

Intro

In our previous lessons, we broke down faith into three parts:

Parts	Latin	Synonyms	Personality
Knowledge	Notitia	Understanding	Mind
Assent	Assensus	Agreement	Will
Trust	Fiducia	Reliance	Emotion

In this lesson, we will move on from definitions to a discussion of God's integrity, or *trustworthiness*.

God's glory: "God's 'glory' is the sum of His perfections, all the attributes that make Him unique and only God. He alone possesses an infinite and inexhaustible supply of energy (omnipotence), a complete awareness of all realities and possibilities past, present, and future (omniscience), and the capacity to be present everywhere at all times (omnipresence). He is unfailingly pure, righteous, and just, yet also patient, compassionate, merciful, and gracious. He is wise and generous, utterly sovereign and yet infinitely self-sacrificial. And He is entirely truthful, reliable, and trustworthy. And in all these qualities and abilities, He never changes (what theologians call immutability)."¹

"Trustworthiness, however, is at the root of our confidence in all His other attributes." [36]

I. What do we know about God?

A. Only what God tells us

B. God speaks (reveals himself)

1. Through creation [general revelation] (Rm 1.18-20, Ps 19.1-4) — but not completely
 - a. The beauty of creation infers God's goodness
 - b. But the presence of evil may infer God is not good

¹ Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God's Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 35 (In subsequent quotations, I will cite Talbert with page numbers in square brackets in the text.).

2. Consequently, we need something more, an explicit and direct revelation from God [special revelation]
 - a. At the core, God's special revelation must be trustworthy
 - b. If God's word is not trustworthy, we cannot know God

The reason so many religions exist in the world is that men do not trust God's word. The first sin lies in an unwillingness to trust God's word.

II. God's active demonstration of trustworthiness

"God does not merely act in silence so He can demonstrate His omnipotence. God speaks first, and then acts according to His words 'that you may know that I am the Lord.'" [37]

A. Declaring, then doing

1. Pharaoh invited to name the day for the plague of frogs "that you may know" (Ex 8.10)
2. God exempts Goshen from the plagues "that you may know" (Ex 8.22)
3. God promises more plagues to come on Egypt "that you may know" (Ex 9.14)
4. God explains that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is so "you may tell ... the mighty things I have done" (Ex 10.2)
5. God intends to overthrow Pharaoh and his armies "that the Egyptians may know" (Ex 14.4)

God does act, then take credit. God predicts, then acts. "That you may know."

B. Covenanting, then keeping

1. God covenanted with Noah to never again destroy the earth by flood
2. After the 40 years in the wilderness, Moses reminds Israel that God would not "forsake you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant" (Dt 4.31)

History... no world-wide floods, the persistence of Israel = God is trustworthy.

C. Defending, then demonstrating (Num 11)

1. During the wilderness wanderings, Israel complained because they had no meat — “just this manna”
2. God promised to give them meat, telling Moses to tell them they would have meat

“not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you”

3. Moses says, “Where are you going to get meat for all of us for one day, let alone thirty days?” (paraphrase)
4. Who showed the most lack of trust in this narrative?
 - a. Israel was complaining (but had seen all the miracles)
 - b. Moses was doubting (but had been the agent of all the miracles)!!!

Num 11:23 And the LORD said to Moses, “Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.” [ESV, “waxed short” KJV, “limited” NAU]

“Directly witnessing divine miracles may allay doubt temporarily, but it does not cure it. Doubt has a high recidivism rate in humans. We are capable of boundless unbelief, especially whenever God says things that over-reach our meager imaginations.” [41]

D. Human testimony to trustworthiness

1. Joshua, at the conclusion of the conquest
 - a. Personally testifies that God did all he said he would do (Josh 21.43-45)
 - b. Publicly calls on the consciences of Israel to God’s integrity (Josh 21.14)

2. Yet ... Israel was not in full possession of the land — what did Joshua mean?
- a. Joshua knew there remained more land to conquer (Josh 23.4-5), so he did not speak mistakenly
 - b. Joshua knew that God's promise was conditioned on Israel's obedience (Josh 1.2-9)
 - c. What Joshua meant:
 - 1) God gave them all the land, as promised, they still had a responsibility to take it — “they had clearly achieved hegemony over the whole region” (43)
 - 2) God gave them rest from all external enemies, they had no threat of significant opposition (44)
 - 3) Thus, God gave them all he promised (45)

The bottom line of this testimony is that God performed his part of his promise, though there remained with Israel the responsibility to **trust** and complete the task of conquest.

III. Prophetic testimony to God's integrity

Next time...