:05 - 2:35 pm – **Beholding the God of Covenantal-Redemptive Love**
- 2:35 - 3:00 pm – Extended Break (Bookstall Open)
- 3:00 - 4:30 pm – **Beholding the God of Sovereign Supremacy**
- 4:30 - 4:40 pm – Closing Song and Dismissal
- 4:40 - 5:15 pm – Bookstall Open

Refreshments available in the Fellowship Hall.
50% Off Bookstall is in the Conference Room.

The Attributes of God

Seeing and Savoring Our Maker

Dr. Bruce Ware

BEHOLDING THE GOD OF MERCIFUL HOLINESS

Isaiah 6:1-13

I. What's at Stake in Pursuing a Knowledge of the True God?

A. Why We Must Know God

- A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 9: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”
- Tozer’s principle: “We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God.”
- Tozer's principle restated: God has so made us that we instinctively, naturally seek to become like whatever it is we esteem most highly. cf. Ps 115:8; 135:18; Hos 9:10
- David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, p. 88: “It is one of the defining marks of Our Time that God is now weightless. I do not mean by this that he is ethereal but rather that he has become unimportant. He rests upon the world so inconsequentially as not to be noticeable.”

B. Scriptural Support: Necessity of Knowing God

1. Isaiah 11:9b
2. Jeremiah 9:23-24; 31:31, 34
3. Philippians 3:7-10
4. John 17:3

II. Fundamental to the Self-Revelation of the True God: Knowing God as both Transcendent and Immanent

Isaiah 57:15 – For thus says the high and exalted One, who lives forever, whose name is Holy, “I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the spirit of the contrite.”

III. God's Transcendent Majesty (Isa. 6:1-5)

A. Aspects of God's Majesty, Glory, and Holiness (6:1-4)

B. Isaiah's Response (6:5)

IV. God's Immanent Mercy (Isa. 6:6-7)

A. The Initiator of Mercy – God

B. The Means of Mercy – Purification (personalized!)

C. The Goal of Mercy – Restoration and Service

V. Isaiah's Call to Ministry (Isa. 6:8-13)

A. Willing Service Flows out of such Knowledge of God (6:8)

B. Perseverance in Difficult Service Flows out of such Knowledge of God (6:9-13)

VI. Conclusion

BEHOLDING THE GOD OF SELF-SUFFICIENT FULLNESS

Isaiah 40:12-17, 27-31

Introduction: Our Culture's Mandate of *Self*-esteem vs. the Bible's Mandate of *God*-esteem

I. God's Self-Sufficiency Defined

God possesses within Himself, intrinsically and eternally, every quality in infinite measure

II. Biblical Support Exhibiting God's Self-Sufficiency

A. Isaiah 40:12-17

1. God's Immensity and Power (40:12)
2. God's Knowledge and Wisdom (40:13-14)
3. Implications for Us (40:15-17, 27-31)

B. Psalm 50

1. Israel is on trial, and God is the 1) Prosecuting Attorney, 2) Chief Witness, and 3) Judge
2. Their offense before God is not their failure to carry out the sacrifices He requires (50:5-8)
3. God doesn't need what they bring to Him (50:9-13)
4. The solution: Thanksgiving! What does thanksgiving imply? God is the Giver, we are the receivers; God protects and rescues, we are the protected and rescued. We need Him! Therefore, live acknowledging our dependence upon God and give thanks to God! (50:14, 15, 23)

C. Acts 17:24-25

God's Self-Sufficiency Supported by Three Truths about God:

1. God is the Creator of All that Is
2. God is the Sovereign Ruler of all that He has Created
3. God is the Giver of All Good Things to All People

III. Two Denials of God's Self-sufficiency

A. Process Theology

B. Popular Evangelical Theology

IV. Implications and Applications of God's Self-Sufficiency

A. Because God is infinitely and eternally full, rich, joyous, and satisfied, i.e., because God is fully self-sufficient, consider these implications:

1. God does not need the glorious creation he has made, either in whole or any part, including his creation of human beings. As humbling as it is true, God does not need us (Isa 40; Acts 17:25).
2. God does not need anything from us; he needs no help, no gifts, no service, no fellowship (Acts 17:25). Though he commands our obedience and calls us to service, he needs nothing that we are or have to offer.
3. God cannot receive anything from us that is not previously, rightfully, and entirely his and his alone (Acts 17:25; Jas 1:17). In fact, this is so much the case that God is both dishonored and offended when we approach him as if he needs what we have to bring him, as if we can give him something that he lacks (Ps 50).

4. Every good and perfect gift, necessarily, is from him and him alone (Acts 17:25; Jas 1:17). Imagine this: there is no true thought, no good work, no discerning word, no talent, no ability, no gifting that is not from him. For every quality that exists in creation, and in your lives and mine, is there at all, and is there to the scope and extent that it is, only because God, in his grace and kindness, has granted this to us. While God possesses all that he has – all that there is – intrinsically, in contrast, we have what we have – all that we have – by derivation. We owe him everything for all that we have and enjoy.
5. God alone is worthy of all honor, glory, praise, adoration, love, devotion, obedience, and worship (Isa 42:8; 1 Cor 10:31).

B. Key Questions that arise because of God's Self-Sufficiency

1. Why are we here? What is our purpose?
The answer is NOT that God was lonely and needed fellowship. Ps 50 – he's offended and dishonored to think so.

Rather, particularly in relation to his people, the answer is this: Though God doesn't need us, he loves us. And so, his purpose in creating and redeeming us is not that we might fill up some lack in him, but that he might fill us up with himself. He made us empty to be filled with his fullness, thirsty to drink of the water of life, weak to receive his strength, foolish to be instructed and corrected by his wisdom.

In his love, he longs to give, to share the bounty. He wants us to experience in finite measure the fullness of joy and blessing that he knows infinitely—all to redound to the praise and glory of his name, the Giver and Provider of all the good we enjoy.

C. S. Lewis, in his *The Problem of Pain*, says that God’s love is not like ours, helping another while needing also to be helped. No, God’s love, says Lewis, is “bottomlessly selfless, by very definition; it has everything to give and nothing to receive” (p. 50).

2. Why does God demand our obedience?

Because he loves us and wants our best, and because he knows that our only true joy is found when we follow in his ways, he demands (yes, demands!) that we obey him.

C. S. Lewis, again, says concerning the commandments of God, “Those divine demands, which sound to our natural ears most like those of a despot and least like those of a lover, in fact marshal us where we should want to go if we knew what we wanted” (p. 52). As he says in his sermon, “The Weight of Glory,” we are far too easily satisfied. God calls us to life, and this is found only in obedience to his will and ways.

3. Why does God enlist our service?

Psalm 100:2 and Acts 17:25—how do they go together? God doesn’t need our service (Acts 17:25), so his call for us to serve (Ps 100:2) is a call to *participate in the privilege and joy of the ministry of grace* that flows *from* him, *into* us, and then *through* us into the lives of others. We can take no credit. All we have is a gift from him, and he gives us what we have in order to be used in service to others. God is so generous! Rather than just doing the work unilaterally, he devises a plan by which he intends that some of his work be done in and through others by calling, equipping, and using them. We have absolutely no basis for boasting, either before God or others. Human pride is utterly shattered; it is devastated when we understand in the depths of our souls the infinite and intrinsic fullness that is God’s alone for all eternity. It not only is not about us; it is not of us, or from us, or because of us! All that we are—every quality that we possess; all that we have—every

good and worthwhile characteristic; and all that we can do—every ability, both in its kind and in its degree – all are gifts to us from God.

4. Why does God call us to pray?

Does God benefit from our prayers? Does he learn new things? Think of it, in Matt 6, in light of Jesus telling us not to worry since the Father already knows what we need, you might think that he'd teach regarding prayer, "don't bother." But God invented *prayer as a tool, a mechanism, for drawing us close to him, in sensed dependency, trust, hope, faith, love, longing, anticipation*. It is for *relationship*—for our relationship with him!

5. Why does he require our worship?

- a. It is our *highest duty* to worship God alone, for *in him alone* is the fullness of infinite perfection. Hence, Isa 42:8; 1 Cor 10:31.
- b. It is our *greatest delight* to worship God alone, for *from him alone* do we receive the fullness of everlasting joy and satisfaction. Hence, Isa 55:1-3; John 15:11.
- c. It is our *ultimate destiny* to worship God alone, for *to him alone* are we drawn to know the intimacy of his glorious presence. Hence, Isa 11:9; John 17:24.

C. How can we know and be rightly related to this glorious, rich, full God?

Answer: In our sin, this is impossible, and apart from God's grace we are eternally separated from this One who alone is good, true, wise, and beautiful. But through faith in Christ, we are reconciled to this God of everlasting life and joy (John 17:3; 1 Pet 3:18). What love, what grace, what mercy, and what joy is ours in God, only through Christ.

V. Conclusion

- Marvel at the glory of God's self-sufficient fullness.
- Be humbled by the glory of God's self-sufficient fullness.
- Find your true joy and satisfaction in the glory of God's self-sufficient fullness.
- Love, obey, and worship God to the glory of God and for our good.

BEHOLDING THE GOD OF REDEMPTIVE-COVENANTAL LOVE

Isaiah 43:1-7

I. Introduction: God's Love as Complex, not Simple

Universal Love — John 3:16; Matt 5:43-48

Redemptive-Covenantal Love — Rom 9:13; Eph 1:5; Eph 5:25

Charles Spurgeon – “The Lord, then, has a people whom He regards with a special love which is not shed abroad in the hearts of others. These people He set apart for Himself from eternity.”

II. God's Redemptive-Covenantal Love Extolled

A. God's Redemptive-Covenantal Formation of His People Established (43:1)

- “But now” — God's judgment of his people (42:23-25) now turns to merciful salvation, in a way reminiscent, for NT believers, of Eph 2:4 that follows 2:1-3
- Yahweh, God's special name as the Covenant God of Israel (cf. Exod 3:13-15), is invoked
- “Your Creator” and “He who formed you” pick up terms from Gen 1:1, 27 (*bara*) and 2:7 (*yatsar*) where God “creates” the universe, and “creates” man as male and female, and “forms” man from the dust of the ground — but here Isaiah 43:1 applies them to Israel created to be God's people, formed as God's own possession
- As His own people, He has pledged to save them, using here the term is to “redeem,” i.e., to buy them out of slavery, to purchase them at great cost since they are His own people — anticipating the forthcoming discussion of Israel's exodus from their bondage and slavery in Egypt (43:3-4)

- God has called them *by name*, i.e., Jacob called Israel (Gen 32:28; 35:10), which is the order of names in 43:1. To name is to demonstrate one’s rightful authority over and possession of the one named. And because He has named Jacob Israel, He says of Israel, “you are Mine”!
- B. God’s Redemptive-Covenantal Commitment to His People Expressed (43:2)
- Waters, river, fire — all symbols here of harm and destruction, and symbols of forces that can overpower their victims, so they are rendered helpless apart from external intervention
 - The people needn’t fear (43:2, 5) for one profound and glorious reason: “I will be with you” — expresses God’s special covenant commitment to this people alone. This might be thought of as the “manifest presence” of the omnipresent God, i.e., God demonstrates His powerful presence in providing protection and salvation
 - “I” and “you” stressed, as in “I will be with you,” but seen over and over in these verses — count them: eleven “you’s” and “your’s” in 42:1-2 alone! What a commitment God has toward these, the people of His creating, His making, His forming, and His naming.
- C. God’s Redemptive-Covenantal Love for His People Expanded (43:3-4)
- Who is this God? the “LORD *your* God, the Holy One *of Israel*” Yes, He is God over all, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. But as Israel’s *shema* declares (Deut 6:4), “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!”

- The price of redemption here is given — Egypt, Cush and Seba are given in exchange for the lives of His own people. Consider afresh the exodus (Ex 4:21-23)
- Crucial question raised by this text: is it possible that something about Israel commended her to God, so that His salvation of Israel, but not Egypt, has something to do with Israel's relative goodness or uprightness when compared to Egypt? The answer given in Ezekiel 20:4-10.
- So, what explains the favoritism shown to Israel, God's particular redemption of her, not Egypt? Answer: "Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love you"
- The exodus, God's greatest saving act in the OT, anticipates the cross, God's greatest saving event ever, where God in Christ has mercy on whom He chooses, but He does so in the cross by giving His own Son
- The greatest display of God's love can only be seen against the backdrop of His just judgment of sin (cf. Rom 9:22-23)

D. God's Redemptive-Covenantal Pledge to His People Extended (43:5-6)

- God's covenant commitment to His people is the basis for the opening admonition of 43:5, "Do not fear, for I am with you" (cf. 43:2)
- Now, God's commitment to His own people is extended from the generation of the exodus deliverance (43:3-4) to those in the future exile whom God will bring from afar and gather together as His own people

- The *certainty* of this future salvation is seen in the two-fold divine, “I will”!!! (43:5 and 6)
- The *extensiveness* of this future salvation is seen in the directional terms — east, west, north, south, afar, ends of the earth — and the use of “sons” and “daughters,” i.e., everyone from everywhere of My people, says the Lord, I will bring back!
- Notice the complexity of God’s relationship with His people — through the prophet Isaiah God, on the one hand, warns of the certainty of upcoming judgment and exile (e.g., Isa 10:5-14; 22:1-14; 29:1-16; 32:9-14) while at the same time He promises ultimate deliverance, redemption, salvation, and full restoration (e.g., Isa 11:1-16; parts of chs. 25, 26, 27; 29:17-24; 32:15-20; 43:1-7). Cf. Jer 32:42 for the expression of this truth in one verse.
- Here is an amazing and glorious truth from what we have seen: God’s final word to His people is *not* a word of judgment (which they — we! — fully and eternally deserve) but rather it is a word of restoration, of healing, of forgiveness, of renewal, of salvation!

E. God’s Redemptive-Covenantal End for His People Extolled (43:7)

- Why, in the end, are *these* saved? Why are *these* the objects of God’s kind and gracious restoration and forgiveness and final salvation? Answer: These comprise the grouping of “everyone who is *called by My name*,” says the LORD. So, while they are called “by name” (43:1), so that they are His possession, the people of His making and forming and calling and naming, they are also, most importantly, called by *His* name (43:7), that is, their identity is wrapped up with God and His purposes, His character, His work, living to His honor.

- The end for which they are created, formed and made: They are called by His name so that they will live for His glory.
- But how shall they live for His glory? They will live to His glory as they embrace the particular redemptive-covenantal love shown them, totally apart from any supposed merit of their own, that has created them, and called them, and saved them, as the objects of God's deepest and most profound love expressed within all of creation. Only as we embrace our election by God, our being called specially to be His people, can we enter into the fullness of His saving love — His redemptive-covenantal love — that He has for His own exclusively. And only then can we live to His glory, knowing the extent and richness of this love

III. Conclusion

- A. The “problem of goodness,” not the problem of evil, is the real “problem” that God faces as He sees us in our sin – i.e., how can God show goodness, mercy, kindness, and favor toward sinful humanity when all that they deserve is His judgment, wrath, and everlasting condemnation?
- B. Embrace this special love, this saving-covenantal love of God for His own. Be humbled by it, be filled with joy over it, and be empowered to live lives that express the depth of our dependence upon and gratitude for such unspeakably lavish, costly, and undeserved love.

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:1-2)

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”
(1 John 4:10)

A wife is to relish, not resist, the exclusive love her husband has for her alone, and an adopted son or daughter is to embrace, not rebuff, the special love his adoptive parents have just for him or her.

So also, God’s people only know His deepest human-directed love as we relish and embrace the fully unmerited and undeserved exclusive love that God has for His people alone. These are the people of His making, of His redeeming, whom He has called by name, and who are called by His name. To know the saving love of God in Christ is to know not merely the universal love of God, but it is to know especially and most deeply this redemptive-covenantal love that God has exclusively for His own people. Rejoice, for indeed, how great is the love the Father has bestowed on us that we are called the very children of God!

BEHOLDING THE GOD OF SOVEREIGN SUPREMACY

Isaiah 44:24-45:7

I. Introduction to God's Sovereignty

- A. Divine Sovereignty Defined: God exhaustively plans and meticulously carries out his perfect will as he alone knows is best, regarding all that is in heaven and on earth, and he does so without failure or defeat, accomplishing his purposes in all of creation from the smallest details to the grand purposes of his plan for the whole of the created order.

- B. Divine Sovereignty Demonstrated from two texts:
 - 1. Daniel 4:34b-35 – “Nebuchadnezzar... blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?”

 - 2. Ephesians 1:11 – “We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.”

II. Divine Sovereignty Exhibited (Isa 44:24-45:7)

- A. God's Sovereignty Control over Nature/Nations (44:24-27)
 - 1. God's Sovereignty over Nature (44:24, 27)
 - a. Creator of heaven and earth (44:24)

 - b. Providential Ruler over land and sea (44:27)

2. God's Sovereignty over Nations (44:25-26)
 - a. God causes the declarations of the future by the false prophets to fail (44:25)
 - b. God causes the declarations of the future by his prophets to succeed (44:26a)
 - c. God causes world events to bring about the fulfillment of his promise to Jerusalem (44:26b)

- B. God's Sovereign Control over Cyrus (44:28-45:4)
 1. God names "Cyrus" as his "shepherd," his "anointed," and king (44:28, 45:1, 3b, 4)
 2. God governs the life of king Cyrus (44:28-45:4)
 - a. God governs the life of Cyrus (44:28, 45:1)
 - b. God governs the activities and successes of Cyrus as king (44:28-45:3).
 - c. God governs the life and activities of Cyrus, though Cyrus does not know God! (45:4-5)
 - d. God governs the life and activities of Cyrus for the sake of his people (44:28, 45:4)

C. God's Sovereign Control over the Full "Spectrum" of life, both good and evil (45:5-7)

Isa 45:5-7 – "I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD Who does all these."

1. Assertion of exclusive claim to deity (45:5-6)
2. Divine control of the full spectrum of light and darkness, well-being, and calamity (45:7)
 - a. Spectrum of light/darkness, well-being, and calamity
 - b. Strength of terminology especially for God's control of evil—1) weaker and stronger verbs used in each couplet, and 2) "well-being" and "calamity" strongest Hebrew words for all that is good (*shalom*) and all that is horrid (*ra*).
 - c. Key Principle: **God fully controls both good and evil yet, God is wholly good and is not evil** in any respect whatsoever.
 - Isa 45:7a, "The One forming light and *creating darkness*" along with 1 John 1:5b, "God is light, and in Him there is *no darkness at all*."
 - Isa 45:7b, "Causing well-being and *creating calamity* [*ra*]" along with Psalm 5:4, "For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; *no evil* [*ra*] *dwells with You*."

d. Other Spectrum Texts

- Deut 32:39 – “See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I who *put to death* and *give life*. I have *wounded* and it is I who *heal*, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.”
- 1 Sam 2:6-7 – “The LORD *kills* and *makes alive*; He brings down to *Sheol* and *raises up*. The LORD *makes poor* and *rich*; He *brings low*, and He also *exalts*.”
- Lam 3:37-38 – “Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both *good* and *ill* go forth?”

III. Divine Sovereignty shown to be Compatible with Human Responsibility

- A. **Genesis 45:4-8** – “Then Joseph said to his brothers... ‘I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.’”
- B. **Isaiah 10:5-7, 12, 15** – “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger, and the staff in whose hands is My indignation. I send it against a godless nation, and commission it against the people of My fury, to capture booty and to seize plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. Yet it does not so intend, nor does it plan so in its heart, but rather it is its purpose to destroy, and to cut off many nation... So it will

be when the Lord has completed all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, ‘I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness... Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?’”

- C. **Acts 2:23; 4:27-28** – “This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death... For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

IV. Conclusion and Applications

- A. Sovereignty and Suffering

- B. Sovereignty and Supplication

- C. Sovereignty and Salvation