

## Intro:

### What do we know about God?

We only know what God reveals about Himself, either through discerning about Him through what He made (creation), or hearing and understanding his voice through what He said (Scriptures).

### Why must God be trustworthy?

We can only fully know God by self-revelation

God's works (actions) are self-revelatory, but ambiguous

God's words provide clarity and meaning to God's actions and reveal more than mere actions can reveal

Therefore: God's words must be trustworthy

**We could say:** Trustworthiness foundational for knowing God

When unbelievers charge God with unjustified anger and wrath, what do they lack? Trust in God's written record which explains his character and actions.

The core of trustworthiness is being and doing what one claims about oneself.

1. A failure to follow through on a promise erodes trust
2. Deliberate deception destroys trust
3. Even slight errors can erode trust (reporting something "mostly" true)

What needs to be true for God's words to be trustworthy?

1. Veracity: always telling the truth without any deception
2. Omniscience: always knowing all the truth and never deceived
3. Omnipotence: always able to deliver all he promised
4. Clarity: communicating truth understandably

## I. Veracity

God cannot lie because God is good: his words are always true.

Ps 119.160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

## II. Accuracy (due to Omniscience)

God cannot err because God is omniscient: he knows all things.

Heb 4.13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

### III. Omnipotence

#### A. Omnipotence defined:

God has the “ability to do all things that are proper objects of his power.”<sup>1</sup>

“God is all-powerful and able to do anything consistent with His own nature.”<sup>2</sup>

“Omnipotence means in practice the power to do everything that in his rational and moral perfection (i.e., his wisdom and goodness) God wills to do.”<sup>3</sup>

#### B. Scriptural testimony to God’s omnipotence

Isa 46.10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

Pr 19.21 Many plans are in a man’s heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.

Psa 33.10-11 The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples.<sup>11</sup> The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

Dan 4.34-35 ¶ “But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I 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.<sup>35</sup> “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does

<sup>1</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1998), 437.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1999), 45.

<sup>3</sup> J. I Packer, *Concise Theology : A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1995), 36.

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?'

Job 42.2 "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Ps 115.3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

Ecc 3.14 I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has *so* worked that men should fear Him.

### C. God's ability undergirds his reliability

"Reliability, then, requires honesty, accuracy and ability."<sup>4</sup>

1. Each of these are attributes: "infinite perfections of God" [80]
  - a. God is infinitely honest
  - b. God is infinitely accurate
  - c. God is infinitely able
2. The consequence of this is that God's words are infinitely reliable

"But what if He chooses not to speak? Or what if His words are vague, mystical, or in some strange language that only a select few, a priestly hierarchy, have the gift to understand them? That's exactly what many false religions believe." [80]

## IV. Clarity

### A. To have a reliable word, God must speak and must speak clearly

1. One person alone can say whatever he wants, there is no one else to whom he must be clear or accurate.
2. When someone speaks to someone else, the words must communicate clearly to be seen as reliable.

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<sup>4</sup> Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God's Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 80 (All other quotations will be noted merely by a page number [in brackets]).

“In the end, God’s trustworthiness doesn’t mean anything if we routinely can’t really understand what He means.” [81]

## B. Consider these words from God: what does God intend to say?

Ex 20.11 “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

(Compare Genesis 1-2)

Gn 2.7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Gn 2.20-23 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.<sup>22</sup> The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.”

Gn 17.5-8 “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.<sup>6</sup> “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.<sup>7</sup> “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.<sup>8</sup> “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

## C. Thoughts on clarity

1. There must be a correlation between what God says and what God does for God’s words to be trustworthy.

2. “If God routinely speaks in riddles, if God chooses language and expressions that he knows His audience will naturally interpret differently than he intends, then God is purposely creating expectations that He knows He will not fulfill.” [82]
3. If God says something we can’t test, we can still be confident in his reliability if...
  - a. He always says what he means
  - b. Those words we can test prove true
  - c. This leads us to trust the words we can’t test or observe.

## Conclusion:

Mt 14.22-29 ¶ Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. <sup>23</sup> After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. <sup>24</sup> But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. <sup>25</sup> And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” <sup>28</sup> ¶ Peter said to Him, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” <sup>29</sup> And He said, “Come!” And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

Peter trusted the Lord’s *reliable* word — and he walked on the water. But...

Mt 14.30-31 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” <sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

- The Lord’s word was clear.
- The Lord had all power.
- The Lord knew all things.
- The Lord spoke true.

But Peter doubted when he looked away from the Lord and considered the wind and the sea.