

- Rev. Grant Mangold, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

GOD IS AWE-FULL

Are you a user of the word awesome? It means extremely impressive, inspiring great admiration - or apprehension. Full of awe (the original awful), amazing, breath-taking, excellent, jaw-dropping, stirring, magnificent, wonderful, etc. Awesome appears in English usage around the time of translating the Bible into English, about a hundred years before the Pilgrims. Awesome is a most appropriate word to use as we cap our series on the attributes of God. The past several months we have been greatly enriched, having invested time in Scripture to explore God's attributes. God is. God is self-existent, with the power of eternal existence in and of Himself. God is spirit, infinite, immaterial, invisible. God is sovereign, ruling over all things that exist. God is holy, perfectly pure. God is omnipresent, everywhere in the fullness of His being. omnipotent, omniscient, knowing all things and able to do anything. Unchanging in His character, so you can always trust Him to be true, good, gracious, and love. God is fore-knowing and fore-loving, and by His sovereign providence He works out His will in all things.

1- God is: AWESOME. Awesome appears 32 times in the Old Testament (English Standard Version), where it captures all the rich aspects of its meaning, wonderful and terrible at the same time - principally, full of awe at God and His deeds. The whole of the Bible declares the supremacy of God. 1 Corinthians 8:4 notes *"for although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many 'gods; and many 'lords"—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."* It's an echo of Deuteronomy 10:17, *"the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God."* Nehemiah 1:5, *"O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who keep His commandments."* In Isaiah 46 God Himself proclaims, *"Listen to Me, all the remnant of the house of Israel. I have made and I will bear, I will carry and I will save. For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose'. Listen to Me, you stubborn of heart, I bring near My righteousness; it is not far off, and My salvation will not delay, for My glory."* The Lord Jehovah God alone is Savior.

2- God is: ATONEMENT. God's awesomeness also has a purpose for us. Made in His image, we have fallen, rebelled against Him, and are helpless to reconcile to Him. What can atone our sins, and make us "at one" with God? He must act to make atonement, breaching the gap, paying our unpayable debt. Only the incomparable God can save us. Isaiah 45 echoes these themes, declaring the awesome only God, and the only Savior. *"For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, (He is God), I AM the LORD and there is no other. I the LORD speak the truth. And there is no other god besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior, there is none besides Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other. By Myself I have sworn, to Me every knee shall bow and every tongue swear allegiance. Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength."* Awesome! God is Savior, architect of salvation, arranged by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Spirit. Philippians 2:9, *God has bestowed on Jesus Christ "the name above every name, to whom every knee will bow and confess as Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* 1 Timothy 6:16, *"He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen!"*

3- You are: AMBASSADOR. The triune Savior God is giver and guardian of spiritual life. Isaiah 57:15, *"thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy, 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the heart of the lowly and contrite."* God is not only our Creator, but our re-creator. The Lord is transcendent, beyond us, yet immanent, coming to us. 2 Corinthians 5 says, *"for our sake, He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."* Jesus paid the price, to make us right with God, and to re-create us to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8). Awesome! The apostle continues v17, *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come."* If you are saved, you are reborn from above by the Spirit, to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You are a new creation in Christ. You have not only new spiritual life in Christ, but a new earthly purpose, with heavenly power. A new commission for your new life. v18 *"Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."* Are you a believer? Then you are God's personal representative. Being transformed by His awesome good news, to share it with everyone else!