

JESUS IS ENOUGH

Readings on
The Greatness of God

Patrick J. Griffiths

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Printed in the United States of America.

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An Introduction

This short booklet looks to guide the reader in understanding life's raw material. Everyone everywhere at all times recognizes matter. They know they exist in a world that can be experienced. They know they are not the sum total of all there is, that something or someone is outside of their physical existence. They equally know that suffering and evil exist in this physical world. There is a longing to be and to have something other than what exists. There is a desire for hope and for change. It is believed one can be better than what one is and what one does. And it is believed by all that something happens beyond this physical existence, even if it is non-existence. Everyone everywhere at all times work from certain presuppositions when contemplating these larger ideas. Their conclusions will mostly be determined by their presuppositions. For those who embrace the authority of the Bible, the following presuppositions are then true.

The biblical *Story* can be thought of as a six act play: God, Creation, Rejection, Redemption, Re-Creation, and finally Joy through Worship [i.e. New Creation]. Before anything else existed, there was God. God exists in a Tri-unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and together called into existence everything that is. What God created was deemed "very good" (Gen. 1:31). God created humanity as the pinnacle of His creation and invited him to experience His greatness and His goodness (Gen. 1:26-28). Humanity, in Adam and Eve, rejected God's offer and hid from God (Gen. 3:1-8). Life apart from God was/is horrific (Gen. 3:22-24; 4:8). God graciously stooped and intervened by saving humanity from themselves and from their sin (Gen. 3:15, 21). In this redemptive act humanity is re-created and thus restored in their relationship to God. The outworking of this relationship with God, marked by redemption and adoption, is a life of joy and pleasure (Ps. 16:11).

This study desires to enable the reader in their understanding of God so they will experience joy and pleasure. Although we still exist in a fallen world not fully restored, the ideas of joy and pleasure are yet contained within the shadow. All of life's experiences are just a veiled representation of the perfect experience. However, it is necessary to understand how joy and pleasure as shadow find their ultimate expression only when aligned in a right relationship with God through initial rescue [i.e. justification]. This relationship is only possible in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Often one's view of God can be distorted and marred by pain and suffering. It is while experiencing pain and suffering many will question the sufficiency and satisfaction of who God is and what He has done. They lose sight of who they are in Christ. In the course of the discussion, we find ourselves falling back on truths that are fundamental to the Christian life. In their absence, there can be no hope, healing, or wholeness. Yet the

needy often fail to find immediate gratification from this fundamental idea. They fail to see God. It is our desire that all of us would see God, that we would be swallowed up by the sheer magnitude of who God is, and that we would see Him for who He is.

This work is presented in light of these presuppositions. May God the Holy Spirit use this material to open our minds and hearts to the grandeur of God, and may our soul and spirit find the rest it seeks in this revelation.

An Extended Introduction

A Word about *God*

God alone has written a *Story* whereby He makes known who He is and what He does to those whom He created. This revelation or unveiling of His person and work enable His people to know Him. **The relationship between God and man is one of gracious condescension.** He has written each part of the *Story* with the intent of reflecting the glory of His being. For it is only in this self-disclosure that humanity finds its ultimate joy. His people are the beneficiaries of this pursuit. Their quest is to seek God in the self-disclosure of His person as explained in His attributes and reflected in His work.

Hence, the only way to know God is to know Him through His attributes. Yet what are attributes? If you were asked what you are like, how would you go about describing yourself?

Emotionally?	“Stable”
Intellectually?	“Acute”
Physically?	“Attractive”
Spiritually?	“Honest”
Socially?	“Acceptable”

If you were asked what God is like, how would you go about describing Him? God reveals Himself in the expression of His attributes. These expressions are the means by which we come to know Him. One noted theologian defines the attributes of God in the following manner: “Attributes are qualities that are inherent to a subject. They identify, distinguish, or analyze the subject.”¹

It is possible to know God. Such information is revealed and knowable through His attributes. Thus, “The attributes of God are those distinguishable characteristics of the divine nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and which constitute the basis and ground for His various manifestations to His creatures.”²

In considering the attributes of God, we need to make six initial observations.

First, the attributes have an objective existence. We do not give God these attributes. This is true of all things. We know a cat is a cat because of its “catness.” Everything is knowable through its attributes. This is equally true of who God is. They are inherent within the very makeup of who God is and what it means to be God. “Without these qualities God would not be what he is God.”³

The attributes are inseparable from the being or essence of God. To speak of God is to speak of His attributes and their expression through His activity.

Second, the attributes exist in the divine essence. We speak of the simplicity of God in that He cannot be cut up or compartmentalized. Many wish to argue as to a fundamental attribute but such discussion is of little value.

The attributes cannot be separate from each other within the divine being so that they could conflict with each other. The attributes all equally qualify the entirety of the divine being and each other. Hence it is futile to argue for the superiority of one divine attribute over another.⁴

The attributes of God are not independent or individual ingredients in His makeup. **God is always and fully all that He is. He is never anything less than what He is in each and every moment.**

Third, the attributes manifest the divine essence. The essence of God is revealed and knowable only through the attributes. If we are to know God, it will be through His attributes. There is no knowledge of God apart from His attributes. "The attributes of God tell what he is and who he is."⁵

This revelation of His attributes is communicated through both general and special venues. General revelation is *the storybook*. It communicates His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1). In so doing, His handiwork and thus glory are seen (Ps. 19:1). Such knowledge given by general revelation is just that — general or broad. It is non-specific. It is very generic. Special revelation on the other hand is specific, exact and intimate. It is *the storyline*. It is relationship oriented. Although we cannot know God exhaustively, we can know Him personally and intimately. Special revelation enables us to know our God. General revelation provides a subjective measurement of God. Special revelation is objective and absolute in so far as it reveals God.

Thus, "We can know God only as He reveals to us His attributes, nevertheless we do, in knowing these attributes, know the Being to whom these attributes belong."⁶

Fourth, the attributes are qualities of the entire Godhead. The tri-unity of God affirms there is one God manifested in three persons. The nature of God is indivisible although distinctly expressed in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. When discussing the attributes of God, what is true of the Father is equally true of the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁷

Fifth, the attributes are permanent qualities. They cannot be gained or lost. They are intrinsic to His existence. This idea becomes problematic when discussing the incarnation and the language of Philippians 2. In the incarnation of Jesus Christ the deity

of Jesus did not suffer (i.e. His divine nature). The incarnation was not a subtraction of deity, but the addition of humanity. What Jesus was **prior** to the incarnation and what He is **after** the incarnation is the same as to what He was **during** the incarnation.

Sixth, “God is more than the sum total of His perfections (attributes).”⁸ In seeking to understand who God is through a study of His attributes, it is important to keep in mind that God is more than the sum total of His attributes.

Thus, the study of His attributes allow us to get a peek at God, **but it is only a peek!** Consider the words of Moses in Exodus 33:17-23, especially verse 23.

Then I will take My hand away and **you shall see My back**, but My face shall not be seen. (Exod. 33:23)

In studying the attributes of God, all we are seeing are God’s “back parts.” Consider also Job 11:7; 26:7-14 and 1 Timothy 6:16.

⁷ **Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?** ⁸ They are higher than the heavens — what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave — what can you know? ⁹ **Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.** (Job 11:7-9 NIV)

⁷ He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. ⁸ He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight. ⁹ He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. ¹⁰ He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness. ¹¹ The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke. ¹² By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces. ¹³ By his breath the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent. ¹⁴ **And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him!** Who then can understand the thunder of his power? (Job 26:7-14 NIV)

Who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (1 Tim. 6:16)

Friend, we know little of God’s majesty. We sit in our finitude and believe we know God. We argue about how feeble our Christianity is and how the truth of Scripture is boring. Oh the tragedy. Our God is bigger (Isa. 40:12), wiser (Isa. 40:13, 14) and greater (Isa. 40:15) than all we see. May God be pleased simply to show us His “back parts.” Such a view will transform the way we approach worship and live life and think theology.

A question needing to be asked is, “Why do we meditate on these things?” We offer three practical reasons as to why we need to study and thus meditate on the attributes of God.

First, meditation on the attributes of God cultivates a spirit of reverence and belief and creates a spirit of awe and grandeur.

Second, “The conception we have of God determines the character of our religion.”⁹ When faulty behavior is seen it is always traced back to a faulty belief of God. The better a person understands God, the better their practical religion.

Finally, “In knowing the attributes . . . we know God as he has revealed himself to be in himself.”¹⁰

As one studies the Scripture, it becomes clear there is no God like the God of the Bible. Although the list is lengthy, consider the following verses.

Then he said, “Tomorrow.” So he said, “*May it be according to your word, that you may know that **there is no one like the LORD our God.***” (Exod. 8:10)

For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that **there is no one like Me in all the earth.** (Exod. 9:14)

Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? **Who is like You**, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? (Exod. 15:11 [Exod. 15:1-21])

Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge this. (Deut. 32:31 [Deut. 32:28-33])

There is none like the God of Jeshurun [Israel], Who rides the heavens to your help, and through the skies in His majesty. (Deut. 33:26 [Deut. 33:26-29])

O LORD, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.” (1 Chron. 17:20 [Read 1 Chron. 17:16-27])

There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours. (Ps. 86:8 [Ps. 86:1-10])

⁶**For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD?** Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD, ⁷A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, And awesome above all those who are around Him? ⁸O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. (Ps. 89:6-8 [Read Ps. 89:5-18])

To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal?” says the Holy One. (Isa. 40:25)

Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me.” (Isa. 46:9 [Read Isa. 46:1-13])

⁶**There is none like You, O LORD;** You are great, and great is Your name in might. ⁷Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Your due! For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, **there is none like You.** (Jer. 10:6, 7 [Read Jer. 10:1-16])

⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day **the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.** (Zech. 14:9 [Read Zech. 14:1-11])

Friend, there is none like our God . . . none. It is for this reason the Psalmist cries out, "Praise Him according to His excellent greatness (Psalm 150:2). So as we study the attributes of God, the intent is that His people would be able to affirm that He is enough in this life and in the life to come. Jesus is not just necessary; Jesus is enough! "When Christ is absolutely everything, then Christ alone is absolutely **enough**."¹¹ May the study of God compel us to say, "He is enough in this life and in the life to come." May this singular truth free us from our self-imposed bondage and cause us to worship Him even when we find ourselves traveling on the path of pain in a context of emotional and spiritual confusion.

A Word about the Trinity

"Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show you a man that can comprehend the Triune God."
John Wesley

The title of this short study begs the question, "Why Jesus?" Does the statement, "Jesus is enough" depreciate the role of the Father and the Holy Spirit in the life of His people? How are we to view this idea?

Primarily, we must introduce the idea of the Trinity. The Bible speaks of a monotheistic faith ("One-God"). There is only one God. Yet this one God exists in three persons. There is one essence within the Godhead shared equally and without division in three persons. The union within the Trinity is explained theologically by two descriptions. **First**, the Bible speaks of an equality of essence within the Trinity.

I and the Father are one. (John 10:30, 31)

Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9)

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, (Col. 2:9)

This, theologically, is called **the ontological Trinity**. This simply means they are equals in their being. The ontological Trinity addresses the area of **unity and equality**. Each member of the Godhead is fully and undiminished God. There is no superiority of essence or being. There is only one God. **However**, there is another way in which the relationship of the Godhead is explained in the Bible and theology calls this **the economic Trinity**.

He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, **Your will be done**." (Matt. 26:42)

I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because **I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.** (John 5:30)

This speaks to the **economy or function or administration** within the Godhead proper, it explains how each person within the Godhead operates. An early church father, Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 35 or 50 between 98 and 117) in writing to the Ephesians notes how,

“Forasmuch as ye are stones of a temple, which were **prepared beforehand for a building** of God the Father, being hoisted up to the heights through **the engine** of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross, and using for **a rope** the Holy Spirit;” (Ephesians 9:1).¹²

Here an attempt is made to explain the diversity existing within the tri-unity. There is a relational hierarchy within the Trinity. The Father begets the Son and the Holy Spirit is sent from the Son. The Father sends the Son, the Son does the Father’s bidding, and the Holy Spirit promotes the Son. It is these ideas the early church wrestled with and thus concluded . . .

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the **Father** Almighty;
Maker of heaven and earth.
And in **Jesus Christ His only Son** our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
the third day He rose from the dead;
He ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence He shall come to judge
the quick and the dead.
I believe **in the Holy Spirit**;
the holy catholic [i.e. global/universal] Church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

Adopted A.D. 325;

Revised at Constantinople, A.D. 381

I believe in one **God the Father** Almighty;
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in **one Lord Jesus Christ,**
the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God,
Light of Light,
very God of very God, begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;

who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by
the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us
under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again,
according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of
the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And **in the Holy Spirit,** the Lord and Giver of Life; **who proceedeth from the Father
and the Son;** who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the Prophets.

And one holy catholic [i.e. global/universal] and apostolic church. I acknowledge one
baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE CHALCEDONIAN CREED

Adopted A.D. 451

We then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and
the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in
manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; **consubstantial with
the Father** according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the
Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father
according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of
the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same
Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, **inconfusedly,
unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means
taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved,** and
concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons,

but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers handed down to us.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

It is the first creed in which the equality of the three persons of the Trinity is explicitly stated, and differs from the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds in the inclusion of anathemas, or condemnations of those who disagree with the Creed.

1. Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic [i.e. global/universal] Faith:
2. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. And the catholic [i.e. global/universal] Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;
4. Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance.
5. For there is one Person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Spirit.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.
7. Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Spirit.
8. The Father uncreated: the Son uncreated: and the Holy Spirit uncreated.
9. The Father incomprehensible: the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.
10. The Father eternal: the Son eternal: and the Holy Spirit eternal.
11. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal.
12. And also there are not three uncreated: nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated: and one incomprehensible.
13. So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Spirit Almighty.
14. And yet they are not three Almighty: but one Almighty.
15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Spirit is God.
16. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.
17. So likewise the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Spirit Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord:
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord:
20. So are we forbidden by the catholic [i.e. global/universal] religion: to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.
21. The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created: but begotten.

23. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten: but proceeding.
24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
25. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater, or less than another.
26. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal.
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.
29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
30. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.
31. God, of the Substance of the Father; begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance of His Mother, born into the world.
32. Perfect God: and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
33. Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead: and inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood.
34. Who although He be God and Man; yet He is not two, but one Christ.
35. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God.
36. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by unity of Person.
37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ;
38. Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell: rose again the third day from the dead.
39. He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father God Almighty.
40. From whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
42. And shall give account for their own works.
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.
44. This is the catholic [i.e. global/universal] Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he can not be saved.¹³

There is beauty to this collective testimony as to the nature of the Trinity. God the Father is glorified as the Son is exalted. This is the thrust of Philippians 2:9-11, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord *to the glory of God the Father.*" It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to lift high the Son of God (John 15:26; 16:14). Our passion in worship is to put Jesus Christ center stage. He is our reality.

How does this relate to our present study? In this study we will note several attributes of God. When we refer to God we are referring to God as He exists in three persons.

What the Bible says of God ontologically is shared equally. Thus to look at a passage of Scripture speaking to the Father's self-existence is equally applicable to the Son and the Holy Spirit **even if** the Bible does not speak directly to the Holy Spirit as self-existing. The attributes of God are expressions of God in His totality. God is without division.

When we state, "Jesus is enough because . . ." we are equally saying the Father and the Holy Spirit are enough. **Because of who God is in the totality of His being, He is enough for us in our finitude.** It is the depth of His being that can ingest the needs of the human condition and reduce it to nothing (Heb. 2:9).

When Jesus died on the cross the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, thereby securing open access to God. My prayer is that we would hear the voice from behind the veil and, in hearing, be drawn to the necessity and sufficiency of God as manifested in the flesh, Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever, Amen.

In discussing the attributes of God it is necessary to note specific qualities of God in which no likeness has been or could have been given to man. These attributes are often called the incommunicable attributes of God or the Greatness of God. We will study eight noted qualities of God's greatness. The first is God's self-existence.