

THE
ONE
TRUE
GOD



THIRD EDITION

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PASTOR, AUTHOR OF *FAMILY DRIVEN FAITH*

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PAUL DAVID WASHER



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MINISTRIES
— PRESS —

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

How can any man or angel write a workbook about God? It would be an easier task to count every star in heaven. Knowing this, we acknowledge that whatever is found to be “holy, righteous, and good” in these pages is the result of the grace of God. Knowing something of the seriousness of the subject matter, this workbook has been written with fear and trembling:

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” James 3:1

I would like to thank my wife Charo who is growing to be “strong in the Lord,” and my three children Ian, Evan, and Rowan who are able to pull me away from my work with a glance. I would also like to thank the staff at HeartCry who encouraged me to publish this work, and Pastor Charles Leiter of Kirksville, Missouri, whose insights were invaluable.

INTRODUCTION

METHOD OF STUDY

The great goal of this study is for the student to have an encounter with God through His Word. Founded upon the conviction that the Scriptures are the inspired and infallible Word of God, this study has been designed in such a way that it is literally impossible for the student to advance without an open Bible before him or her. Our goal is to obey the exhortation of the apostle Paul in II Timothy 2:15:

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

Each lesson deals with a specific doctrine of the attributes of God. The student will complete each lesson by answering the questions according to the Scriptures given. The student is encouraged to meditate upon each text and write his or her thoughts. The benefit reaped from this study will depend upon the student’s investment. If the student answers the questions by thoughtlessly copying the text and without seeking to understand its meaning, very little will be gained.

The student will find that this is primarily a Biblical study and does not contain much in the way of colorful illustrations, quaint stories, or even theological commentaries. It was our desire to provide a work that only pointed the way to the Scriptures and allowed the Scriptures to speak for themselves.

This book may be used by an individual, small group, or Sunday school class. It is highly recommended that the student complete each chapter on his or her own before meeting for discussion and questions with the group or discipleship leader.

EXHORTATION TO THE STUDENT

Through the use of this book the student is encouraged to study biblical doctrine and discover its exalted place in the Christian life. The true Christian cannot bear or even survive a divorce between the emotions and the intellect, or between devotion to God and the doctrine of God. According to the Scriptures, neither our emotions nor our experiences provide an adequate foundation for the Christian life. Only the truths of Scripture, understood with the mind and communicated through doctrine, can provide that sure foundation upon which we should establish our beliefs and behavior as well as determine the validity of our emotions and experiences. *The mind is not the enemy of the heart, and doctrine is not an obstacle to devotion.* The two are indispensable and should be inseparable. The Scriptures command us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Matthew 22:37), and to worship God in both spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

The study of doctrine is both an intellectual and devotional discipline. It is a passionate search for God that should always lead the student to greater personal transformation, obedience, and heartfelt worship. Therefore, the student should be on guard against the great error of seeking only impersonal knowledge, and not the person of God. Neither mindless devotion nor mere intellectual pursuits are profitable, for in either case, God is lost.

THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION

While there are many good English translations of the Bible, this study was developed for use with the New American Standard Version. This version is not absolutely required to complete the study, but there may be times when the student will notice a minor difference if they use a different translation (especially if they are using a less accurate, non-literal translation). This translation of Scripture was chosen for the following reasons: (1) the unwavering conviction of the translators that the Bible is the infallible Word of God; and (2) its faithfulness to the original languages.

“HEAR O ISRAEL! THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE!”

– DEUTERONOMY 6:4 –

**“THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE LOVE OF GOD, AND
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE WITH YOU ALL.”**

– II CORINTHIANS 13:14 –

LESSON ONE

GOD IS ONE

GOD IS ONE

It is the testimony of the Scriptures that there is only one true God. The belief in one God is often referred to as *monotheism* [Greek: *mono*, one + *theos*, god]. The belief in more than one God is called *polytheism* [Greek: *poly*, many]. The Christian faith is *monotheistic*.

1. In **Deuteronomy 6:4** is found one of the most important declarations in all the Scriptures. What does this declaration affirm?

Note: There is only one true God. It is important to understand that the word *one* comes from the Hebrew word *echad*, which often refers to a unity of more than one person. For example, in Genesis 2:24 we read, "...*they (i.e. the man and the woman) shall become one flesh,*" and in Ezra 3:1, "...*the people gathered together as one man.*" This truth will have great importance in the second part of our study where we will learn that the one true God exists as a Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. What do the following Scriptures affirm about the being of God? Are there any other gods apart from the God of the Scriptures?

Deuteronomy 4:39

Isaiah 43:10

Isaiah 45:18

3. According to the following Scriptures, how should all men live in light of the truth that the God of the Bible is the one true God?

Exodus 20:3-6

Mark 12:28-30

GOD IS A TRINITY

The word *trinity* comes from the Latin word *trinitas*, which means *threefold* or *three in one*. The Bible affirms that the one true God exists as a Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are three distinct persons who are distinguishable from one another, and yet they share the same divine nature or essence and relate to one another in unbroken fellowship. It is important to note that the word *trinity* is not found in the Scriptures, but was first employed by Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers, to describe what the Bible teaches about the triune nature of God.

1. As Christians, we openly admit that the Trinity is a great mystery that is beyond human comprehension, and yet we cannot deny the Trinity because it is the teaching of the Scriptures. The same Bible that declares God to be One also refers to three different persons as God:

a. *How is the Father referred to in I Corinthians 8:6?*

i. G____, the F_____ (see also: John 6:27; I Peter 1:2).

b. *How is the Son referred to in the following Scriptures?*

i. The Word (*i.e.* the Son of God—v.14) was G_____ (**John 1:1**).

ii. The only begotten G_____ (**John 1:18**).

iii. My L_____ and my G_____ (**John 20:28**).

iv. He who existed in the F_____ of God and was equal with G_____ (**Philippians 2:6**).

v. Our great G_____ and Savior (**Titus 2:13**).

vi. The one who is over all, G_____ blessed forever (**Romans 9:5**).

vii. The I_____ of the invisible G_____ (**Colossians 1:15**).

viii. The one in whom all the fullness of D_____ dwells in bodily form (**Colossians 2:9**).

ix. Your throne, O G_____ (**Hebrews 1:8**).

c. *How is the Holy Spirit referred to in the following Scriptures?*

i. **Acts 5:3-4:**

In verse 3, Ananias lied to the H_____ S_____.

In verse 4, Peter said that Ananias lied to G_____.

ii. **I Corinthians 3:16** and **6:19:**

In I Corinthians 3:16, the believer is called the temple of G_____.

In I Corinthians 6:19, the believer is called the temple of the H_____ S_____.

iii. **Romans 8:9:** The Holy Spirit is referred to as:

The S_____. He is a real person, distinct from the Father and the Son.

The S_____ of G_____. God the Father and the Holy Spirit are one.

The S_____ of C_____. God the Son and the Spirit are one.

2. In **Matthew 28:19** is found the declaration used in every Christian baptism as commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This declaration is a wonderful example of the unity and trinity of God:

a. *The Lord commanded us to baptize in the N_____ of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Note: Notice that *name* is singular and yet it is ascribed to three different persons. The verse does not say in the *names* of the Father, Son, and Spirit, but in their one *Name*, because the Three are One.

3. The Trinitarian view of God that we discovered in Matthew 28:19 is seen throughout Scripture. Read **II Corinthians 13:14** and then complete the phrases:

a. *The grace of the Lord J_____ C_____.*

b. *The love of G_____.*

c. *And the fellowship of the H_____ S_____ be with you all.*

Note: Such a literary structure denotes absolute equality. It is noteworthy that the Son is mentioned even before the Father. It would be blasphemous to mention the Son and the Spirit in the same breath with God the Father if they were not equal with Him (*see also*: I Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:4-6; I Peter 1:2).

4. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of one divine essence and dwell in perfect equality and unity. At the same time, they are also three distinct persons, and not simply one person who reveals Himself in distinct ways at different times. In the following Scriptures this truth is clearly affirmed:

a. **Mark 1:9-11:**

i. The S_____ is baptized (vs. 9,10).

ii. The S_____ descends (v.10).

iii. The F_____ speaks from heaven (v.11).

b. **John 14:16-17:**

i. The S_____ prays to the Father (v.16).

ii. The F_____ gives the Helper or Holy Spirit (v.16-17).

iii. The S_____ lives with and in the Christian (v.17).

Note: From these simple texts of Scripture it is clear that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons. God is not three independent persons or three different Gods; nor is God one person who wears three different masks or simply reveals Himself in three different forms. The God of the Scriptures exists *simultaneously as three distinct and equal persons* who are *one in their divine nature or essence*, and who dwell in perfect equality and unity.

5. Although the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal and exist in perfect unity, they often carry out distinct functions, and manifest themselves in different ways. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth? Fill the blank spaces with the correct answer found in each Scripture:
- The F_____ is the invisible God who no man has seen (John 1:18).*
 - The S_____ is God made flesh and the perfect revelation of the Father (John 1:1,14, 18; 14:9).*
 - The S_____ is God living in the Christian (Romans 8:9; John 14:16-17, 23).*

SUMMARY

From the Scriptures we have studied, we may affirm the following truths about God:

- God is One.* There are not three different Gods in the Trinity—a heresy called *Tritheism*.
- God is Three.* There is one God who exists as three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- The Three Persons of the Trinity are real and distinct Persons.* The Trinity is not just one person who wears three different masks, or who reveals himself in three different forms—a heresy called *Modalism*.
- The Three Persons of the Trinity are perfectly equal.* The Son is not less than the Father, nor is the Spirit less than the Son.

5. *The Three Persons of the Trinity may manifest themselves in different ways and may carry out different functions.* No man has seen the Father; the Son became flesh and dwelt among men; the Spirit dwells with every believer in Christ.
6. *The Scriptures affirm two important truths: God is one and God is three.* Although we cannot fully comprehend how this can be, we must believe and teach both truths with equal conviction. Heresy (*i.e.* false doctrine) occurs when we affirm one truth and deny the other, or emphasize one truth over the other. We must hold to all truth equally and avoid all extremes.
7. *The Mystery of the Trinity is not a ground for its denial.* Some may say that they cannot believe what they cannot understand, or that if something cannot be explained, it cannot be true. If we were to apply this same logic to the entire Bible, or even to our own existence, then there would be very little left for us to believe. Even the simplest truths of Scripture and of human reality go beyond our understanding. We do not believe because we can understand, but we believe because it is true—the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.
8. *Most illustrations used to explain the Trinity are woefully inadequate.* Often students of the Bible have resorted to various illustrations in an attempt to explain the Trinity. Regrettably, these illustrations often do more harm than good. For example, the Trinity is sometimes compared to water that exists in three different forms—liquid, ice, and steam. Such an illustration is a distortion of the Trinity in that it suggests that God is one person who takes three different forms—a heresy called Modalism (see #3). It is better to simply affirm the oneness and threeness of God without explanation or illustration than to give an explanation or illustration that is misleading or even heretical.

“BUT AN HOUR IS COMING, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE TRUE
WORSHIPERS WILL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH;
FOR SUCH PEOPLE THE FATHER SEEKS TO BE HIS WORSHIPERS.
GOD IS SPIRIT, AND THOSE WHO WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP
IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH.”

– JOHN 4:23-24 –

LESSON TWO

GOD IS SPIRIT

GOD IS SPIRIT

God is not material or corporeal (*i.e.* He does not possess a physical body). Two of the greatest implications of this truth are: (1) God is not confined to any of the physical restraints so common to humanity, and (2) God is not visible and therefore should never be degraded with images made by men. At times, the Scriptures speak of God as if He possessed a physical body. There are references to His arms, back, breath, ears, eyes, face, feet, fingers, etc. How do we explain these references in light of the truth that God is spirit? In theology, these references are considered *anthropomorphic* [Greek: *anthrōpos*, man + *morphé*, form] expressions. In other words, God is simply attributing to Himself human characteristics in order to communicate a truth about Himself in a way that men can comprehend. For example, the Bible speaks of God’s “wings,” and of His people “hiding under the shadow of His wings” (Exodus 19:4; Ruth 2:12; Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4). It would be *absurd* to interpret such statements literally.

1. How do the Scriptures describe God in **John 4:24**?
 - a. *God is S_____.*
2. According to the following Scriptures, how shall we live in light of the truth that God is Spirit?
 - a. *We must worship God sincerely (John 4:24).*

Note: The reference to worshipping God “in spirit” has two possible implications: (1) We must worship God with all our being, sincerely and profoundly. (2) We must worship God in the power and under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The reference to worshipping God “in truth” also has two possible implications: (1) We must worship God truthfully, sincerely, and with integrity. (2) We must worship God according to the truth (*i.e.* according to the will of God revealed in the Scriptures).

b. *We must avoid associating God with a religious building or ascribing to God any human limitation (Acts 17:24-25).*

3. How do the Scriptures describe God in **Hebrews 11:27**?

a. *God is He who is U_____.*

Note: If God is invisible, how do we explain the passages of Scripture where He seems to reveal Himself in a visible form? To answer, we must first understand two principles of biblical interpretation. First, the Bible does not contradict itself. Second, the passages of Scripture that are difficult to interpret with certainty should be interpreted in light of those passages whose interpretation is unmistakable. The Scriptures clearly state that God is invisible, therefore the “visible” appearances of God in the Scriptures (with the exception of the incarnation of the Son of God) should be interpreted as “visions”—symbolic representations of spiritual reality. Ezekiel tells us (1:1) that “the heavens were opened” and he “saw *visions* of God.” In verse 28, the prophet summarizes these visions as “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” In Daniel 7:9-15, Daniel sees a symbolic *vision* of God the Father as the “Ancient of Days.” In Luke 3:22, John the Baptist sees a *vision* of the heavens “opening” and the Holy Spirit descending with the appearance of a dove (the symbolism is *obvious*).

4. What do the following Scriptures affirm about God, and especially about His invisibility?

1 Timothy 1:17

I Timothy 6:15-16

5. According to **Deuteronomy 4:11-12** and **15-16**, how should we live in light of the truth of God's invisibility?

6. God is immaterial (*i.e.* spirit) and invisible. How then can we know such a God? According to the following Scriptures, how has God revealed Himself (*i.e.* made Himself known) to men?

a. *According to the words of Jesus in **John 6:46**, has any man ever seen the Father? Who has seen the Father?*

b. *If no one has ever seen God the Father except for the Son, how has the Father made Himself known to men? How can we understand who God is? Who can explain such things to us? What does **John 1:18** teach us?*

c. According to the following Scriptures, why is Jesus uniquely qualified to show us God the Father?

Colossians 1:15

John 14:9

GOD IS PERSONAL

One of the most important truths of Scripture is that God is not an impersonal force thoughtlessly moving the universe, nor is He a capricious power, coldly manipulating His creation for some selfish end. The Scriptures teach us that God is a personal being who is aware of His own existence, who possesses both an intellect and a will, and who is capable of entering into a personal relationship with man.

GOD IS AWARE OF HIS OWN EXISTENCE

It may seem unnecessary to say that God is aware of His own existence, but this is one of the most fundamental characteristics of a “person.” There are many religions outside of Christianity whose concept of “god” is either that of an impersonal force (*Buddhism, Taoism, etc.*), or an essence that dwells within all things (*Pantheism* [Greek: *pan*, all + *theos*, god]). The God of the Scriptures is a real person, who is aware of His own existence as distinct from all other beings and things.

1. That God is aware of His own existence is clearly revealed in the Scriptures. How does God refer to Himself in **Exodus 3:14**?

a. *I A*__.

Note: This declaration is a powerful affirmation that God recognizes His own existence as a person. He *knows* that He *is*—and He declares, “I AM.”

2. The Scriptures not only teach us that God is aware of His own existence, but that He is aware of His individuality (*i.e.* He is distinct from all other persons and things). According to the Scriptures, what does God declare about His own unique existence apart from anyone or anything else?
 - a. *There is no O_____ God besides Him (Isaiah 45:21).*
 - b. *There is none E_____ Him (Isaiah 45:21).*
 - c. *There is none to whom we may L_____ (or compare) God (Isaiah 40:25).*
 - d. *There is none that is His E_____ (Isaiah 40:25).*

Note: Each one of these declarations proves that God is a person who is distinct and independent from all other persons and things.

GOD POSSESSES AN INTELLECT

The *intellect* is considered to be one of the primary characteristics of personhood. The word comes from the Latin word *intellegere* [*inter*, between or among + *legere*, to pick or choose] and refers to the ability to reason, perceive, or understand. According to the Scriptures, God possesses an intellect that goes far beyond human comprehension. Nothing is beyond His knowledge or understanding.

1. What do the following Scriptures teach us about God's intellect?

Psalm 92:5-6

Romans 11:33-36

2. According to the following Scriptures, how is the intellect or understanding of man described in comparison with that of God?

Psalm 94:11; I Corinthians 3:20

Isaiah 55:8-9

I Corinthians 1:20, 25

3. God's knowledge and understanding is far beyond the comprehension of finite men. According to the following Scriptures, how may man come to understand (*at least, in part*) the infinite things of God?

a. *Through the Son of God (John 1:18).*

b. *Through the Spirit of God (I Corinthians 2:11-12).*

c. *Through the Word of God (Psalm 119:97-100).*

4. In Deuteronomy 29:29, the Scriptures declare: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us...” According to **Psalm 131:1-3**, how should we live (*i.e.* what should be our attitude) in light of the infinite knowledge of God?

GOD POSSESSES A WILL

The Scriptures clearly reveal that God possesses a will—the power to determine His actions (*i.e.* what He will do) and the purpose, or end of His creation (*i.e.* what He will do with what He has made). God’s choices flow from who He is; His will is an *expression* of His being and disposition. It is important to understand that the will of God and the will of man are two very different things. God is the *only* one who is completely free to do whatever He purposes in Himself *without limitations or the possibility of failure*. By contrast, the most resolute decisions of the most powerful men often come to nothing.

1. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the will of God? Are there any limitations to the will of God? Can the will of God be thwarted in any way by man?

Proverbs 19:21

Isaiah 14:27

Isaiah 46:9-10

Daniel 4:34-35

Ephesians 1:11

2. Although God's will cannot be limited by any person or force outside of Himself, there are some things that God will not do simply because they contradict His most holy and righteous character. According to the following Scriptures, what are some things that God will not do? How is this a comfort and a blessing to us?

Titus 1:2

II Timothy 2:13

James 1:13

GOD IS RELATIONAL

It is the testimony of Scripture that God desires a personal relationship with His creation, and especially with man who has been created in His image. This is one of the greatest truths of Christianity. God is not an impersonal “it” that is incapable of entering into a relationship with others, and man is not a cosmic accident alone in the universe. God created man so that man might know Him and be a recipient of His goodness. When man’s relationship with God was broken through sin God sent His own Son in order that the relationship might be restored. Those who have been reconciled with God through faith in His Son may have the greatest confidence that God seeks a personal, vital, and growing relationship with them.

1. From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures portray God as one who desires to enter into fellowship with His creation. It is proper to say that the Bible is the history of God seeking to restore His relationship with man that was broken through Adam’s rebellion. According to the Scriptures, what was the result of Adam’s sin?

a. *How did Adam’s sin affect his attitude toward God (Genesis 3:8-10)?*

b. *How did Adam’s sin affect God’s relationship with him (Genesis 3:23-24)?*

2. How does **Isaiah 59:1-2** explain the change in God’s relationship with Adam? What does it teach us about our own sin and how it affects our relationship with God?

3. According to **Genesis 3:8-9**, who sought after Adam and Eve immediately after their fall? What does this teach us about God's character and His desire to have a relationship with fallen man?

4. According to **Acts 17:26-27**, why has God sovereignly determined the times and places in which all men are born and live? How does this demonstrate that God is relational and desires to have a relationship with fallen man?

5. According to **Luke 19:10**, why did God send His Son to earth? What was the purpose of His incarnation? How does this demonstrate that God is relational and desires to have a relationship with fallen man?

6. According to the following Scriptures, what has the Son of God accomplished so that man's broken relationship with God might be restored?

Romans 5:8-10

Colossians 1:19-22

7. According to **John 17:3**, what is the essence of eternal life? How does this demonstrate that God is relational and desires to have a relationship with His people?

Note: The word *know* means a great deal more than simply impersonal knowledge. It denotes an intimate personal relationship. Eternal life is much more than a life of infinite duration. It is a life of unbroken fellowship with God.

8. As Christians, we have a restored relationship with God. Therefore, we should live a life that is separated from anything that might be an obstacle to our fellowship with Him. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

II Corinthians 6:16-18

II Timothy 2:19

9. As Christians, we not only have the responsibility to watch over our relationship with God, but we also have the responsibility to announce the Gospel to others so that they might also enter into the same restored relationship with God. What does **II Corinthians 5:18-20** teach us about this truth?

“FOR I PROCLAIM THE NAME OF THE LORD; ASCRIBE GREATNESS
TO OUR GOD! THE ROCK! HIS WORK IS PERFECT, FOR ALL HIS WAYS
ARE JUST; A GOD OF FAITHFULNESS AND WITHOUT INJUSTICE,
RIGHTEOUS AND UPRIGHT IS HE.”

– DEUTERONOMY 32:3-4 –

LESSON THREE

GOD IS GREAT AND PERFECT

GOD IS GREAT

There is only one God and He alone is great. All other beings and things are totally dependent upon His goodness and strength. If such is the case for even the most esteemed among men and angels, how could we ever attribute greatness to any being or thing other than God? A comparison should never be made between God and any other creature or thing. As the self-existent and infinite Creator, He is infinitely above His dependent and finite creation. The mightiest archangel is no closer to being like God than the tiniest microbe. God is incomparable. In the context of the body of believers, this truth is extremely important. There are no great men or women of God in the Scriptures or in Church history; but only weak, sinful, faithless men and women of a great and merciful God.

1. How is God described in the following Scriptures?

- a. *The Lord is a great G_____ and a great K_____ (Psalm 95:3).*
- b. *The Lord is the G_____ and A_____ God (Daniel 9:4).* The word *awesome* comes from the Hebrew word *yare'* which means *to fear, revere, or be afraid*. Even the smallest revelation of God's greatness and holiness would strike even the most splendid of His creatures with astonishment, reverence, and even terror. God is awesome, and therefore He is worthy of the greatest reverence.
- c. *The Lord is very G_____ ; He is clothed with S_____ and M_____ (Psalm 104:1).* God's splendor and majesty are not something external that He puts on, but are a part of His very being. Unlike men, God has no need to add some-

thing to Himself to enhance His greatness or His beauty. God is so much greater than any other thing that to add anything to Him would be to diminish Him.

2. How is the greatness of God described in **Psalm 145:3**?

a. *His greatness is U_____*. The word refers to that which is beyond investigation or inquiry—a thing that cannot be searched out or measured. It would be far easier to count the sand on all the shores and deserts of the world, or to number all the stars in space than to measure the greatness of God.

3. What do the following Scriptures affirm about the greatness of God? How is the one true God contrasted with all other so-called gods?

Psalm 77:13

Psalm 86:10

Psalm 95:3

Psalm 135:5

4. According to the following Scriptures, what should be our attitude and our response to the greatness of God? How shall we live in light of His unsearchable greatness?

Deuteronomy 32:3

I Chronicles 16:25

Psalms 104:1

Psalms 111:2

Psalms 138:5

GOD IS PERFECT

The Scriptures teach us that God is perfect, complete, and lacking in nothing in His person and works. God is not only morally perfect, but He is perfect in every aspect of who He is and what He does. There is no possibility of defect in God. The perfection of God has many important implications for us: (1) It assures us that God will not change. He cannot become better than He is because He is already perfect, and He cannot become less because He would cease to be God. (2) It assures us that God is worthy of our absolute trust.

THE WORKS OF GOD ARE PERFECT

God is perfect in every aspect of His character. The works of God, being an extension of His character, are also perfect. The implications of this truth are tremendous and should produce in us a confidence that will prevail against the greatest doubts and the most difficult trials. All that God has ever done or ever will do, in the universe and in each of us, is *perfect*.

1. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the perfection of God's works?

Deuteronomy 32:3-4

Psalms 18:30-31

Psalms 111:7-8

Ecclesiastes 3:14

2. God not only works in His creation, but He works especially in His people. Every Christian is a work of God. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Ephesians 2:10

Philippians 2:13

Philippians 1:6

3. The God of all creation is working in the life of every Christian. His work is perfect and will be accomplished without fail. This truth goes beyond what the human mind can comprehend—the *perfect God* is doing a *perfect work* in us to *make us perfect*. According to the following Scriptures, how should we respond to this truth?

Psalms 92:4

Psalm 107:22

Philippians 2:12-13

THE WILL OF GOD IS PERFECT

The will of God is perfect because it is founded upon His perfect and most holy character. The implications of this truth are far-reaching. His purpose and plan for us is worthy of absolute trust. We should never lean upon our own understanding or seek to do that which is only right in our own eyes. Rather, we should trust in God and obey His Word, the Holy Scriptures.

1. How is the will of God described in **Romans 12:2**?
 - a. *G*_____. The word refers to that which is excellent, honorable, agreeable, pleasant and useful, something that brings joy or happiness.
 - b. *A*_____. The word refers to that which is pleasing, approved, or acceptable.
 - c. *P*_____. The word refers to that which is complete and lacking in nothing.
 - d. *How should this description motivate us to live a life of obedience to the will of God?*

2. According to the following Scriptures, what should be our response to the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God?

a. According to **Matthew 6:9-10**, how should we pray concerning the will of God?

b. According to the following Scriptures, how should we do the will of God?

Psalm 40:8

Ephesians 6:6

c. How does the life of the Lord Jesus Christ demonstrate a correct attitude and response to the will of God? How should we imitate Him?

John 4:32-34

John 5:30

3. One of the most important truths in Christianity is that the *will of God* is revealed first and foremost through the *Word of God* (i.e. the Scriptures). Like the will of God, the Word of God is perfect because God is its Author and its Preserver. What do the following Scriptures teach us with regard to this truth?

Psalm 19:7-9

Psalm 12:6

II Timothy 3:16-17

4. The Word of God is the primary means through which the will of God is revealed. According to the following Scriptures, what should be our attitude and response to this truth?

Psalm 119:47

Psalm 119:127-128

Psalm 119:167

II Timothy 2:15

“BEFORE THE MOUNTAINS WERE BORN OR YOU GAVE BIRTH TO THE
EARTH AND THE WORLD, EVEN FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING,
YOU ARE GOD.”

– PSALM 90:2 –

“FOR I, THE LORD, DO NOT CHANGE...”

– MALACHI 3:6 –

LESSON FOUR

GOD IS ETERNAL, SELF-EXISTENT, AND IMMUTABLE

GOD IS ETERNAL

One of the most amazing attributes of God, and one of the many that distinguish Him from all creation is His eternal existence—He is without beginning and without end. There was never a time when He did not exist and there will never be a time when His existence will cease. He is before all things and will remain after all things have passed away. The eternality of God does not simply mean that He has and will exist for an infinite number of years, but also that He is timeless and ageless, always existing and never changing. No other person or created thing shares this attribute with Him. We are for only a moment, but He is forever. We were caused by Him, but He was caused by no one. We depend upon Him for our very existence, but He depends upon nothing. Our earthly existence passes away like sand through an hourglass, but He always remains. He was God, is God, and will be God forever.

1. In the Scripture, a person's name has great significance and often reveals something about the person who bears it. What are the names given to God in the following Scriptures and what do they teach us about His eternity?
 - a. *I A___ Who I A___ (Exodus 3:14)*. The idea that is communicated in this statement is that existence is an attribute of God's very nature. Unlike man, God does not will to exist, or make an effort to exist. He simply is.

b. *The E_____ God (Isaiah 40:28).* One who is *everlasting* will *last forever*. When applied to God, the word not only refers to the future, but to the past. Not only will He always be, but He has always been.

c. *The A_____ of D_____ (Daniel 7:9).* When used with reference to men, the word *ancient* usually denotes old age and weakness of mind and body. When used with reference to God, it denotes the grandeur, splendor, power, and wisdom of the One who was before the very foundations of the world and will continue when the world has passed away.

d. *The A_____ and the O_____ (Revelation 1:8).* The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is a colorful way of communicating that God is the first and the last (see Isaiah 44:6). He is before all things and will continue on when all things have passed.

2. Having considered the names of God that speak of His eternal nature, we will now consider some of the most important declarations made in Scripture. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the eternal nature of God and His relationship to His creation? How do they demonstrate His greatness?

Job 36:26

Psalm 90:2

Psalm 90:4

II Peter 3:8

3. God is eternal, without beginning or end. What are the implications of His eternity for all of creation, and especially for the people of God? What do the following Scriptures teach us? Write your thoughts.

a. *God's Reign is Eternal:*

Jeremiah 10:10

Psalms 145:13

Psalms 45:6

b. *God's Word is Eternal:*

Isaiah 40:6-8; I Peter 1:24-25

c. *His Salvation and Care for His People is Eternal:*

Deuteronomy 33:27

Psalms 48:14

Psalms 102:27-28

Isaiah 26:3-4

Isaiah 40:28-31

Matthew 28:20

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4. What should be our response to the truth of God's eternity? What should be our attitude and how should we live before Him? What do the following Scriptures teach us?

I Chronicles 16:36

Daniel 4:34

I Timothy 1:17

GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT

One of the most awe-inspiring and humbling truths about God is that He is absolutely free from any need or dependence. His existence, the fulfillment of His will, and His happiness or good pleasure do not depend upon anyone or anything outside of Himself. He is the only being who is truly self-existent, self-sustaining, self-sufficient, independent, and free. All other beings derive their life and blessedness from God, but all that is necessary for God's existence and perfect happiness is found in Himself. God has no lack or need, and is dependent upon no one. To teach or even suggest that God made man because He was lonely or incomplete is absurd and even blasphemous. Creation is not the result of some lack in God, but the result of His fullness or the overflow of His abundance. To teach that God somehow needs our help to make things run rightly in the world is equally absurd and blasphemous. He did not create because He had a need, but because He desired to make known the superabundance of His perfections, glory, and goodness.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance, in that it often reveals something about one's person or character. What name does God ascribe to Himself in **Exodus 3:14**? What does it communicate to us about His self-sufficiency?

a. *I A___ Who I A___ (Exodus 3:14)*. The name demonstrates that God's existence was not caused, nor does it depend upon anything or anyone outside of Himself. It is God's nature to exist and so He simply *is*—without effort. God has no need that must be met, no void that must be filled, and no purpose that requires the aid of another. In I Corinthians 15:10, the apostle Paul declared that which is true of all men, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Only God is able to declare, "*I AM WHO I AM* by virtue of my own perfections and power."

2. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the self-existence, self-sufficiency, or fullness of God? How does such an attribute demonstrate God's greatness?

Psalm 36:9

John 5:26

Note: God's life or existence is not derived from anyone or anything outside of Himself. He *is* life. It is His very nature to exist. The existence of all other things—visible or invisible, animate or inanimate—depends upon Him. Only God is truly free of need or dependence.

3. The self-sufficiency of God is a declaration of His infinite greatness and His exalted place above His creation. All things depend upon Him for their very existence and yet He depends upon no one. In **Acts 17:22-31**, we find the Apostle Paul's sermon to the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers on Mars Hill. In **verses 24-25**, He refutes their idolatrous views by making three very important declarations about the one true God. What do these declarations teach us about the self-sufficiency of God and His relationship to His creation?

a. *God does not dwell in temples made with hands (v.24).*

b. *God is not served by human hands (v.25).*

c. *God does not need anything (v.25).*

4. To conclude our study of God's self-sufficiency, we will consider **Psalm 50:8-15**. What does this Scripture teach us about God's self-sufficiency and our relationship with Him? Does God need anything from us? What does God desire from His people?

GOD IS IMMUTABLE

The word *immutable* comes from the Latin word *immutabilis* [*in* or *im*, not + *mutabilis*, mutable or changing]. Other words such as *unchanging*, *constant*, and *faithful* are also helpful in understanding this divine attribute. The immutability of God means that He never changes in His attributes or counsel. God does not grow, evolve, or improve because He is already perfect. He cannot diminish, deteriorate, or regress because He would no longer be God. Whatever God is, He has always been, and always will be. He does not change His mind, or overrule one decree with another. He does not make a promise and then change His vow. He does not threaten and then not fulfill. This

is especially comforting, since the possibility of an Almighty God suddenly becoming evil or suddenly changing His mind is utterly terrifying. The immutability of God is one of His most important attributes because it guarantees that He and His Word will be the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the only constant in the universe, the only Being worthy of absolute trust.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance, often revealing something about the person who bears it. What are the names given to God in the following Scriptures and what do they teach us about His immutability?
 - a. *IA__ Who IA__ (Exodus 3:14)*. The name is derived of the Hebrew verb *hayah*, which means *to be* or *to exist*. It points not only to God's eternal nature and self-existence, but also to His immutability. He not only *always is*, but *always is* the same.
 - b. *The R_____ (Deuteronomy 32:4)*. This name needs little explanation. Within creation there are few things more permanent or unchanging than stone and rock, and the mountains they form. It is a comfort to know that even this metaphor is inadequate. When all the rocks of this earth have turned to dust, God will remain unchanged.
2. Having considered the names of God that speak of His immutability, we will now turn to some of the most important declarations made in Scripture. What do they teach us about the unchanging nature of God and His relationship to His creation? How do they demonstrate His greatness?

Psalm 102:25-27

Malachi 3:6

Hebrews 13:8

James 1:17

3. Having considered the many Scriptures that speak of the immutability of God’s nature, we will now consider those passages that specifically speak of the immutability of His Word and Counsel. What do the following Scriptures teach us about their unchanging nature? What do they teach us about God’s relationship to His creation—especially to man?

I Samuel 15:29

Numbers 23:19

Psalms 33:11

Note: In I Samuel 15:29, the Scriptures declare that God “is not man that He should change His mind.” From this passage and others, it is clear that God’s immutability extends even to His counsel and will. He is perfect in wisdom and therefore does not err in what He decrees; He is all-powerful and therefore is able to do all He has decided. But how do we reconcile this teaching with other Scriptures that seem to teach the contrary? In Genesis 6:6, God “was sorry that He had made man.” In Exodus 32:9-14, the Lord “changed His mind” about

destroying the disobedient nation of Israel. Finally, in Jonah 3:10, God “relented” concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon the city of Nineveh. Do the Scriptures contradict themselves? Does God indeed change His mind? The answer is not as complex or mysterious as one might think.

The Scriptures clearly teach that God’s perfections, purposes, and promises are always the same. But this does not mean that His relationship and disposition toward His “always changing” creation cannot vary. Genesis 6:6 simply refers to God’s holy response to man’s sin and His determination to blot out man from the face of the earth—v.7 (the same in I Samuel 15:11, 26). In Exodus 32:9-14, God “changed His mind” with regard to Israel’s destruction as a gracious answer to Moses’ prayer (a prayer that God led and empowered Moses to pray). In Jonah 3:4-10, God simply “relented” from destroying Nineveh when Nineveh “relented” from its sin. These passages are reminders to us that the immutability of God does not mean immobility. He does not change, but He is not static, apathetic, and uninvolved with His creation. He is dynamic and interacts with His creation. He is always the same, but His relationship and dealings with mutable men will vary according to how they respond to Him (Jeremiah 18:7-10; Ezekiel 18:21-24). This is not a contradiction to His immutability, but proof of it. He will always respond to men’s actions in a manner consistent with His unchanging attributes.

4. It is important to understand that God’s immutability not only depends upon His perfection, but also upon His power. God would not be immutable if there existed some being or power greater than Himself that could coerce or manipulate Him. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the sovereignty and power of God? Is there any created being or thing that can “change” God?

Isaiah 14:24

Isaiah 46:9-10

Daniel 4:34-35

“AH LORD GOD! BEHOLD, YOU HAVE MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH BY YOUR GREAT POWER AND BY YOUR OUTSTRETCHED ARM! NOTHING IS TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU.”

– JEREMIAH 32:17 –

“AM I A GOD WHO IS NEAR,’ DECLARES THE LORD, ‘AND NOT A GOD FAR OFF? CAN A MAN HIDE HIMSELF IN HIDING PLACES SO I DO NOT SEE HIM?’ DECLARES THE LORD. ‘DO I NOT FILL THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH?’ DECLARES THE LORD.”

– JEREMIAH 23:23-24 –

LESSON FIVE

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT, OMNIPRESENT, AND OMNISCIENT

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

The word *omnipotent* comes from the Latin word *omnipotens* [*omnis*, all + *potens*, powerful] and refers to the attribute of having infinite or unlimited power. With regard to God, the word means that He can do all that He has determined to do and no person or force can hinder Him or oblige Him to do the contrary. To say that God can do all things means that He can do all that is in agreement with His most holy, righteous, and loving nature. He *cannot* contradict Himself—He cannot be cruel or selfish; He cannot lie; He cannot break a promise; He cannot do the absurd (*i.e.* make square circles, triangles with four corners, or rocks so heavy that He cannot move them). For the Christian, the omnipotence of God instills absolute confidence. God is powerful to do all that He has promised. For the unbeliever, the omnipotence of God instills terror because no man can resist His will or escape His judgment.

1. In the Scripture, a person's name has great significance and frequently reveals something about his character. What are the names and titles given to God in the following Scriptures?
 - a. God A_____ (*Genesis 17:1; Revelation 4:8; 19:6*).
 - b. The Lord S_____ and M_____ (*Psalms 24:8*).

c. A R_____ of Strength (*Psalm 31:2*).

d. A T_____ of S_____ (*Psalm 61:3*).

e. M_____ God (*Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 10:21*).

f. The M_____ One (*Luke 1:49*).

2. What do the following Scriptures teach about the omnipotence of God? Is there anything beyond the power of God?

Jeremiah 32:17, 27

Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37

3. One of the most important implications of the omnipotence of God is that it assures us that He is able to carry out all that He has determined to do. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Job 42:1-2

Psalm 115:3

Psalm 135:5-6

Isaiah 14:24, 27

Daniel 4:35

Ephesians 1:11

4. In the Scriptures, the omnipotence of God is one of the attributes that most distinguish Him from the lifeless idols that men are so prone to create.
- a. *In Psalm 115:3-8, how is the omnipotent God of the Scriptures contrasted with the worthless idols of men?*

b. According to **Psalm 115:9-11**, how should believers respond to this truth?

5. The omnipotence of God has great implications for the Christian that trusts in Him, His will, and His promises. According to the following Scriptures, what does the omnipotence of God mean for those of us who believe?

Joshua 23:14

Psalm 121:4-5

Romans 8:31

Philippians 1:6

II Corinthians 3:4-5

Philippians 4:13

6. According to the following Scriptures, the Christian should respond to the omnipotence of God with both faith and obedience. Write your thoughts regarding this truth.

a. *Faith (Romans 4:19-21)*

b. *Obedience (Genesis 17:1)*

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT

The word *omnipresent* comes from the Latin word *omnipraesens* [*omnis*, all + *praesens*, present] and refers to the state of being present everywhere at once. When the Scriptures speak of God as omnipresent, it means that He is always present in every place in His fullness. Omnipresence does not mean that part of God is in China and another part of God is in England, but that all of God is everywhere at once. Although the universe itself cannot contain God, God is present in all His fullness in every place. For the Christian, the omnipresence of God instills great confidence and comfort—every

believer, from the greatest to the smallest, benefits from God's undivided presence. For the unbeliever, the omnipresence of God instills terror because there is no possibility of hiding or escaping from His presence.

1. In I Kings 8 is found an account of the dedication of the temple of God that Solomon built in Jerusalem. What did Solomon declare in **I Kings 8:27**? What does his declaration teach us about the omnipresence of God? According to this text, should we think that God is somehow confined to our modern day 'church buildings'?

2. In the following Scriptures are found several important texts regarding the omnipresence of God and its implications for all men. Write a summary of each Scripture in your own words.

Psalm 139:7-10

Jeremiah 23:23-24

Acts 17:24-28

3. In the following Scriptures are found several important texts regarding the omnipresence of God with a special emphasis on its significance for His people. Summarize the truth of each text in your own words.

Deuteronomy 4:7

Psalms 46:1

Psalms 145:18

Isaiah 43:1-2

Matthew 18:20

Matthew 28:20

GOD IS OMNISCIENT

The word *omniscient* comes from the Latin word *omnisciens* [*omnis*, all + *sciens*, from *scire*, to know] and refers to the attribute of possessing all knowledge. The omniscience of God means that He possesses perfect knowledge of all things past, present, and future—immediately, effortlessly, simultaneously, and exhaustively. There is nothing hidden from God. There is never the slightest difference between God’s knowledge and what really is. He not only *knows* all the facts, but He *interprets* them with perfect wisdom. For the Christian, the omniscience of God instills great confidence and comfort—God knows our every need, He understands our every trial, and He has given us His infallible Word to guide us through life. For the unbeliever, the omniscience of God instills terror because God will judge every man according to His perfect knowledge of all the facts—no sin will be hidden or forgotten. Every creature, every deed, and every thought is before Him like an open book.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance and often communicates something about the person who bears it. What is the name given to God in **I Samuel 2:3** and what does it communicate to us about His omniscience?

a. *The God of K*_____.

2. In **Daniel 2:20-22** is found one of Scripture’s most beautiful descriptions of the knowledge of God. What does this text teach us?

3. In the following Scriptures, several words are used to describe God’s omniscience. Through our understanding of these words, we can begin to grasp something of the greatness of God’s knowledge. Identify each word according to the verse given:

a. *God’s knowledge is P*_____ (**Job 37:16**). The word refers to that which is whole, complete, entire, not lacking.

b. *God’s understanding is I*_____ (**Psalms 147:4-5**). The word refers to that which is innumerable, beyond counting.

c. *God's understanding is I _____ (Isaiah 40:28).* The word refers to that which is beyond investigation or inquiry.

4. It is important to understand that God's knowledge is not limited to the present, but that He knows all things past, present, and future. What do the following Scriptures from **Isaiah 44:6-8** and **Isaiah 46:9-10** teach us about this truth?

5. In **Psalms 139:1-4** and **11-12** is found one of the most beautiful and thorough descriptions of the omniscience of God and of His knowledge of the deeds of men. According to the outline given below, describe the extent of God's omniscience:

a. *Verse 1*

b. *Verse 2*

c. *Verse 3*

d. *Verse 4*

e. *Verses 11-12*

6. According to the Scriptures, there is no depth or secret in the heart of man that is beyond the reach of God's knowledge. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth? According to each Scripture, complete the declaration.

a. *I Kings 8:39*: God alone knows the H_____ of all men.

b. *Psalms 7:9*: God T_____ the H_____ and M_____.

c. *Psalms 94:11*: God knows the T_____ of man.

d. *Romans 2:16*: God will J_____ the S_____ of all men.

7. For the Christian, the omniscience of God instills great confidence, comfort and joy. We can rest secure that God is always watching us, and that He knows our every need and understands our every trial. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

II Chronicles 16:9

Matthew 6:7-8, 31-32

Matthew 10:29-31

8. As we have learned, the omniscience of God does not produce the same reaction in every man. All depends upon one's relationship with God. For the unbeliever, the omniscience of God instills terror because God will judge every man according to His perfect knowledge of all the facts—no sin will be hidden or forgotten. Every creature, every deed, and every thought is before Him like an open book. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Job 34:21-23

Psalms 33:13-15

Proverbs 5:21

Proverbs 15:3

Jeremiah 17:10

Jeremiah 32:19

Hebrews 4:13

“IN THE YEAR OF KING UZZIAH’S DEATH I SAW THE LORD SITTING ON A THRONE, LOFTY AND EXALTED, WITH THE TRAIN OF HIS ROBE FILLING THE TEMPLE. SERAPHIM STOOD ABOVE HIM, EACH HAVING SIX WINGS: WITH TWO HE COVERED HIS FACE, AND WITH TWO HE COVERED HIS FEET, AND WITH TWO HE FLEW. AND ONE CALLED OUT TO ANOTHER AND SAID, ‘HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY.’”

– ISAIAH 6:1-3 –

LESSON SIX

GOD IS HOLY

THE MEANING OF HOLY

The word *holy* comes from the Hebrew word *qadosh* that means, *separated, marked off, placed apart, or withdrawn from common use*. With regard to God, the word has two important meanings. God is separate from and transcendent above His creation, and He is separate from and transcendent above His creation's corruption.

GOD IS TRANSCENDENT ABOVE HIS CREATION

The word *transcendence* comes from the Latin verb *transcendere* (*trans, over + scandere, to climb*) that means *to go beyond, rise above, or exceed*. As Creator, God is above all His creation and totally distinct from every created being. The distinction between God and the rest of His creation is not merely quantitative (the same, but greater), but qualitative (God is a completely different being). Regardless of their splendor, all other beings on earth and in heaven are mere creatures. God alone is God; separate, transcendent, and unapproachable. The most splendid angel that stands in the presence of God is no more truly like God than the smallest worm that crawls upon the earth. God is incomparable!

Holiness is the preeminent attribute of God and the greatest truth that we can ever learn about Him. Every divine attribute that can be studied is simply an expression of His holiness in that it *demonstrates* that He is distinct from His creation, absolutely separate, and a completely different being. The triune nature of God is an expression of His holiness. Is there any created being so incomprehensible, mysterious, and wonderful? To say that God is Spirit is an expression of His holiness. Is there any created being so free and unhindered? The truth of God's perfection, eternal nature, self-existence, immutability, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are all expressions of His holiness. Is there any created being so great and worthy of reverence? As we continue our study of the attributes of God and as you walk before Him, keep in mind this one great truth—God is holy, and all He is and does is an expression of His holiness!

GOD IS TRANSCENDENT ABOVE HIS CREATION'S CORRUPTION

The holiness of God also means that He transcends the moral corruption of His creation and is separated from all that is profane and sinful. God cannot sin, cannot take pleasure in sin, and cannot have fellowship with sin. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of God's holiness. What we understand about this attribute will influence every aspect of our relationship with God. As the Scriptures declare in Proverbs 9:10, "...the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

It is important to understand that God's holiness is *intrinsic* or *inherent* (i.e. inward, essential, belonging to His nature). Holiness is not merely something that God decides to be or do, but it is essential to His very nature—He *is* holy. God would have to cease to be God in order to be unholy. He would have to deny His own nature to do something that is unholy. This is a wonderful truth that inspires great confidence in God.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance and communicates something about the person who bears it. What are the names given to God in the following Scriptures and what do they communicate to us about His holiness?
 - a. *I A___ who I A___ (Exodus 3:14)*. God is holy, separate, and distinct from all other beings and things. There is no adequate illustration or example to communicate who He truly is.

Note: If we ask another man to describe himself to us, he can point to other human beings and say, "I am like him" or "I am like her." In contrast, God is incomparable. Not even the greatest archangel in heaven is an adequate example of who He is. When Moses asked God, "Who are you?" God could only point to Himself and declare: "I Am who I Am." This truth helps us to understand the great importance of the revelation of God in Christ. Jesus is God in the flesh and the *only* true image or example of who God is (John 14:9; Colossians 1:15). God now answers every question about Himself by pointing to His Son and declaring, "I am like Him!"

- b. *H_____ and A_____ (i.e. inspiring awe, reverence, fear) is His Name (Psalm 111:9)*. A proper understanding of the holiness of God will always result in a profound reverence before God.
 - c. *The H_____ and E_____ One Who lives forever, whose name is H_____ (Isaiah 57:15)*.

d. *In the preceding verses, words such as holy, separate, awesome, high, and exalted were used to describe the person of God. What do these words communicate to you about the holiness of God?*

2. In the Scriptures, we find that the holiness of God is both *preeminent* and *transcendent*. It is *preeminent* in that no other divine attribute is so often declared and explained in the Scriptures. It is *transcendent* in that there is simply no comparison between the holiness of God and that of any other being or thing.

a. *God's Holiness is Preeminent* [Latin: *prae*, before + *eminere*, to project]. It is impossible to understand the character of God apart from His holiness. Above all things, God is holy! How is this truth demonstrated in **Isaiah 6:3** and **Revelation 4:8**?

Note: In Hebrew literature, repetition is used to give emphasis to what is being said. That God's holiness is declared three times (called the *trihagion* in Greek [*tri*, thrice + *hagios*, holy]) denotes that God is absolutely and infinitely holy. No other divine attribute is proclaimed with such great emphasis. We never read in the Scriptures that God is "love, love, love," or "merciful, merciful, merciful," but we do read that He is "holy, holy, holy." Holiness is the foundation of all that God is and does. If there is one attribute of God that we simply cannot overemphasize, it is His holiness.

b. *God's Holiness is Transcendent* [Latin: *trans*, across or beyond + *scandere*, to climb]. God's holiness infinitely surpasses all others. There is none holy like the Lord! What do the following Scriptures teach us with regard to this truth?

Exodus 15:11

I Samuel 2:2

Job 15:15

Note: This does not mean that there is sin or corruption in heaven, but communicates two great truths: (1) Nothing, not even the heavens themselves or those who dwell there, are holy like God. (2) God's holiness alone is *intrinsic* or *inherent* (i.e. inward, essential, belonging to His nature). Holiness is not merely something that God decides to be or do, but it is essential to His very nature—He *is* holy. In contrast, all other beings and things (even heaven and its holy angels) derive their holiness from God. They are not holy in themselves, but their holiness flows from God as a gift of grace to them. If God turned away from them and withdrew His grace, they would fall from their holy state into a state of sin and corruption.

Isaiah 40:25

3. The holiness of God not only means that He is unique among all His creation, but also that He is separated from all that is profane and sinful. God cannot sin, cannot take pleasure in sin, and cannot have fellowship with sin. There is absolutely no possibility that God could be tempted or that His nature could be defiled. He always remains as He is—*holy* and *incorruptible*. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Psalms 5:4

Job 34:10

Isaiah 59:1-2

Habakkuk 1:13a

James 1:13

James 1:17

I John 1:5

4. The holiness of God not only means that He is unique among all His creation and that He is separated from all that contradicts His nature (*i.e.* sin), but also that He cannot take pleasure in sin. God is not neutral or apathetic about evil, but it is an abomination to Him (*i.e.* a loathsome thing that evokes His hatred or disgust). He hates all that is evil with a holy passion. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Deuteronomy 25:16

Note: The word translated *abomination* in this passage and in Proverbs 15:8-9 below is from the Hebrew word *toeba*, referring to something or someone who is repugnant (*i.e.* offensive), disgusting, revolting, or obscene. In Psalm 88:8, the word is translated *object of loathing*.

Psalm 5:4-5

Note: The popular phrase, “God loves the sinner, but hates the sin” must be re-evaluated in the light of Psalm 5:5. God not only hates the sin, but His hatred is also manifested against those who practice it! How can this truth be reconciled with other passages of Scripture that speak of God’s love for sinners? Though God’s wrath is revealed against the sinner (John 3:36), He has demonstrated His love by sending His Son to die for the very people who deserve only judgment (Romans 5:8, 10).

Proverbs 15:8-9

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S HOLINESS

God is holy, holy, holy! Although we have sinned against Him and made ourselves an abomination before Him, He has reconciled us who believe to Himself through the death of His own Son. Having saved us, He has called us to be His special people upon the earth. How shall we live in response to this great truth? How shall we live before a holy God?

1. According to the following Scriptures, how important is it that we acknowledge and understand the holiness of God? How important is it that we grow in our own personal holiness?

Proverbs 9:10

Note: In Proverbs 9:10, we learn that the greatest truth set before men is that God is holy and worthy of all reverence and worship. All other knowledge and wisdom (scientific, philosophical, historical, legal, etc.) is worthless apart from a correct understanding of this truth.

Hebrews 12:14

Note: In Hebrews 12:14, we learn that no unholy or ungodly person will ever be acceptable to God. This does not mean that we gain a right standing before God through our own works, but that all who are saved by the grace of God will be transformed by that same grace. Our growth in holiness is the evidence of our salvation. We are not saved because we are holy, but true salvation will always lead to true holiness because as we have already learned, God is doing a perfect work in the life of every Christian.

2. According to **Hebrews 12:5-11**, what does God do to ensure that *ALL* His children share in His holiness (*i.e.* become holy as He is holy)?

3. God is holy, holy, holy! How should we live in light of this great truth? In the following Scriptures are listed several appropriate responses to the holiness of God. Read each Scripture below and write your comments:

a. *We should live before God with Reverence and Godly Fear:*

Psalm 96:9

Isaiah 6:2-3

Isaiah 8:13

Habakkuk 2:20; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2

b. *We should live before God with Worship, Gladness, and Thanksgiving:*

Psalm 30:4

Psalm 97:12

Psalm 99:3, 5, 9

Isaiah 12:6

Revelation 15:4

Note: Why is the holiness of God such an astonishing truth to the holy angels who have never sinned? It is because holiness is not primarily a reference to God's sinless perfection, but to His transcendence above even the greatest of His creatures. The distinction between God and the rest of His creation is not merely *quantitative* (the same, but greater), but *qualitative* (God is a completely different being). Regardless of their splendor, all other beings on earth and in heaven are mere creatures. God *alone* is God—separate, transcendent, and unapproachable.

The most splendid angel that stands in the presence of God is no more like God than the smallest worm that crawls upon the earth, and therefore even they must bow their heads and cry out, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY!"

c. *We should live before God in Holiness and Obedience:*

Leviticus 20:26

Note: As Christians, God has set us apart from the rest of the peoples on the earth to be His. We are to respond by separating ourselves from all that displeases Him and by giving ourselves to His worship and service.

Leviticus 22:31-33

Note: God has sanctified (*i.e.* separated) us to be His special people. We are to sanctify the Lord (*i.e.* treat Him as special, honor Him) by keeping His commandments. To break His commands is to profane His name (*i.e.* to treat Him as common or unimportant).

II Corinthians 6:16-7:1

Ephesians 4:22-24

II Timothy 2:19-21

I Peter 1:14-17

d. *We should live before God with Integrity:*

Psalms 15:1-5

Psalms 24:3-6

“RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR
THRONE; LOVINGKINDNESS AND TRUTH GO BEFORE YOU.”

– PSALM 89:14 –

LESSON SEVEN

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

THE MEANING OF RIGHTEOUS

The word *righteous* is translated from the Hebrew word *tsaddik*' and the corresponding Greek term *dikaíos*. Both terms denote the rightness, correctness, or moral excellence of God. According to the Scriptures, God is an absolutely righteous being and always acts in a way that is perfectly consistent with who He is. There is nothing wrong or incorrect about God's nature or His works. He will never *be* or *do* anything that would justify any accusation of wrongdoing. His works, decrees and judgments are absolutely perfect. On that day when God judges all men according to their works, even the condemned will bow their heads and declare that God is right!

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

It is important to understand that just like the other attributes of God, God's righteousness is *intrinsic* or *inherent* (*i.e.* inward, essential, belonging to His nature). Righteousness is not merely something that God decides to be or do, but it is essential to His very nature—He *is* righteous. God would have to cease to be God in order to be unrighteous. He would have to deny His own nature to do something that is not right. This is a wonderful truth that inspires great confidence in God.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance and regularly communicates something about the character of the person who bears it. What is the name given to God in **Psalm 7:9**? What does it communicate to us about the character of His person and works?

a. The R_____ God (*Psalm 7:9*).

2. In the following verses are some of the most important declarations in the Scriptures with regard to the righteousness of God and His works. Summarize each teaching in your own words. Remember, there is a direct relationship between God's own personal righteousness and the righteousness of His acts and judgments. God *does* right and *judges* righteously because God *is* righteous.

Deuteronomy 32:4

Job 36:23

Psalm 36:6

Note: The metaphors are clear. God's righteousness is greater and more majestic than the highest mountain, and more profound and unfathomable than the deepest sea.

Psalm 89:14; 97:2

Psalm 119:142

Jeremiah 9:24

3. It is important to understand that the justice of God (like His holiness) is transcendent [Latin: *trans*, across or beyond + *scandere*, to climb]. God's righteousness infinitely surpasses all others. There is no other who is *just* and *righteous* like the Lord. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Job 4:17-19

Isaiah 5:16

Note: This Scripture means that the Holy God will show Himself to be separate or distinct from all others through the righteous acts that He does. God's holiness (*i.e.* separateness from all other beings and things) is most clearly demonstrated through His righteous deeds. There is none holy or righteous like the Lord.

Isaiah 45:21

4. The righteousness of God, like His holiness, is reflected in His attitude toward the deeds of men and angels. God is not morally neutral or apathetic, but He fervently loves righteousness and hates all unrighteousness. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Psalm 7:11-12

Psalm 11:7

5. The righteousness of God guarantees that God will do no wrong. He will rule over His creation without caprice, partiality, or injustice. What do the following Scriptures teach with regard to this truth?

II Chronicles 19:7

Job 8:3; 36:23

Psalm 9:7-8

Zephaniah 3:5

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

God is righteous! His works and judgments are perfect. How shall we live in response to this great truth? How shall we live before such a righteous God? We should be righteous for He is righteous; we should worship Him for He is worthy; we should be thankful for He is absolutely deserving of our trust; and we should proclaim His righteousness to the peoples for His praise is rightly on our lips.

1. How are we to live before a righteous God? How are we to respond to His righteous deeds and judgments? What do the following Scriptures teach us?
 - a. *We should Fear the Lord and Live Righteously before God:*

II Chronicles 19:7

Ephesians 4:22-24

I John 2:29; 3:7

Note: It is important to understand that we do not gain a right standing before God through our righteous deeds, but our righteous deeds are the evidence that God has truly saved us. A genuine Christian is not sinless, but he will not live out all the days of his life in sin and rebellion. If someone professes to be a Christian and yet his or her life is marked by unrelenting disobedience to God's Word without repentance or divine discipline, it is certain that their profession is not genuine.

b. *We should Live with Great Confidence in God and His Care of us:*

Psalm 92:15

Isaiah 41:10

Isaiah 42:6

c. *We should Live a Life of Worship, Praise, and Rejoicing before God:*

Psalm 96:11-13

Psalm 145:6-7

Daniel 4:37

Revelation 15:3-4

d. *We should Live a Life of Prayer before God:*

Psalm 145:17-19

Luke 18:7-8

e. *We should Proclaim the Righteousness of God to all Peoples:*

Psalm 40:10

Psalm 71:15-16

Psalm 145:3, 6-7

Psalm 147:1

Jeremiah 9:23-24

I Peter 2:9

“BUT THE LORD IS THE TRUE GOD; HE IS THE LIVING GOD AND THE
EVERLASTING KING. AT HIS WRATH THE EARTH QUAKES AND THE
NATIONS CANNOT ENDURE HIS INDIGNATION.”

– JEREMIAH 10:10 –

“GOD IS NOT A MAN, THAT HE SHOULD LIE, NOR A SON OF MAN,
THAT HE SHOULD REPENT; HAS HE SAID, AND WILL HE NOT DO IT?
OR HAS HE SPOKEN, AND WILL HE NOT MAKE IT GOOD?”

– NUMBERS 23:19 –

LESSON EIGHT

GOD IS TRUE AND TRUTHFUL

THE INTEGRITY OF GOD

The word *integrity* comes from the Latin word *integer* that refers to anything complete or whole. When used with reference to God, the word means that God's character is whole, flawless, or unimpaired. There are three words that may be employed to describe God's integrity: (1) God is *True*—He is real; not fabricated, invented, or an imitation. (2) God is *Truthful*—He only acts and speaks within the realm of the truth. Falsehood is contrary to His nature. (3) God is *Faithful*—He will do all that He has promised.

GOD IS GENUINE OR TRUE

In the Scriptures, the word *true* is translated from the Hebrew word *'emeth* and the Greek word *alethinós*. Both words not only denote the truthfulness of God, but also His authenticity. God is genuine or real. He is exactly as He reveals Himself to be. He is not a counterfeit, a fake, an invention, or a mere imitation. He is the one true God—distinct from the idols made by the hands of men and the false gods born in the corrupt imaginations of men.

1. In the Scriptures, a name is often the means through which the character of a person is revealed. What are the names ascribed to God in the following Scriptures? What do they reveal about His authenticity? Write your thoughts.

a. *But the LORD is the T_____ God; He is the L_____ God and the everlasting King (Jeremiah 10:10).*

b. *The O_____ T_____ God (John 17:3).*

c. *The L_____ and T_____ God (I Thessalonians 1:9).*

d. *The Lord H_____ and T_____ (Revelation 6:10).*

Note: The words *only* and *living* are very important. They are used in the above Scriptures to contrast the only living God with the multitude of lifeless idols made by men.

2. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the uniqueness and authenticity of God? Is there any true and living God other than the God of the Scriptures?

II Samuel 7:22

1 Kings 8:60

Isaiah 46:9

3. To fully understand the significance and importance of the truth we have learned, we must consider the Scriptures that contrast the one true God with the lifeless idols and false gods of men. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the uniqueness and authenticity of God compared to false gods and lifeless idols?

Psalms 115:3-9

Isaiah 46:5-10

4. In **Jeremiah 10:3-16** is found an excellent comparison between the one true and living God and the lifeless idols and false gods of men. Read the text until you are familiar with its contents and then continue with the following exercise:

a. *How are the lifeless idols and false gods of men described in the following Scriptures?*

i. Idols are nothing more than a D_____ (v.3, 8). Idols are a delusion because they are supposed to be a powerful divine being, when in fact they are not even alive.

ii. Idols are nothing more than W_____ cut from the F_____ (v.3, 8).

- iii. Idols are nothing more than the W_____ of men—a craftsman with a cutting tool (v.3, 9).
- iv. Idols are nothing more than decorations of S_____ and G_____ (v.4, 9).
- v. Idols are nothing more than lifeless things that must be fastened with H_____ and N_____ so that they will not T_____ (v.4).
- vi. Idols are like a S_____ in a field (v.5).
- vii. Idols cannot S_____, and they must be C_____ because they cannot not W_____ (v.5).
- viii. Idols can do neither H_____ nor G_____ to us (v.5).
- ix. Idols are D_____ and there is no B_____ in them (v.14). Idols are deceitful because they are supposed to be a powerful divine being, when in fact they are not even alive.
- x. Idols are W_____ (v.15).
- xi. Idols are a W_____ of M_____ that will perish under the judgment of God (v.15, 11). Idols are a work of mockery in the sense that they are worthy of ridicule.

b. *How are idolaters (i.e. those who trust in and reverence idols) described in the following Scriptures?*

- i. They are altogether S_____ and F_____ (v.8).
- ii. They are S_____ and D_____ of knowledge (v.14).
- iii. They will be put to S_____ (v.14).

c. *How is the one true God of Scripture described in the following verses? How is He contrasted with the idols and false gods of men?*

- i. Verses 6-7:

ii. Verse 10:

iii. Verses 12-13:

d. *According to verse 7, how should all men respond to the one true God of Scripture?*

5. In light of what we have learned about the glory of the one true God and the vanity of dumb idols and false gods, how should we live? What do the following Scriptures teach us?

Exodus 20:3; 23:13

Exodus 20:4-5, 23; Leviticus 19:4

I Thessalonians 1:9

I John 5:20-21

6. It is extremely important to understand that idolatry can take many forms. If we give preference to anyone or anything above God, then we are guilty of idolatry. The joys and pleasures of this present world, careers, ministries, hobbies, and especially self are some of the more common idols found among men. Prayerfully consider this truth and then answer the following questions: What is most dear to you? What most occupies your thought life? Do you think most about the excellencies and glory of God, honoring God in your family, doing the will of God in your vocation? Or do you think most about self, success, possessions, entertainment, hobbies, etc.? Remember: “As a man thinks within himself, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Are we not all guilty of some form or measure of idolatry? Do we not all have the need to repent and seek God’s mercy and grace?

GOD IS TRUTHFUL

Having considered the authenticity of God, we will now turn our attention toward His truthfulness. Not only is God exactly as He reveals *Himself* to be (*i.e.* He is true), but *things* are exactly as He says *they* are (*i.e.* He is *truthful*). God only acts and speaks within the realm of the truth. His knowledge is perfect and so He is never mistaken. His character is holy and righteous; He cannot lie or distort the truth. Misinterpretation and falsehood are impossible with God.

1. In the Scriptures, a name is often the means through which the character of a person is revealed. What are the names and attributes ascribed to God in the following Scriptures?
- a. *The God of T_____ (Isaiah 65:16; Psalm 31:5).*
 - b. *God is T_____ (John 3:33).*

c. *What do these names reveal to us about God's truthfulness?*

2. What do **Numbers 23:19** and **I Samuel 15:29** teach us about the truthfulness of God?

Note: God never lies, repents, or changes His purpose. He is not like men who continually change their minds, are often mistaken, and frequently distort the truth. God is true and His Word is immutable (*i.e.* unchanging and unchangeable) truth.

3. How is the truthfulness of God described in the following Scriptures?

a. *God's truthfulness is higher than the very C_____ of heaven (Psalm 57:10).*

b. *God is A_____ in truth (Psalm 86:15).*

c. *What do these descriptions reveal to us about God's truthfulness?*

4. The truthfulness of God has many great implications, but one of the most important is that we can trust in Him and His every promise. What do the following statements teach us about this truth?

a. *God C_____ lie (Titus 1:2).*

b. *It is I_____ for God to L____ (Hebrews 6:18).*

c. *According to the above Scriptures, should we ever doubt God's truthfulness? Should we ever be afraid that God might lie?*

5. Our God is the God of Truth. Therefore it is no surprise that His works and words are true. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

a. *God's W_____ are T_____ (Daniel 4:37).*

b. *The W_____ of God's H_____ are T_____ (Psalm 111:7).*

c. *The L_____ of God is T_____ (Psalm 119:142).*

d. *All the C_____ of God are T_____ (Psalm 119:151).*

e. *The S_____ of God's W_____ is T_____ (Psalm 119:160).*

f. *The W_____ of God is T_____ (John 17:17).*

6. Our God is the God of Truth, and He has revealed His truth to men in various ways. According to the following Scriptures, what are the three principle means or ways through which God reveals truth to all men and especially to His people?

a. *God reveals His truth through the Word of God. What does **II Timothy 3:16-17** teach us about this truth?*

b. *God reveals His truth through His Son. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?*

John 1:14, 17

John 14:6

Note: This declaration is of great importance. Jesus not only taught the truth, but He *is* the Truth. He is the very essence of all truth and the fountain of all truth. In His person is found the greatest revelation of truth. The Scriptures testify in Ephesians 4:21 that the truth is “in Jesus.”

c. *God reveals His truth through the Holy Spirit. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?*

- i. The Holy Spirit is the S_____ of T_____ (**John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13**).
- ii. The Holy Spirit will G_____ God’s people into all the T_____ (**John 16:13**).

7. Our God is the God of Truth and all of His ways, works, and words are within the realm of truth. According to the following Scriptures, how should the Christian respond?

a. *We should study the Word of Truth. What does **II Timothy 2:15** teach us?*

b. *We should pray for knowledge and direction in God’s truth. What do the following Scriptures teach us?*

Psalm 25:5

Psalm 43:3

Psalm 86:11

c. *We should praise and thank God for His truth. What do the following Scriptures teach us?*

Psalm 115:1

Psalm 138:2

d. *We should live before God and worship God in truth. What do the following Scriptures teach us?*

Psalm 51:6

Proverbs 3:3

John 4:23-24

e. *We should walk in God's truth and rejoice when others do the same. What do the following Scriptures teach us?*

Psalm 26:3

II John 1:4

III John 1:3-4

f. *We should share God's truth in love with others and pray that they might grow in truth.
What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?*

Psalm 40:10

Ephesians 4:15

II Timothy 2:25

I Timothy 2:1-4

“YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS, O LORD, EXTENDS TO THE HEAVENS,
YOUR FAITHFULNESS REACHES TO THE SKIES.”

– PSALM 36:5 –

“FOR THE LORD IS GOOD; HIS LOVINGKINDNESS IS EVERLASTING
AND HIS FAITHFULNESS TO ALL GENERATIONS.”

– PSALM 100:5 –

LESSON NINE

GOD IS FAITHFUL

The word *faithful* comes from the Hebrew word *aman* and the Greek word *pistós*. Both words communicate the idea of certainty or stability. An appropriate illustration would be a strong column that holds up the weight of a building or the strong arms of a father that uphold and protect his helpless child. When the word *faithful* is used with regard to God, it means that He is worthy of absolute trust, and that His people can depend upon Him without doubt or reservation. It is important to understand that God is faithful, not because He does everything that His people desire, but because He does everything that He has promised.

1. In the Scriptures, the character of a person is regularly revealed through their name. What names are ascribed to God in the following Scriptures?
 - a. The F_____ God (*Deuteronomy 7:9*).
 - b. The God of F_____ (*Deuteronomy 32:4*).
 - c. The H_____ One who is F_____ (*Hosea 11:12*).
 - d. The F_____ Creator (*I Peter 4:19*).
2. How is God's faithfulness described in the following Scriptures? What truths are communicated by each description?

Psalm 36:5

Psalm 100:5

Psalm 146:6

3. It is important to understand that God's faithfulness not only depends upon His character, but also upon His *power* and *immutability* (*i.e.* He does not change). A God of limited power would be limited in His ability to fulfill His promises, and a mutable God could change His mind about what He has promised. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the power of God and His unchanging nature? Is He *able* to do all that He has promised? Will He ever change?

a. *God is Powerful to Do All that He has Promised:*

Psalm 135:5-6

Isaiah 14:24, 27

Ephesians 1:11

b. *God and His Promises are Unchanging:*

Psalm 102:25-27

Malachi 3:6

4. In the Scriptures are found four very important proofs of God's faithfulness to His people and to all of His creation. These proofs are: (1) God's covenants; (2) God's Word; (3) God's works; (4) The coming of God's Son. We will consider them in that order below.

a. *The Covenants of God.* The word *covenant* comes from the Latin verb *convenire* [*com*, together + *venire*, to come]. In the Scriptures, the word *covenant* comes from the Hebrew word *berit* (in the Old Testament) and the Greek word *diathéke* (in the New Testament). When the Bible speaks of the covenants between God and His people, it refers to the promises that God has made to His people—commitments that He has obligated Himself to fulfill without fail. According to the following Scriptures, how faithful has God been to the covenants He has made?

Deuteronomy 7:9

I Kings 8:23-24

Isaiah 54:10

Jeremiah 31:35-37; 33:20-21

- b. *The Word of God.* The Word of God is another proof of the faithfulness of God. Not one word of all the words that the Lord has spoken has failed. God is faithful to fulfill every promise and to carry out every decree. What do the following Scriptures teach us with regard to this great truth?

Joshua 23:14

I Kings 8:56

Psalms 119:89-90

Isaiah 40:8

Matthew 5:18

- c. *The Works of God.* It is often said that one's works verify or annul the faithfulness of one's words. When we apply this proverb to God, we find that His faithfulness is absolutely perfect. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the absolute faithfulness of God as revealed through His works?

Psalm 33:4

Psalm 138:8

Isaiah 25:1

Philippians 1:6

I Thessalonians 5:23-24

- d. *The Coming of God's Son.* The greatest demonstration or proof of God's faithfulness is seen in the coming of His only begotten Son. From the very first chapters of the Scriptures, we find promises of His coming and the salvation He would bring. After thousands of years, all these promises were fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. What do the following Scriptures teach us was revealed about the faithfulness of God through the coming of His Son?

Luke 1:46-47; 54-55

Luke 1:68-75

Romans 15:8-9

II Corinthians 1:19-20

5. The faithfulness of God is revealed throughout all the Scriptures. In addition there has never been one instance in all of history when God was not absolutely faithful to every word He has spoken. In the following, we will consider the implications of such faithfulness. How should we live in light of the absolute fidelity of God?

a. *We should trust in the Lord and call upon Him in prayer:*

Psalm 31:14

Psalm 56:3

Psalm 62:7-8

Isaiah 26:4

b. *We should trust in God's wisdom and direction:*

Psalm 37:5

Proverbs 3:5-6

c. *We should believe that He will do what He has promised:*

Romans 4:20-21

Hebrews 11:6

James 1:6-8

d. *We should proclaim His faithfulness to all:*

Psalm 40:10

Psalm 89:1

6. The Scriptures frequently contrast the wisdom of trusting in God with the foolishness of trusting in self. Read **Jeremiah 17:5-8** until you are familiar with its contents and then describe the difference between the man who trusts in his own power and wisdom, and the man who trusts in the faithfulness of God.

a. *The man who trusts in himself (v. 5-6):*

b. *The man who trusts in God (v. 7-8):*

“THE ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE DOES NOT KNOW GOD, FOR GOD IS LOVE. BY THIS THE LOVE OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED IN US, THAT GOD HAS SENT HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON INTO THE WORLD SO THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM. 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 4:8-10 -

LESSON TEN

GOD IS LOVE

LOVE: A DIVINE ATTRIBUTE

What is the love of God? It is that divine attribute that moves Him to freely and selflessly give Himself to others for their benefit or good. The Scriptures teach us that divine love (*i.e.* God's love) is much more than an attitude, an emotion, or a work. It is an *attribute* of God—a part of His very being or nature. God not only loves, but He *is* love. He is the very essence of what true love is and all true love flows from Him as its ultimate source.

1. 1. What is the name ascribed to God in **II Corinthians 13:11**? What does this name tell us about God's nature?

a. The G_____ of L_____

Note: God is love itself and the source of all true love everywhere.

2. In **I John 4:8** and **4:16** is found one of the most important declarations in all of the Scriptures with regard to the character and nature of God. What is that declaration and what does it communicate to us about God?

Note: It is important to recognize that the Scriptures declare that, “*God is Love,*” and not, “*Love is God.*” The two phrases are not interchangeable. The universe was not created and is not ruled by a sentiment, emotion, or attitude called ‘love,’ but by the sovereign Lord of Scripture who, in His very nature, is love.

THE MANY DEMONSTRATIONS OF GOD’S LOVE

It would be easier to count all the stars in the heavens or each grain of sand on the earth, than to measure or even seek to describe the love of God. Its height, depth, breadth and width are beyond the comprehension of the greatest and most discerning creatures. Although we will never be able to fully comprehend God’s love or measure its contents, we can seek to grow in our understanding of it through considering its many demonstrations in the Scriptures.

GOD’S BENEVOLENCE TOWARD ALL CREATURES

The word *benevolence* can be defined as the disposition to seek the ‘good’ of others, to bless them and to promote their welfare. It is the constant testimony of the Scriptures that God is a loving and benevolent Creator; He seeks the blessing and benefit of all His creatures, both the evil and the good. He is the ‘absolute opposite’ of any opinion that would portray Him as a capricious or vindictive deity who seeks the downfall and misery of His creation.

1. What do the following Scriptures teach us with regard to God’s benevolence to all His creation?

Psalm 145:9, 15-16

Matthew 5:44-45

Acts 14:16-17

2. According to the following Scriptures, how should all creation respond to the benevolence of God?

Psalm 147:7-9

Psalm 150:6

3. According to **Romans 1:21-23**, how has mankind in general responded to God's benevolence toward them?

GOD'S MERCY, GRACE, AND PATIENCE TOWARDS SINFUL HUMANITY

Three of the most beautiful and dearly loved ideas found in the Scriptures are the mercy, grace, and patience of God. In these 'three jewels', the love of God is truly manifested. The word *mercy* refers to the lovingkindness, tenderheartedness, and compassion of God towards even the most miserable and pitiful of His creatures. The word *grace* refers to God's willingness to treat His creatures, not according to their own merit or worth, but according to His own kindness and generosity. The words *patience* and *longsuffering* refer to God's willingness to bear with or suffer long with the weakness and wrongdoing of His creatures.

1. In **Exodus 34:6**, we find one of the most important self-descriptions of God in all the Scriptures. What does this verse teach us about the ‘three jewels’ of God’s character that were mentioned above?

Note: The word *compassionate* may be translated *merciful*. The phrase *slow to anger* may be translated *patient* or *longsuffering*.

GOD’S MERCY

The word *mercy* refers to the lovingkindness, tenderheartedness, and compassion of God towards even the most miserable and pitiful of His creatures. In God’s *mercy* is found a great manifestation of His love. In many of the Scriptures given below, the idea of mercy is communicated through the words *compassion* and *lovingkindness*.

1. How is God described in the following texts?
- a. The L_____ is M_____ (*Psalm 145:8*).
 - b. The F_____ of M_____ (*II Corinthians 1:3*).
 - c. The God who is R_____ in M_____ (*Ephesians 2:4*).
 - d. The Lord is F_____ of compassion and is M_____ (*James 5:11*).
2. How is God’s mercy described in **Psalm 57:10**? What does this description mean? Write your explanation.
- a. God’s L_____ (also translated “mercy”) is great to the H_____.

3. According to **Luke 6:35-36**, how is God's mercy revealed to all men?

4. According to the following Scriptures, how is God's mercy (lovingkindness and compassion) revealed to His people?

Psalm 86:5

Psalm 103:10-14

Lamentations 3:22-23

5. According to the following Scriptures, how should we respond to God's mercy?

Hebrews 4:16

Jude 1:21-22

Luke 6:35-36

GOD'S GRACE

The word *grace* denotes unmerited favor and refers to God's willingness to treat His creatures, not according to their own merit or worth, but according to His own abundant kindness and overflowing generosity. In God's grace is found a great manifestation of His love.

1. How is God described in the following texts?
 - a. *The Lord is G_____ (Psalm 145:8).*
 - b. *The God of A____ G_____ (I Peter 5:10).*
2. According to **Isaiah 30:18**, what is God's attitude toward all men and especially toward His people?

3. According to **John 1:14, 16-17**, what, or who, is the greatest manifestation of the grace (*i.e.* unmerited favor) of God? Explain your answer.

4. According to the following Scriptures, what is the relationship between God's grace and the salvation of sinful men? Are we saved through our own merits or through the grace of God?

Ephesians 2:8-9

II Timothy 1:9

5. According to **Ephesians 1:6** and **2:7**, what is God's great and eternal purpose in saving sinful men?

a. *God has saved us to the P_____ of His glorious G_____ (Ephesians 1:6).*

b. *God has saved us so that throughout all of eternity He might S_____ the surpassing R_____ of His G_____ in His kindness towards His people (Ephesians 2:7).*

6. According to the following Scriptures, how should we respond to the grace of God revealed through Jesus Christ and the Gospel?

Acts 20:24

Romans 6:1-2

Philippians 4:13; II Timothy 2:1

Titus 2:11-13

Hebrews 4:16

I Peter 5:5

II Peter 3:18

GOD'S PATIENCE

The words *patience* and *longsuffering* refer to God's willingness to "bear with" or "suffer long" with the weakness and wrongdoing of His creatures. In God's patience is found a great manifestation of His love, especially in light of the sinfulness of mankind.

1. One of the most important and precious truths about God is found in **Exodus 34:6**. What is this truth and what does it mean? Explain your answer.

a. *The Lord is S_____ to A_____.*

Note: This declaration is also found in: Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:3. The frequency with which this description of God occurs in the Scripture demonstrates both its importance and truthfulness.

2. According to **I Peter 3:20**, why did God delay so long before judging the world in the days of Noah? What attribute of God caused Him to hold back His hand of judgment? What does this teach us about God's nature?

3. The patience or longsuffering of God is especially manifested in the kindness He showed the nation of Israel. According to **Psalm 78:36-40**, how did God respond to Israel's almost constant rebellion? What does God's response teach us about His patience or longsuffering?

4. What is the foundation or motivation of God's patience towards even the greatest of sinners? What do the following Scriptures teach us? Why is God so patient, so willing to bear with disobedient and ungrateful humanity?

Ezekiel 18:23, 32

I Timothy 2:4

II Peter 3:9

5. In **Numbers 14:18** is found one of the most important texts with regard to the patience or longsuffering of God. It teaches us that, although God is longsuffering, He is also just and will ultimately judge the wicked after every offer of pardon has been rejected. Fill in the blanks and complete the phrase:

- a. *God's Patience:* The LORD is S_____ to A_____ and abundant in loving-kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression. This truth teaches us that God is very patient, even with the most wayward sinner and hardened rebel.
- b. *God's Justice:* He will by no means C_____ the G_____, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations. This truth teaches us that while God is patient and disposed to *suffer long* those who rebel against Him; nevertheless, the sinner who refuses to repent will ultimately suffer the consequences of his sin. This truth is also clearly demonstrated in many other Scriptures. For example, in Nahum 1:3 we read, "The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished."

6. According to **Romans 2:4**, how should we respond to God's patience and longsuffering towards our sin? What should the sinner do in light of God's kindness?

GOD'S GIVING OF HIS SON FOR THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE

We have learned that God's love is beyond comprehension, and that it is manifested to all of His creatures in an almost infinite number of ways. Nevertheless, the Scriptures teach us that there is one manifestation of the love of God that rises above them all—God giving His only Son for the salvation of His people!

1. In **I John 4:8-10** is found one of the most important passages in all of Scripture about the love of God and its greatest manifestation to men. Read the text several times until you are familiar with its contents and then answer the following questions:

a. *What does verse 8 teach us about the very character or nature of God?*

b. *According to verse 9, what is the greatest manifestation of the love of God towards His people?*

c. *According to verse 10, was God's love a response to our love for Him? Yes or No? Explain your answer.*

2. We have learned from I John 4:8-10 that God’s sending of His Son to die for the sins of His people is the greatest demonstration of unmerited and unconditional love. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth? Why did God send His Son to die for our sins and save us from judgment?

John 3:16-17

Romans 5:6-8

3. If God loved us so much that He gave His Son to die for us, even when we were “enemies” in His sight, what will this love cause Him to do for us now that we are His children? What do the following Scriptures teach us?

Romans 5:8-10

Romans 8:32

“IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.”

– GENESIS 1:1 –

**“FOR FROM HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS.
TO HIM BE THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.”**

– ROMANS 11:36 –

LESSON ELEVEN

GOD IS CREATOR AND SUSTAINER

GOD THE CREATOR

One of the foundational truths of Scripture and the Christian faith is that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is before all things, and all things exist because of Him. He was neither caused nor made by something or someone greater than Himself. He is the Cause and Maker of all things, and nothing that does exist would exist apart from Him. He alone is Creator and no one shares this title with Him.

1. The belief that God created all beings in heaven and on earth should radically affect every aspect of one's life.
 - a. *It should lead to awe and reverence.* The knowledge that there is a God so great that He has created innumerable worlds and beings and sustains them effortlessly is beyond comprehension. Such a God is worthy of absolute reverence. If at times we stand in awe of His creation, how much more should we stand in awe of Him?
 - b. *It should lead to thanksgiving and worship.* If God had not created us we would not be. To refuse Him thanksgiving and praise is to be guilty of the greatest arrogance and ingratitude.
 - c. *It should lead to humility.* What is man that God should take thought of Him? We exist because He made us and apart from Him we are nothing. A lack of humility before God is beyond comprehension.
 - d. *It should give purpose to our existence.* We are not the result of random chance or some mindless process of naturalistic evolution. We were made according to God's design and for His purpose and good pleasure.

2. In the Scriptures, a person's name has great significance, often describing and revealing something about their character. What is the name given to God in **Isaiah 40:28**? What does it teach us about His greatness and His relationship to His creation—especially to mankind?

3. In the following verses are some of the most important statements in the Scriptures with regard to God as Creator. Consider carefully each verse, and identify the truths that are being communicated. What do they teach us about God? What do they teach us about man's dependence and indebtedness to God?

Genesis 1:1-2

Nehemiah 9:6

Jeremiah 10:12

John 1:2-3

Note: It is important to note that both John 1:3 above and Colossians 1:16 below are speaking about the Son of God. God the Father created all things through God the Son (Colossians 1:16).

Colossians 1:16

Note: It is important to note that all things were not only created *through* the Son of God, but also *for* Him—for His honor and good pleasure.

Hebrews 3:4

Note: It would be absurd to think that the house one lives in simply came into being. The existence of a house implies a builder with intelligence. How much more does this complex universe imply a personal and intelligent Creator?

Hebrews 11:3

Note: Theologians often use a Latin phrase to describe God's work of creation: *creatio ex nihilo*—creation out of nothing. God did not use already existing materials to make the universe, but created it out of nothing, by His own power and for His own glory.

GOD THE SUSTAINER OF ALL

The Scriptures teach us that God is not only the Creator of the heavens and the earth, but He is also their Sustainer. Nothing that exists would exist apart from Him. If He were to turn away from His creation for even a moment, all would perish. We owe our every breath and movement to Him. Every being, from the highest angel to the lowest worm, lives in absolute dependence upon God. Both the man who bows in humble worship and he who clenches his fist in defiance of God have this in common—they live and breathe and move by His gracious, sustaining power. They exist because He made them and they breathe because He gives them breath. If He turned away from them, they would turn to dust.

1. In **I Timothy 6:13** is found a very brief and yet powerful declaration about God and creation's dependence upon Him. What does it teach us about God's power and creation's absolute dependence upon Him? Complete the declaration and then explain its meaning:

a. *God gives L_____ to all T_____.*

2. The Scriptures not only teach us that God created the universe, but that He also faithfully sustains it by His power. Without God, the universe would never have been brought into existence, and without His continued care, the universe and every living thing would cease. All things that are, exist in absolute dependence upon Him. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this great truth?

Job 12:10

Job 34:14-15

Psalm 104:27-30

Colossians 1:17

Note: It is again important to note that both Colossians 1:17 above and Hebrews 1:3 below are speaking about the Son of God. He is not only the Creator of all things, but the Sustainer of all He has created.

Hebrews 1:3

3. In **Acts 17:22-31** is recorded the Apostle Paul's sermon to the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers on Mars Hill. The passage contains one of the greatest discourses on God as both Creator and Sustainer of the universe. According to the following verses, complete and explain the meaning of the four great declarations that are made about God, and about man's absolute dependence upon Him.
- a. *He is the God who made the W_____ and all T_____ in it (v.24).*

b. *He is the Lord of H_____ and E_____ (v.24).*

c. *He Himself gives to all people L_____ and B_____ and A_____ T_____ (v.25).*

d. *In Him we L_____, M_____ and E_____ (v.28).*

GOD THE OWNER OF ALL

God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things in heaven and on earth. Therefore it is not wrong that He claims all things as His own. One of the ‘first truths’ that must be comprehended if we are to have a right understanding of God and our place in His creation is that we are not our own. *We were not made for ourselves.* We belong to the One who made us and are responsible before Him to live according to His will and for His glory and good pleasure.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance because it often describes who a person is and reveals something about one’s character. What is the name given to God in **Genesis 14:19, 22** and what truth does it communicate to us about Him?

2. In the following are some of the most important statements in the Scriptures with regard to God's ownership of His creation. Consider carefully each verse, and then identify the truths that are being communicated. How do they demonstrate God's claim upon creation, and especially upon mankind?

Deuteronomy 10:14

Job 41:11

Psalms 24:1-2; 50:10-12; 89:11

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

We have learned from the Scriptures that God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Rightful Owner of His creation. It now follows that we should consider the purpose for which He created all things. If God was under no obligation to create the universe, and if He did not need the universe to fill some void in His existence, then what was and is the divine purpose behind the creation and existence of man? The Scriptures boldly and unapologetically declare that it is *the glory and good pleasure of God*.

THE GOD OF ALL FULLNESS

One of the most awe-inspiring and humbling truths about God is that He is absolutely free from any need or dependence. His existence, the fulfillment of His will, and His happiness or good pleasure does not depend upon anyone or anything outside of Himself. He is the only being who is truly *self-existent, self-sustaining, self-sufficient*,

in-dependent, and *free*. All other beings derive their life and blessedness from God, but all that is necessary for God's existence and perfect happiness is found in Himself. To even suggest that God made man because He was lonely or incomplete is absurd and even blasphemous. Creation is not the result of some lack in God, but the result of His fullness, or the overflow of His abundance.

1. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the *self*-existence and *self*-sufficiency of God? From where does God's life or existence come? Is He dependent upon another?

Psalm 36:9

John 5:26

Note: God has life in Himself and is the fountain of life for all living creatures. He is not dependent upon another, but all things are dependent upon Him.

2. The *self*-sufficiency of God is a declaration of His infinite greatness and His exalted place above His creation. All things depend upon Him for their very existence and yet He Himself depends upon no one. **Acts 17:22-31**, records the Apostle Paul's sermon to the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers on Mars Hill. In **verses 24-25**, he refutes their idolatrous views by making three very important declarations about the one true God. What do these declarations teach us about God's self-sufficiency and His relationship to His creation?

- a. *God does not dwell in temples made with hands (v.24).*

b. *God is not served by human hands (v.25).*

c. *God does not need anything (v.25).*

THE GLORY OF GOD

If God did not create the universe because of some need, then what was His purpose? Why did God create all things? The Scriptures teach us that God created everything for His good pleasure and glory (*i.e.* to manifest His greatness and receive from us the honor and worship that is due Him). This may sound strange, even a bit self-centered and selfish on God's part, but nothing could be further from the truth. *First*, God is worthy to take the highest place above His creation and He is worthy to be the object of all our thoughts, activities, and worship. For Him to deny to Himself the 'first place' above His entire creation would be to deny that He is God. *Second*, the greatest good God could ever do for us, and the greatest kindness He could ever show us, would be to direct all things in such a way that His greatness might be fully displayed before us. If God is of infinite worth, beauty, and majesty, then the most valuable, beautiful, and majestic gift He could ever give us would be to show us His own glory.

1. God is the Creator, Sustainer and Rightful Owner of the heavens and the earth and all that dwells within them. *All things were created by Him, belong to Him, and exist for His glory.* What does **Romans 11:36** teach us about this truth? Complete each statement.
 - a. *F_____ Him are all things.* God is the *Source* of all things and the fountain of all life (Psalm 36:9). Creation owes its very existence to God, and apart from Him there would be nothing. Man is not the product of some mindless evolutionary process that he should live without purpose; nor is he the source of his own existence that he should live for himself; *but he is the work of God that he should live for His glory.*

- b. T_____ Him are all things. God is the *Agent* through which all things were created and are sustained. If God were to turn away from His creation for one moment, *all would become chaos*. But through His unhindered sovereignty, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite power, He sustains all things and directs them (molecules and men alike) to the great end for which they were created—the glory of God.
- c. T__ Him are all things. In this simple phrase is found the meaning of existence. God created all things, and works in all things for His good pleasure and glory—in order to manifest His greatness and receive from us the honor and worship that are due to Him.
- d. T__ Him be the G_____ forever. A_____. The *only* proper response to the greatness of God is to esteem Him above all things and to give to Him the highest honor, adoration, and praise. In the study of theology there is an important Latin phrase used to describe this truth—*Soli Deo Gloria*, which translates, *To God Alone be the Glory*.
2. **Colossians 1:16** is very similar to Romans 11:36, but it speaks specifically about the Son of God. What does this text teach us about the purpose of creation?
- a. *All things have been created B__ Him and T_____ Him*. The Father is the source of all things (Romans 11:36), but He has created all things *through* the Son (John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2), who is the Mediator between the Father and creation. *Through the Son*, the Father *created* all things, *reveals* Himself to His creation (John 1:18), *reconciled* the creation to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19), *rules* creation (Philippians 2:9-11), and will one day *judge* creation (John 5:22).
- b. *All things have been created F_____ Him*. It is no contradiction to say that all things have been created for the glory and good pleasure of both the Father and the Son. According to the Scriptures, the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand (John 3:35); it is the Father's will that all honor the Son as they honor Him (John 5:23). Therefore everything said in Romans 11:36 about the purpose of creation may also be applied to the Son. All creation, in all realms, has one great and final purpose—the glory of God.

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD THE CREATOR

REVERENCE & HUMILITY

Our first response to God as Creator should be one of reverence and humility. We reverence God to the degree that we acknowledge His highest place before us as Creator and Lord of all that exists, regarding Him with the utmost respect and awe. We humble ourselves to the degree that we acknowledge our place before Him as creatures; that we are His possession, created for His glory and good pleasure. When the creation is correctly understood, it works to lay all men prostrate before God with reverence, trembling, and a real sense of utter dependence upon the One who made them.

1. In light of the awesome power and grandeur of God, mankind's first response should be that of reverence and awe. Read **Psalm 33:6-9**. According to verse 8, how should the inhabitants of earth respond to the infinite power and wisdom of God revealed through creation?

2. Awe and reverence are inseparable from humility. If we have truly comprehended something of the infinite perfections and power of God, we will humble ourselves before Him. Read **Psalm 8:1-4**. According to verse 4, how did the psalmist's contemplation of God's creation produce in him an attitude of great humility? How should this attitude also be reflected in the life of every man?

WORSHIP & ADORATION

How can the creature not *worship* its Creator and Sustainer? The debt that is owed Him cannot be measured. Would there be anything if He had not spoken? Would not all things immediately turn to chaos and destruction if He did not sustain them? Could the constellations and planets find their way through the skies without Him? Would not the seas escape their boundaries and engulf the land if His hand did not hold them back? Could man draw even one more breath were it not granted to him by God? How then

can we not worship? It would not be wrong to say that the primary purpose of creation and especially of man is to worship the God who created us and by whose power and faithfulness we are sustained. The worship of God is our highest privilege and greatest responsibility. When we do worship Him, we are at last fulfilling the purpose for which we were created.

1. According to **Revelation 4:11**, why is God worthy to be praised?

2. In **Psalm 148:1-13** is found a call for every creature of every realm to render worship, honor, and glory to the God who made them. Read the text until you are familiar with its contents and then complete the following exercises:

a. *Identify the different creatures and realms of creation that are called to offer worship to God:*

b. *According to verses 5-6, what is the reason given for offering praise to God?*

c. *According to verse 13, what is the reason given for offering praise to God?*

3. We will conclude our study of God as Creator and Sustainer with two commands that authoritatively reach to every realm and every inhabitant of creation. For each pas-

sage answer the following questions. What is commanded? What is the significance of each command for mankind?

Psalm 103:22

Note: How can a man bless God? We do not have any power to give to Him any blessing that is not already His. To bless God is simply to acknowledge in our hearts His greatness and to confess His greatness in praise.

Psalm 150:6

“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. 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?’”

– DANIEL 4:34-35 –

“NOW TO THE KING ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, THE ONLY GOD, BE HONOR AND GLORY FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.”

– I TIMOTHY 1:17 –

LESSON TWELVE

GOD IS LORD OVER ALL

The Scriptures not only teach us that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, but also that He is its Sovereign Lord and King. He rules over all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest to the smallest, by His perfect wisdom, infinite power, and absolute righteousness. He is free to do all things according to His own will, and to do them for His own glory and good pleasure. What He has determined, no power in heaven or on earth can annul.

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

Before we begin upon our study of sovereignty, we must first consider a doctrine that is absolutely essential to a correct understanding of God—His *Supremacy*. The word *supreme* refers to that which is highest in excellence, rank, or authority. The *Supremacy of God* refers to His exalted place above all creation.

The truth of God's supremacy has many important implications. With regard to *God's Person*, it means that He is infinitely more excellent than any of His creatures and of infinitely greater worth than all of His creation combined. With regard to *God's Place* (or *Rank*), it means that He is exalted above all creation and has no equals. With regard to *God's Purpose*, it means that He is at the very center of all things and that He directs all things towards one great goal—His own glory.

1. In the Scriptures, a person's name has great significance, often describing who he is and revealing something about his character. What are the names or titles ascribed to God in the following Scriptures? What do they reveal to us about His supremacy, His relationship to His creation, and especially to man?

a. *The Lord M_____ H_____ over all the E_____ (Psalm 97:9).*

b. *The H_____ and E_____ One (Isaiah 57:15).*

2. Having considered the divine names that reveal God's supremacy, we will now consider one of the most beautiful declarations of the supremacy of God in the Scriptures. Read **I Chronicles 29:11** until you are familiar with its contents and then answer the following questions:

a. *What are the six attributes and rights that are ascribed to God?*

i. G _____.

ii. P _____.

iii. G _____.

iv. V _____.

v. M _____.

vi. D _____.

b. *How do these six attributes demonstrate God's supremacy over all?*

c. *Having declared the greatness and supremacy of God over all things, I Chronicles 29:11 concludes with a very important statement about God. What does God do for Himself? How does this demonstrate His rightful supremacy over all things?*

i. God E_____ Himself as H_____ over A_____.

3. To conclude our study on the supremacy of God, we will consider two very important Scriptures from the book of Psalms. What do they teach us about God's absolute supremacy over all creation?

Psalm 97:9

Psalm 113:4-6

Note: In verse 6, we read, "Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?" This is one of the most majestic verses in all of Scripture. It means that God is so glorious, so excellent, and so beautiful that He must condescend (*i.e.* humble Himself) to turn His eyes away from His own beauty and look at any other being or thing. All the beauty of heaven and earth combined is nothing compared to the glory of God Himself!

THE TITLES OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

In the thought and language of the Scriptures, a name can have great significance and communicate many important truths about the one who bears it. In the Scriptures are found numerous names and titles that communicate important truths about God's attributes and works. Through the study of these names we can come to know Him in a greater and more profound way. In the following, we will consider the most important names and titles that demonstrate God's absolute sovereignty over all creation:

LORD

The English title that is most often employed in the Scriptures to communicate God's sovereignty is *Lord*. The title describes someone who has supremacy and authority over another. When applied to God, it refers to His absolute sovereignty over all creation. It is important to recognize that the title *Lord* not only communicates truth about God, but also defines man's relationship to Him. If God is Lord, then all creation (especially man) is His subject.

1. What names or titles are attributed to God in the following Scriptures? What do they communicate to us about His Lordship?

a. *God is the Lord of H_____ and E_____ (Acts 17:24).*

b. *God is the Lord of L_____ (I Timothy 6:15).*

KING

Closely related to the title of *Lord* is that of *King*. There is probably no other title in the English language that has as much power to communicate not only the ideas of sovereignty and power, but also of royalty, nobility, and majesty. In the Scriptures, God

is the great King over all creation and reigns with unsurpassed glory. His throne is in heaven, the earth is His footstool, and His kingdom endures forever.

1. What names are attributed to God in the following Scriptures? What do they communicate to us about His sovereign rule as King?

a. The G_____ King over all the E_____ (*Psalm 47:2, 7; Malachi 1:14*).

b. The King of H_____ (*Daniel 4:37*).

c. The K_____ of K_____ (*I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16*).

d. The G_____ King above all G_____ (*Psalm 95:3*).

Note: This Scripture is not teaching that there is more than one God or that the one true God competes for first place with other gods. It means that God is far above all the false gods that have ever been conceived of in the hearts and minds of fallen men.

e. *The King E_____ , I_____ , I_____ , the O_____ God (I Timothy 1:17).*

SOVEREIGN, RULER, & MASTER

The three divine titles *Sovereign, Ruler, and Master* clearly communicate the absolute authority of God over His creation. The title *sovereign* comes from the Latin prefix *super* that means, *over* or *above*. It refers to one who rules over others with authority. The title *ruler* is derived from the Latin verb *regere* that means, *to lead straight* or *guide*. It refers to one who sets the standard and marks out the path with authority. The title *master* is derived from the Latin term *magnus* that means, *great* or *large*. It refers to one who has control or mastery over something, such as a teacher who has mastered a certain area of study, an owner who has control over his slaves, or a ruler who reigns over his subjects. In the following Scriptures, we will learn that God is the only true Sovereign, Ruler, and Master over all creation.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance and communicates something about the person who bears it. What names are attributed to God in the following Scriptures? What do they communicate to us about His sovereignty?

a. *The B_____ and O_____ S_____ (I Timothy 6:15).*

b. *The R_____ over the R_____ of mankind (Daniel 4:17).*

c. Our O _____ M _____ and Lord (*Jude 4; II Timothy 2:21; II Peter 2:1*).

THE EXTENSION OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

It is often asked, “What are the limits of God’s rule? Is there any creature or activity that is not under His government?” The Scripture’s answer is clear—every living being, every created thing, and all the events of history are under the sovereign government of God. He rules over all things; no one, including man, is beyond the boundaries of His rule. As Creator and Sustainer, He has the exclusive and unchallenged right to govern all realms and all creatures according to His will and good pleasure. All that He desires, He does, and there is no power in heaven, earth, or hell that can alter or hinder what He has determined.

1. The following are some of the most important declarations in the Scriptures with regard to the absolute sovereignty of God. Consider carefully each verse, and then identify the truths that are being communicated. What do they teach us about the extension of God’s sovereignty?

Psalm 33:11

Psalm 103:19

Psalm 115:3

Psalm 135:6

Isaiah 46:9-10

Ephesians 1:11

2. The truth that God does whatever He pleases in every realm of creation is not only a testimony to His sovereignty, but to His omnipotence. He is all-powerful and therefore there is no creature or power that can successfully oppose Him. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

II Chronicles 20:6

Job 23:13

Proverbs 21:30

3. In **Daniel 4:34-35** is found one of the greatest declarations in all the Scripture with regard to the sovereignty of God over His creation. Summarize each of the following phrases and explain what it teaches us about the sovereignty of God:

a. *His dominion is an everlasting dominion. His kingdom endures from generation to generation (v.34):*

b. *All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing (v.35):*

c. *He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth (v.35):*

d. *No one can ward off His hand (v.35):*

e. *No one can say to Him, “What have you done?” (v.35):*

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

God is creation’s Sovereign Lord and King. He rules over all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest to the smallest. He is free to do all things according to His own will, and to do them for His own glory and good pleasure. What He has determined, no power in heaven or on earth can hinder. What should be man’s response to such a God? The Scriptures are clear—*reverence* and *worship*. When the sovereignty or lordship of God is correctly understood, it works to lay all men prostrate before Him and to acknowledge that He alone is worthy of creation’s reverence, obedience, adoration, and praise.

REVERENCE & OBEDIENCE

Man’s first response to the sovereignty of God should be that of reverence and obedience. To revere God is to acknowledge His highest place before us as Lord and regard Him with the utmost respect and awe. Such an attitude of reverence will always result in obedience. Sovereignty implies a relationship of one exercising authority over another. If we truly acknowledge God’s sovereignty, then we will place ourselves before Him in reverent submission to His will.

1. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the great and sincere reverence that is due God as the Lord and only Sovereign of creation?

Psalm 47:2

Jeremiah 10:7

Daniel 6:26

2. Having considered the reverence that is due the King of kings and Lord of lords, we will now consider the obedience that must follow all true reverence. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the allegiance and obedience that is due God as the Lord and only Sovereign of creation?

Psalms 66:7

Isaiah 45:23

ADORATION & PRAISE

If men think it proper to give homage and honor to the kings and rulers of the earth, whose lives are mortal and whose kingdoms are frail and temporary, how much more should mankind honor the Eternal King whose kingdom endures forever! Although there are many kings and lords, God alone bears the title *King of kings and Lord of lords*. He

alone is supreme over all creation, ruling with absolute and unhindered sovereignty. The inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers before Him. The nations are like a drop from a bucket and regarded as a speck of dust on the scales. He reduces rulers to nothing and makes void the decisions of the most powerful among angels and men. There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against Him. He does all things according to the counsel of His own perfect will, and no creature in heaven or on earth can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have you done?" He should therefore be the focus of all worship and adoration.

1. In **Psalm 99:1-5** is found one of the most majestic declarations in the Old Testament about the reverence and worship that is due God as Sovereign and King. Read the text until you are familiar with its contents and then answer the following questions:

a. *How is God described in the following verses? What does this description of God communicate to us about His sovereign rule over creation? Complete the following declarations:*

- i. He R_____ (v.1).
- ii. He is E_____ above the C_____ (v.1).
- iii. He is G_____ (v.2).
- iv. He is E_____ above all the peoples (v.2).
- v. His Name is G_____ and A_____ (v.3).
- vi. He is H_____ (v.3).

b. *According to verse four, how is God's reign described? What are the characteristics of His sovereign rule over creation? Complete the following declarations:*

- i. The love of J_____.
- ii. The establishment of E_____.
- iii. The execution of J_____ and R_____.

c. *According to the following verses from this Scripture, how should men respond to what God has revealed about Himself and His sovereign rule over His creation?*

i. Verse 1:

ii. Verse 3:

iii. Verse 5:

“BUT THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER; HE HAS ESTABLISHED HIS
THRONE FOR JUDGMENT, AND HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD
IN RIGHTEOUSNESS; HE WILL EXECUTE JUDGMENT FOR THE
PEOPLES WITH EQUITY.”

– PSALM 9:7-8 –

“AND INASMUCH AS IT IS APPOINTED FOR MEN TO DIE ONCE AND
AFTER THIS COMES JUDGMENT...”

– HEBREWS 9:27 –

LESSON THIRTEEN

GOD IS LAWGIVER AND JUDGE

Having considered God as Lord, we will now consider His place over creation as Lawgiver and Judge. The Scriptures teach us that God is a holy, righteous, and loving Sovereign who cares for the well-being of His creation. It is right that such a Sovereign should rule over His creation and administer justice, rewarding the good that is done and punishing the evil. According to the Scriptures, God has revealed His will to all men and will judge all men according to the standard that has been revealed to them. All creatures can be assured that God will judge them according to the strictest standards of justice and fairness. It must always be recognized that God's judgment of man is not unwarranted or cruel, but an inevitable consequence of His holy and righteous character and a necessary part of His government. A God who would forego judging wickedness would not be good or righteous. A creation where wickedness was not restrained and judged would soon self-destruct.

GOD AS LAWGIVER

The Scriptures teach us that the Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe is also its supreme Lawgiver and Judge. God has established the moral laws by which all men must live and He also holds them accountable for their obedience and disobedience. According to the Scriptures, man was not created to be *autonomous* [Greek: *auto*, self + *nomos*, law], or self-governed, but *theonomos* [*theos*, God + *nomos*, law] or under God's law.

As Lawgiver and Judge, God is both holy and righteous. The *holiness* of God refers to His separation from all that is common, profane, or sinful. The *righteousness* of God refers to the rightness and fairness of all His works and judgments. These attributes guarantee that God's law will always be appropriate and right, and that His judgments will always be perfect and impartial. He will always do the right thing. On that great day of

His judgment, when all men stand before Him, they can be assured that He will judge them with perfect justice. The condemned will have no recourse against Him, nor any valid grounds for appeal—*“but the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgement, and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness” (Isaiah 5:16).*

1. In **Isaiah 33:22**, three very important offices are ascribed to God. Each one communicates to us something about the person and work of God and our relationship to Him. Identify these three offices and write a brief explanation of the truth they communicate.

a. *J* _____

b. *L* _____

c. *K* _____

2. In **James 4:12**, is found an extremely important truth about God. What does this Scripture teach us about God and our relationship to Him?

THE FOUNDATION OF GOD’S LAW

Why has God declared some things to be ‘right’ and others to be ‘wrong’? Is the law of God nothing more than an arbitrary set of rules? Is there a reason behind all these

commands and prohibitions? What is the true essence or heart of the law? These are very important questions, and if we are to have a correct understanding of God's law we must give them careful consideration. The following statements are helpful:

1. God is the self-existent Creator, Sustainer, and Lord of all. It is right for God to rule over and judge all that He has made and sustains. It is right for Him to establish His laws and hold His creatures accountable for them.
2. God is the only basis for morality. Why are some things 'good' and other things 'evil'? What is the basis for determining whether something is 'right' or 'wrong'? The Bible teaches that God *is* good. That which is like God (*i.e.* conforms to His character) is 'good'; and that which is not like God (*i.e.* contradicts or opposes His character) is 'evil.' Apart from God, there can be no law, no right or wrong; no good or evil.
3. God's laws are an expression of who He is. God's laws are not arbitrary rules that He has capriciously chosen, but a reflection of His character—holiness, righteousness, benevolence, etc. Sometimes, even Christians speak of the law as though it were a set of eternal and universal principles, independent of God and to which even God is subject. Again, this could not be further from the truth. It is God who established the law, and the law He established is the expression of His very nature.
4. The Essence of God's Law is to love Him supremely and to love others as ourselves. This is clearly taught by Jesus to be the ultimate end to which all divine law is directed as well as the essence of every command God has ever given (Mark 12:29-31). The knowledge that we should love God supremely and others as ourselves is written on the heart of every man, and its full implications (*i.e.* what such love involves) are spelled out in clear and specific terms in the Scriptures (e.g. not worshiping idols, not stealing, not murdering, etc.).

THE LAW REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES

The law of God is made known to men through the Scriptures. In the pages of the Bible we learn that men ought to love God supremely and love their fellow man as themselves. It is also through the Bible that the full implications of what such love involves are spelled out in clear and specific terms: We love God by not worshiping idols, not stealing, not murdering, etc. (Exodus 20:1-17). This written revelation of the law is unfolded with greater and greater clarity throughout the Bible, beginning in the book of Genesis and reaching its culmination in the New Testament. From Genesis to Revelation, God's will is both revealed and clearly illustrated, therefore the apostle Paul writes in II Timothy 3:16-17:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

Although God's revelation of His law in the Scriptures includes every portion of the Bible, God's will for human conduct was made known with special power and clarity on two occasions in Biblical history: at the giving of the Old Covenant to Israel through Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20:1-18), and at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's ultimate and final word to mankind (Hebrews 1:1-2).

THE LAW REVEALED IN THE HEART

We have learned that God is the Great Lawgiver who will judge every man according to His Law, but this truth brings to mind a very important and troubling question, "How can God judge every man according to His Law when a great multitude of humanity has never had the privilege of knowing the Scriptures in which the Law is contained?" According to the Scriptures, God has revealed His unchanging moral standard to mankind in two distinct ways: (1) He has revealed His will in great detail to *some men* through the written commands of Scripture, and (2) He has revealed His will to *all men* in a general way through the law that He has written on their hearts. In both cases, the revelation of God's law is sufficient to cause all men everywhere to be without excuse on the Day of Judgment. Those who have had the privilege of possessing the Scriptures will be judged according to the Scriptures, and those who have had only the law written on their hearts will be judged according to that revelation of the law. Each man will be judged according to the light he has received. As the Scriptures declare in Luke 12:47-48:

"And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."

1. Once again, we have learned that God is the Great Lawgiver who will judge every man according to His Law, but this truth still leaves us with the very important and troubling question, "How can God judge every man according to His Law when a great multitude of humanity has never had the privilege of knowing the Scriptures in which the Law is contained?" In Romans 2:12, this problem is set before us with great clarity.

- a. According to **Romans 2:12**, all mankind can be divided into two distinct groups. What are these two groups?
 - i. Those who have sinned W_____ the Law. This refers specifically to the Gentiles or pagans outside of Israel that had no knowledge of the Law of God revealed through Moses. In the wider context it refers to all those throughout history who have lived and died *without* the privilege of

knowing the details of the law of God revealed through the written commands of the Scriptures.

- ii. Those who have sinned the Law. This refers specifically to the nation of Israel that had been entrusted with the Law of God revealed through Moses. In the wider context, it refers to all those throughout history who have been *privileged to know* the law of God as it is revealed in detail through the written commands of Scripture.

- b. *According to Romans 2:12, what are the consequences of sin for both groups—those who have known the Law as it is revealed in the Scriptures and those who were never privileged with such knowledge?*

- 2. It is understandable that God can rightly condemn those who have known the written code of the Law and rebelled against it, but how can He *justly* condemn those who have lived and died without the Scriptures, seemingly living their whole life without the knowledge of God? The Scriptures themselves provide us with two undeniable and essential truths. These truths (presented below) prove that *God is right* in judging all men and demonstrate that *all men are accountable* before God, even those men who are without the Scriptures:

- a. *God has made Himself evident to all men through the creation. What does **Romans 1:19-20** teach us about this truth?*

Note: This does not mean that all men know everything that may be known about God or that all men are granted the same degree of revelation. It means that all men everywhere and at all times possess sufficient knowledge of the one true God so that they will be without excuse for their sins on the Day of Judgment. Although limited, God’s revelation of Himself to all men has not been ambiguous or unclear. He has made it “evident” to all men that there is one true God and that He alone should be worshipped. The phrase “within them” proves that the knowledge of the one true God is not only demonstrated through the works of creation, *but that God Himself has imprinted this knowledge upon the very heart of every man.* The universe

that God has made proves His existence, but this proof simply acts as a confirmation of what all men already know—there is one true God who is worthy of worship and obedience.

b. *God has placed His law in the hearts of all men. What does **Romans 2:14-15** teach us about this truth?*

Note: This does not mean that there were those among the Gentiles who obeyed the Law perfectly so as to be righteous before God (see Romans 3:9-12), but that even in pagan cultures there were morals and standards that agreed with the Law—telling the truth, honoring one’s parents, prohibitions against murder, etc. This stands as undeniable proof that God has written (imprinted, engraved) the essence of His law (love to God and love to one’s fellow man) on the heart of every man. Although multitudes are without the written code of the Law revealed through the Scriptures, God has written His law on their very hearts and minds. Although not as specific as the written Law of Scripture, it is still sufficient to guide them; therefore all men will be held accountable for their sin on the Day of Judgment.

Note: The *conscience* refers to a moral sense or awareness of right and wrong within every man that defends him when he obeys God’s law and rightly accuses him in every act of disobedience. The conscience can be shunned and rejected (I Timothy 1:19) until it no longer functions as a moral compass. Paul refers to this frightful state as being turned over to the degrading passions of one’s own corrupt heart (Romans 1:24, 26) or having the conscience seared as with a hot iron (I Timothy 4:2).

GOD AS JUDGE

According to the Scriptures, God has revealed His will to all men and will judge all men according to the standard that has been revealed to them. All creatures can be assured that God will judge them according to the strictest standards of justice and fairness. It must always be recognized that God’s judgment of man is not unwarranted or cruel, but an inevitable consequence of His holy and righteous character and a necessary part of His government. A God who would forego judging wickedness would not be good or righteous. A creation where wickedness was not restrained and judged would soon self-destruct.

OMNISCIENT OBSERVER

In previous lessons, we learned that God is both holy and righteous, and that these attributes stand as an eternal and immutable guarantee that His judgments will always be in accordance with the strictest rules of equity and justice. But if we are to rightly understand the nature of God's judgments, then as we consider the Scripture's teaching it is essential that we bear in mind one more divine attribute which we have already studied—the omniscience of God.

The word *omniscience* comes from the Latin word *omnisciens* [*omnis*, all + *sciens*, from *scire*, to know] and denotes the attribute of possessing all knowledge. The omniscience of God means that He possesses perfect knowledge of everything without having to search out or discover the facts. He knows all things past, present and future—immediately, effortlessly, simultaneously, and exhaustively. There is nothing hidden from God. Every creature, and every word, deed, and thought is like an open book before Him. God not only *knows* all the facts, but He *interprets* them with absolutely perfect wisdom, truthfulness, and fidelity. There is never the slightest difference between God's knowledge and reality. The omniscience of God not only proves that He is worthy to judge His creation, but it also guarantees that His judgments will always be perfect. God will always judge according to His perfect knowledge of all the facts.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance and communicates something about the person who bears it. What is the name given to God in **I Samuel 2:3** and what does it communicate to us about His omniscience?

2. In the following Scriptures, three words are used to describe God's omniscience. Through our understanding of these words we can begin to grasp something of the greatness of His knowledge. Identify each word according to the verse given and explain its meaning:

a. P_____ (*Job 37:16*).

b. I _____ (*Psalm 147:4-5*).

c. I _____ (*Isaiah 40:28*).

3. The Scriptures affirm that nothing exists outside of the reach of God’s knowledge. He knows all things past, present, and future—immediately, effortlessly, simultaneously, and exhaustively. Such knowledge not only proves that He is worthy to judge His creation, but it also guarantees that His judgments will always be perfect. God will always judge according to His perfect knowledge of all the facts. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth?

Job 34:21-23

Psalm 33:13-15

Proverbs 5:21

Proverbs 15:3

Proverbs 15:11

Jeremiah 17:10

Hebrews 4:13

4. In Psalm **139:1-4** and **11-12** is found one of the most beautiful and thorough descriptions of the omniscience of God as it relates to His knowledge of the deeds of men. According to the outline given below, describe this most glorious attribute of God:
- a. *Verse 1:*

b. *Verse 2:*

c. *Verse 3:*

d. *Verse 4:*

e. *Verses 11 & 12:*

5. According to the Scriptures, there is no depth or secret in the heart of man that is beyond the reach of God's knowledge. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth? Complete each declaration and then explain its meaning.

a. *God alone knows the H_____ of all men (I Kings 8:39).*

b. *God T_____ the H_____ and M_____ (Psalm 7:9).*

c. *God knows the T_____ of man (Psalm 94:11).*

d. *God will J_____ the S_____ of all men (Romans 2:16).*

6. In light of the Scriptures we have studied, explain how the omniscience of God not only proves that He is worthy to judge His creation, but also acts as a pledge to guarantee that His judgment will always be perfect.
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THE DIVINE JUDGE

Having noted the omniscience of God, we will now consider His place as Judge of all. The Scriptures teach us that God is a holy, righteous, and loving Sovereign who cares for the well-being of His creation. Such a Sovereign must administer justice, rewarding the good and punishing the evil. Because of God's holiness, righteousness and omniscience, all creatures can be assured that He will judge them according to the strictest standards of justice and fairness. Again, it must always be recognized that God's judgment of man is not unwarranted or cruel, but an inevitable consequence of His holy and righteous character and a necessary part of His government. A God who would forego judging wickedness would not be good or righteous. A creation where wickedness was not restrained and judged would soon self-destruct.

1. In the Scriptures, a name has great significance and frequently communicates important truths about the person who bears it. What are the names given to God in the following Scriptures? What do they reveal to us about His person and place as Judge over all?

a. *The J_____ of all the E_____ (Genesis 18:25).*

b. *The J_____ of A_____ (Hebrews 12:23).*

2. The above titles reveal God to be Judge of all. In the following we will consider two titles that reveal something of His integrity. What are the names given to God in the following Scriptures? What do they reveal to us about the righteousness of His person and the rightness of His judgments?

a. *The R_____ J_____ (Psalm 7:11, II Timothy 4:8).*

b. *A God of J_____ (Isaiah 30:18).*

3. In the following are some of the most important declarations in the Scripture with regard to the judgment of God. What do these texts teach us about the certainty that all men will one day stand before God in judgment?

Psalm 9:7-8

Ecclesiastes 12:14

Hebrews 9:27

4. Thus far, we have considered the names of God that speak of His role as Judge, and we have considered some of the most important passages of Scripture that prove that He will judge the world. At this point in our study it is necessary that we consider the key passages in Scripture that affirm the rightness and fairness of God’s judgments. What do the following Scriptures teach us with regard to this truth?

Genesis 18:25

Psalm 96:10-13

Isaiah 5:16

5. In **Revelation 20:11-13** is found one of the most awesome passages in all the Scriptures. Read the text several times until you are familiar with its contents and then answer the following questions:

a. *According to verse 11, how is the judgment throne of God described? What truths does this description communicate?*

b. *According to verse 11, where is God seated? What truths does this communicate to us about God and His relationship to His creatures?*

c. *In verse 11, it is written that heaven and earth will flee away from God and that no place will be found for them. What are the main truths being communicated?*

Note: Two main truths communicated are: (1) God is so awesome and overwhelming that the whole of creation is not able to stand in His presence. How much less man? (2) This present world and its treasures are passing away and will be of no significance on the Day of Judgment.

- d. *According to verse 12, who will be standing before the judgment throne of God on the great Day of Judgment? According to verse 13, will any be able escape or hide on that day?*

Note: The word *hades* in verse 13 is most likely a reference to the grave or the abode of the dead. Men will find no hiding place in the deepest sea, the darkest tomb, or the lowest regions of hell. All will be called up to stand before God on the awesome Day of His Judgment.

- e. *According to verses 12-13, what do the “books” represent? What is the basis upon which God will judge every man?*

Note: All men will be judged according to their deeds (they have all been recorded in the “books”) before the throne of God. The only ones who will be saved on that day are those whose names have been written in the book of life—those who have trusted in Christ and His perfect work of salvation on their behalf (v.15).

6. To conclude our study of the judgement of God we will consider how the Christian should live in light of the certainty of God’s righteous judgement. What do the following Scriptures teach us?

- a. *Confidence in Christ alone:*

Romans 5:1

Philippians 3:3

Hebrews 10:17-23

b. *Obedience:*

II Corinthians 5:9-10

c. *Godliness:*

II Peter 3:11-14

d. *Reverent worship:*

Revelation 14:7

e. *Gravity:*

I Peter 4:7

f. *Hope and joy:*

Psalm 96:10-13

g. *Commitment of both ourselves and our causes to God:*

Romans 12:19

I Peter 2:23

Psalm 37:5-6

“FOR FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN EVEN TO ITS SETTING, MY
NAME WILL BE GREAT AMONG THE NATIONS, AND IN EVERY PLACE
INCENSE IS GOING TO BE OFFERED TO MY NAME, AND A GRAIN
OFFERING THAT IS PURE; FOR MY NAME WILL BE GREAT AMONG THE
NATIONS,’ SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS.”

– MALACHI 1:11 –

LESSON FOURTEEN

THE NAMES OF GOD

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In the Hebrew culture, one's name is not a mere title, but an expression or revelation of the person. In the Scriptures, we find several examples of this: *Abraham* means *the Father of a Multitude* (Genesis 17:5), *Jacob* means *one who takes by the heel or one who supplants* (Genesis 25:26; 27:36), *Nabal* means *fool* (I Samuel 25:25), and *Barnabas* means *Son of Encouragement* (Acts 4:36). All these names reflect the character of the men that bore them. In a similar manner the names of God are inseparable from His person. They are meant to be received as a faithful revelation of Him. Each and every name of God expresses some truth about His character and person. In the following we will briefly consider the names of God. There are no exercises included in this portion of our study; simply consider each name carefully and prayerfully.

THE NAMES OF GOD

GOD (HEBREW: *EL*)

The word *el* is one of the oldest and most common names for God employed by Semitic peoples (Babylonian, Phoenician, Aramaic, Hebrew). The exact meaning of the word is uncertain. It probably denotes power, strength, greatness, and majesty. This name is used 208 times in the Scriptures (Exodus 34:14; Psalm 19:1; Isaiah 43:12).

GOD (HEBREW: *ELOAH*)

The exact meaning of the word *eloah* is uncertain. It probably communicates the same ideas as *el*—power, strength, greatness, and majesty. The word occurs 56 times in the Old Testament—41 times in the book of Job. (See Job 22:12; 27:3; 27:8; 33:12; 37:22; 40:2).

GOD (HEBREW: *ELOHIM*)

The word *elohim* is the first name of God that appears in the Scriptures (Genesis 1:1) and is used with reference to God more than almost any other name in the Scriptures (2,570 times). The name *elohim* is probably the plural form of *eloah* and communicates the same ideas of strength and power. In the Scriptures, *elohim* is translated in four distinct ways, depending on the context. The word may refer to: (1) God, (2) gods, (3) angels, or (4) judges. The fact that *elohim* is a plural word is very important and has two possible interpretations: *First*, all Semitic languages use the plural to communicate that something is exceptional or unique. A small body of water would be called ‘water’, whereas an immense body of water would be called ‘waters’. The plural word *elohim* is used with regard to God, not because there is more than one God, but because He is the great and incomparable God, the one true God above all gods. *Second*, the plural word *elohim* may possibly denote the plurality of persons within the Trinity.

GOD (ARAMAIC: *ELAH* / GREEK: *THEOS*)

The Aramaic word *elah* is translated *God* in the Aramaic portions of the books of Ezra (4:8-6:18; 7:12-26) and Daniel (2:4b-7:28). The Greek word *theos* is translated *God* throughout the New Testament. Neither of the words contributes anything new to the biblical understanding of God. By using them, the writers of Scripture are not affirming the erroneous ideas that the Greeks and Aramaic peoples held about God.

MOST HIGH (HEBREW: *ELYON* / ARAMAIC: *ILLAI* / GREEK: *HUPSISTOS*)

The Hebrew word *elyon* is translated *Most High*, and denotes the exalted state and indescribable majesty of God. In Psalm 97:9, we read, “For You are the LORD Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.” The word is used 31 times in the Scriptures. In the Aramaic passages of Daniel (2:4b-7:28), the name *Most High* is translated from the Aramaic word *illai*. In the New Testament, the name *Most High* is translated from the Greek word *hupsistos* (Mark 5:7; Luke 1:32, 35, 76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17; Hebrews 7:1).

ALMIGHTY (HEBREW: *SHADDAI* / GREEK: *PANTOKRÁTOR*)

The Hebrew word *shaddai* is translated *Almighty*, and denotes the infinite power of God. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), the word is translated by the word *pantokrátor* (all powerful), and in the Latin Vulgate, it is translated *omnipotens*, from which we derive the English word *omnipotent*.

LORD (HEBREW: *ADON, ADONAI*)

The name *Adon* denotes both lordship and ownership. In the Scriptures, when the name is found in its plural form (*i.e. Adonai*) it always refers to God. The plural form denotes intensity—*God is the absolute Lord of all things without exception* (see *Elohim* above). The title *Adonai* denotes the Lordship of God over all creation. It also communicates a great deal about the relationship that exists between God and His people. As *Owner* and *Master*, God is committed to care for His people and provide for their needs. As servants of the *Master*, we are to be committed to serve Him in absolute obedience. The name *Adonai* appears 456 times in the Scriptures with reference to God.

LORD (HEBREW: *YAHWEH* OR *JEHOVAH*)

The name *Yahweh* is the personal name of God and the one most employed in the Scriptures (6,825 times). In Hebrew, the name is written in the form of a tetragram (a word with four letters): YHVH. Although it is not known for certain, the true pronunciation is probably Yahveh or Yahweh. The great majority of Bible scholars believe that the name Yahweh comes from the verb *hayáh*—*to be* (Exodus 3:14). The name denotes the eternity, immutability, and uniqueness of God. It is important to recognize that the Lord Jesus Christ applied this name to Himself (John 8:58-59), and thus affirmed His deity.

LORD (HEBREW: *YAH*)

The name *Yah* is the contracted form of *Yahweh*. It appears 48 times in the Scriptures, mostly in the book of Psalms and in the exclamation *hallelu[jah]* (*i.e. "Praise Yahweh!"* or "Praise the Lord!"). The word *yah* also forms part of several personal names in the Scriptures: *Eli[jah]*—(*i.e. "My God is Yahweh" or "Yahweh is God"*).

LORD (GREEK: *KÚRIOS* OR *KYRIOS*)

For the Greeks, the word *kyrios* could refer to a man of high position and power or to a supernatural being (*i.e.* a god). The word is used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) in place of the Hebrew name *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*, and in the New Testament to communicate the Hebrew idea of God as Lord. The word is employed 640 times in the New Testament as a reference to God. It is significant that the word *kyrios* is used without reservation with reference to Jesus.

LORD (GREEK: *DESPÓTES*)

The Greek word *despótes* denotes ownership and absolute lordship. In its oldest use, the *despótés* was the master of the house who ruled with absolute authority. In time, the term came to denote someone of unlimited or even tyrannical political authority. Today, the term is most often used negatively for the simple reason that absolute power corrupts fallen men absolutely. When the term is ascribed to God in the Septuagint and the New Testament, it communicates nothing negative. God is the rightful *Owner* and *Lord* of what He has made. His holiness and righteousness guarantee that He will always use His absolute authority with perfect justice. The term *despótés* is used 6 times in the New Testament with reference to God (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; II Timothy 2:21; II Peter 2:1; Jude 1:4; Revelation 6:10). In II Peter 2:1 and Jude 1:4, the reference is specifically to Jesus Christ.

A CLOSER LOOK AT YAHWEH

In the following, we will briefly consider the compound names of God that are formed using the name *Yahweh*. Each name will give us greater insight into the person and work of God.

THE LORD OF HOSTS (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-SABAOTH*)

The name *Yahweh-Sabaoth* represents God as the omnipotent King and Warrior who rules and protects His people. The word *hosts* may refer to: (1) angelic beings or (2) the cosmos—sun, stars, and the forces of nature. The idea communicated is that the Lord rules over all beings and things whether they be earthly, cosmic, or heavenly. He carries out His perfect will and there are none who can oppose Him. (Psalm 24:10; Isaiah 6:1-5; Isaiah 31:4-5).

THE LORD MOST HIGH (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-ELYON*)

The name *Yahweh-Elyon* speaks of the sovereignty, exaltation, and majesty of Yahweh. God is Lord *over all and above all*—He is worthy of all worship and praise (Psalm 7:17; 47:2; 97:9).

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-JIREH*)

This name was ascribed to God by the patriarch Abraham in Genesis 22:14. In obedience to God's command, Abraham placed his son Isaac on the altar as a sacrifice. Before Abraham could strike his son, God detained him and provided a ram in his place. The redemption that God provided that day on Mount Moriah motivated Abraham to call the place *Yahweh-Jireh*. Although it is true that God is powerful and faithful to supply *all* our needs, the name *Yahweh-Jireh* is not a promise of economic prosperity, but a promise of redemption from sin. We should die for our sins (Romans 6:23), but *Yahweh-Jireh* has provided a sacrifice in our place—His only begotten and beloved Son. He is the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). It is near blasphemy to emphasize economic prosperity over redemption. Jesus did not shed His blood for our monetary gain, but for the salvation of our souls—the redemption of the soul is costly (Psalm 49:8).

THE LORD IS MY STANDARD (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-NISSI*)

This name was ascribed to God by Moses in Exodus 17:15 after God defeated the army of the Amalekites. In ancient times, the troops would rally together around a standard or banner in preparation for battle. The truth communicated here is that God is the standard of His people. When we rally around Him, our victory is sure.

THE LORD THAT SANCTIFIES (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-QADESH*)

This name appears for the first time in Exodus 31:13 and several times in the book of Leviticus (20:8; 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32). The word *sanctify* (Hebrew: *qadash*) means to *separate* something or someone from common use and to consecrate or dedicate them to some special purpose. The name *Yahweh-qadesh* communicates many wonderful truths to the people of God. God has separated us from the rest of the peoples of the earth, He has consecrated us for His service, and He is working to conform us to His image.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-RAAH*)

This name is found in one of the most well-known and beloved chapters in all the Scriptures—Psalm 23. For the people of God, the name *Yahweh-raah* is one of the most esteemed. God is the *pastor* of His people. He loves them, feeds them, guides them and guards them from their enemies (Genesis 48:15; 49:24; Psalm 28:9; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:12; Micah 7:14; John 10:1-42; Revelation 7:17). In the New Testament, God is present in Jesus Christ as the Good Pastor that lays down His life for His sheep (John 10:11).

THE LORD YOUR HEALER (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-RAFAH*)

This name is found in Exodus 15:26, where Moses communicates God's promise to Israel: "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer." The name *Yahweh-rafah* assures us that we can trust in the Lord's providential care. He has healed us from the mortal illness of sin, and is able to heal us physically if by such healing His will and glory may be promoted.

THE LORD IS PEACE (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-SHALOM*)

This name is found in Judges 6:22-24 and communicates one of the most important aspects of the relationship that exists between God and His people—peace. In this passage, Gideon had seen the awesome revelation of God through the Angel of the Lord and is sure that he will die because of the vision. Such dread is common whenever sinful man has an encounter with Holy God. In the case of Gideon and the people of God, *the grace of God changes such terror to peace*. This truth finds its greatest fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ who is our peace (Ephesians 2:14).

THE LORD IS HERE OR PERSONALLY PRESENT (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-SAMA*)

This name is found in Ezekiel 48:35 where God promises His presence in the complete restoration of His people in the latter days. The presence of God has always been a very special blessing for the people of God. Adam walked with God in Eden before his fall and judgment (Genesis 3:8). In Exodus 33:12-16, Moses asked that the presence of God might accompany Israel in her journey through the wilderness. In I Kings 8:10-11, God blessed His people by filling the temple with His presence. In the New Testament, the promise of God's presence was fulfilled in its most perfect way through Jesus Christ.

In Him, God was made flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:1, 14). In the Church, God not only dwells *with* His people, but *in* His people through the Holy Spirit (John 14:17). In the consummation of all things, God will dwell with and within His people in the New Heavens and New Earth (Revelation 21:1-3; Romans 8:11).

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (HEBREW: *YAHWEH-TSIDKENU*)

This name is found in Jeremiah 23:5-6. In this text God promises that the Messiah will both “save” His people and will “rule over” them with perfect righteousness. This prophecy has also found its perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Through His perfect life, atoning death, and heavenly intercession. He has made His people righteous and He rules over them with perfect righteousness. Our righteousness is not our own, but Jesus Christ, who is the Lord Yahweh, is our righteousness.

DIVINE NAMES, TITLES, AND METAPHORS

In the following, is a listing of the many other names, titles, and metaphors that are ascribed to God in the Scriptures with important references for each. Again, each name will give us greater insight into the person and work of God. Be certain to look up and study each of the references for yourself.

NAMES THAT REFLECT GOD’S GLORY AND MAJESTY (8)

God of Gods: Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:2; Daniel 2:47; 11:36

God of Glory: Psalm 29:3; Acts 7:2

God in Heaven Above and on Earth Beneath: Joshua 2:11

Invisible God: Colossians 1:15

Blessed God: I Timothy 1:11

Majestic Glory: II Peter 1:17

Majesty in the Heavens: Hebrews 8:1

He Who is to be Feared: Psalm 76:11

NAMES THAT REFLECT THE ETERNITY OF GOD (6)

Everlasting or Eternal God: Genesis 21:33; Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 40:28;
Romans 16:26

Ancient of Days: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14, 22
I Am: Exodus 3:13-14; John 8:56-58
Alpha and Omega: Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13
The Beginning and the End: Revelation 21:6
The First and the Last: Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; Revelation 22:13

NAMES THAT REFLECT THE HOLINESS AND JUSTICE OF GOD (6)

The Holy One: Proverbs 9:10; Isaiah 40:25; 43:15; Hosea 11:9; Habakkuk 1:12
Holy God: I Samuel 6:20
Jealous God: Joshua 24:19
God of Justice: Isaiah 30:18
Righteous God: Isaiah 45:21
Righteous Judge: Psalm 7:11

NAMES THAT REFLECT THE POWER AND SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD (29)

Creator: Romans 1:25
Architect and Builder: Hebrews 11:10
Possessor of Heaven and Earth: Genesis 14:19, 22
Potter: Romans 9:20-21
Mighty One: Luke 1:49
God of all Flesh: Jeremiah 32:27
God of all the Earth: Isaiah 54:5
God of all the Kingdoms of the Earth: Isaiah 37:16
Mighty God: Isaiah 9:6
Great and Awesome God: Nehemiah 1:5
Great, Mighty, and Awesome God: Deuteronomy 10:17
Great God and King Above all Gods: Psalm 95:3
Great King over all the Earth: Psalm 47:2
Living God and Everlasting King: Jeremiah 10:10
King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible: I Timothy 1:17
King from Old: Psalm 74:12
King of all the Earth: Psalm 47:7
King of the Nations: Jeremiah 10:7
King of Heaven: Daniel 4:37

King of Kings: I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16

Lord of Heaven: Daniel 5:23

Lord of the Whole Earth: Psalm 97:5

Lord of Heaven and Earth: Luke 10:21; Acts 17:24

Lord of Kings: Daniel 2:47

Lord of Lords: Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:3; I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16

Lord of the Harvest: Matthew 9:37-38

Blessed and only Sovereign: I Timothy 6:15

Lawgiver: Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12

Judge of all the Earth: Genesis 18:25

NAMES THAT REFLECT THE JUDGMENT AND WRATH OF GOD (7)

Jealous God: Exodus 20:4-5; Deuteronomy 4:24; Joshua 24:19-20

Consuming Fire: Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29

Jealous and Avenging God: Nahum 1:2

God of Recompense: Jeremiah 51:56

Watcher of Men: Job 7:20

Judge of all the Earth: Genesis 18:25; Psalm 94:2

Righteous Judge: Psalm 7:11

NAMES THAT REFLECT GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE

GOD IS THE ONLY GOD AND CREATOR OF HIS PEOPLE (4)

True God: Jeremiah 10:10; John 17:3

Creator: Isaiah 43:7, 15; 44:2, 21

Faithful Creator: I Peter 4:19

Maker: Psalm 95:6; 149:2-3; Isaiah 54:5

GOD IS INTIMATE WITH HIS PEOPLE (10)

Father: Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 64:8; Malachi 1:6; 2:10; John 20:17; I John 3:1

Holy Father: John 17:11

Righteous Father: John 17:25
Father of Mercies: II Corinthians 1:3
Father of Lights: James 1:17
Father of Glory: Ephesians 1:17
Heavenly Father: Matthew 6:14
Father of Spirits: Hebrews 12:9
Abba Father: Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6
Husband: Isaiah 54:5

GOD IS THE FAITHFUL ONE WHO LOVES AND FORGIVES HIS PEOPLE (9)

God of Truth: Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16
Faithful God: Deuteronomy 7:9
Compassionate God: Deuteronomy 4:31
Gracious and Compassionate God: Nehemiah 9:31; Psalm 86:15
Forgiving God: Psalm 99:8
God of all Grace: I Peter 5:10
God of Peace: Romans 15:33; 16:20; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20
God of Love and Peace: II Corinthians 13:11
God of all Comfort: II Corinthians 1:3

GOD REIGNS OVER HIS PEOPLE (4)

King: Isaiah 33:22; 43:15
Great King: Psalm 48:2
Lawgiver: Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12
Judge: Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12; 5:9

GOD SAVES HIS PEOPLE (9)

Redeemer: Job 19:25; Psalm 19:14; Isaiah 44:24; 54:5; Jeremiah 50:34
Redeemer from of Old: Isaiah 63:16
Horn of my Salvation: II Samuel 22:3
Deliverer: II Samuel 22:2; Psalm 40:17; Psalm 144:2
Saving Defense: Psalm 28:8
Salvation: Exodus 15:2; Psalm 27:1; 62:1-2; 118:14; Isaiah 12:2
Savior: II Samuel 22:3; Isaiah 45:21; Luke 1:47; I Timothy 1:1; Jude 1:25
Savior of all Men: I Timothy 4:10
Strength of my Salvation: Psalm 140:7

GOD GIVES SECURITY TO HIS PEOPLE (26)

Rock: Deuteronomy 32:4, 31; II Samuel 22:2, 32, 47; Psalm 62:6-7

Everlasting Rock: Isaiah 26:4

Rock of our Salvation: Psalm 95:1

Rock of Strength: Psalm 31:1-2

Rock of my Strength: Psalm 62:7

Rock of Habitation: Psalm 71:3

Fortress: II Samuel 22:2; Psalm 71:3; 91:2 144:2

Stronghold: Psalm 59:9, 16-17; 144:2; Jeremiah 16:19

Tower of Strength: Psalm 61:3

Strong Tower: Proverbs 18:10

Sanctuary: Isaiah 8:13-14

Refuge: Psalm 59:16; 61:3; 62:7; 91:2

Refuge in the Day of Distress: Jeremiah 16:19

Refuge from the Storm: Isaiah 25:4

Hiding Place: Psalm 32:7; 119:114

Dwelling Place: Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 91:9

Shade from the Heat: Isaiah 25:4

Defense of my Life: Psalm 27:1

Defense for the Helpless: Isaiah 25:4

Defense for the Needy in his Distress: Isaiah 25:4

Shield: Genesis 15:1; II Samuel 22:3, 31; Psalm 3:3; 18:2, 30; 28:7; 115:9-11; 119:114; 144:2; Proverbs 2:7; 30:5

Shield of our Help: Deuteronomy 33:29

Wall of Fire: Zechariah 2:5

Father of the Fatherless: Psalm 68:5

Judge of the Widows: Psalm 68:5

Strength of my Heart: Psalm 73:26

GOD FIGHTS FOR HIS PEOPLE (6)

Warrior: Exodus 15:3; Isaiah 42:13

Man of War: Isaiah 42:13

Dread Champion: Jeremiah 20:11

Sword of our Majesty: Deuteronomy 33:29

Consuming Fire: Deuteronomy 9:3

Lion: Isaiah 31:4-5

GOD HELPS HIS PEOPLE (4)

Strength: Exodus 15:2; Psalm 18:1; 28:8; Jeremiah 16:19; Habakkuk 3:19

Helper: Psalm 30:10; Hebrews 13:6

Stay: Psalm 18:18

Very Present Help in Trouble: Psalm 46:1

GOD SUSTAINS HIS PEOPLE (7)

Sun: Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2

Shade: Psalm 121:5; Isaiah 25:4

Dew: Hosea 14:5

Fountain of Living Waters: Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13

Life: John 14:6; Colossians 3:4

Light: Psalm 27:1; Micah 7:8; I John 1:5

Everlasting Light: Isaiah 60:19-20

GOD CARES FOR HIS PEOPLE (10)

God Who Sees: Genesis 16:7-14

Shepherd: Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:11-16

Chief Shepherd: I Peter 5:4

Great Shepherd: Hebrews 13:20

Good Shepherd: John 10:11, 14

Shepherd and Guardian of our Souls: I Peter 2:25

Vinedresser: John 15:1-2

Potter: Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 18:1-6

Lamp: II Samuel 22:29

Keeper: Psalm 121:5

GOD IS THE REWARD OF HIS PEOPLE (6)

Inheritance: Numbers 18:20; Deuteronomy 10:9; 18:2; Joshua 13:33; Ezekiel 44:28

Possession: Ezekiel 44:28

Portion: Numbers 18:20

Beautiful Crown: Isaiah 28:5

Glorious Diadem: Isaiah 28:5

Song: Exodus 15:2; Isaiah 12:2

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Washer became a believer while attending the University of Texas studying to become an oil and gas lawyer. He completed his undergraduate studies and enrolled at Southwestern Theological Seminary where he received his Master of Divinity degree. Paul left the states shortly after graduation as a North American missionary to Peru.

Paul ministered as a missionary in Peru for 10 years, during which time he founded the HeartCry Missionary Society to support Peruvian Church planters. HeartCry's work now supports over 80 indigenous missionaries in 15 different countries throughout Eastern Europe, South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

An itinerant preacher, Paul also frequently teaches at his home church, Grace Life Church of the Shoals. At present, Paul serves as the Director of HeartCry Missionary Society and resides in Muscle Shoals, Alabama with his wife Charo and two sons Ian and Evan, and one daughter Rowan.

ABOUT HEARTCRY MISSIONARY SOCIETY



As Christians, we are called, commissioned, and commanded to lay down our lives so that the Gospel might be preached to every creature under heaven. Second only to loving God, this is to be our magnificent obsession. There is no nobler task for which we may give our lives than promoting the glory of God in the redemption of men through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If the Christian is truly obedient to the Great Commission, he will give his life either to go down into the well or to hold the rope for those who go down. Either way, the same radical commitment is required.

The Christian who is truly passionate about the glory of God and confident in His sovereignty will not be unmoved by the billions of people in the world who have yet to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we are truly Christlike, the lost multitude of humanity will move us to compassion (Matthew 9:36), even to great sorrow and unceasing grief (Romans 9:2). The sincerity of our Christian confession should be questioned if we are not willing to do all within our means to make Christ known among the nations and to endure all things for the sake of God's elect (II Timothy 2:10).

While we recognize that the needs of mankind are many and his sufferings are diverse, we believe that they all spring from a common origin—the radical depravity of his heart, his enmity toward God, and his rejection of truth. Therefore, we believe that the greatest benefit to mankind can be accomplished through the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of local churches that proclaim the full counsel of God’s Word and minister according to its commands, precepts, and wisdom. Such a work cannot be accomplished through the arm of the flesh, but only through the supernatural providence of God and the means which He has ordained: biblical preaching, intercessory prayer, sacrificial service, unconditional love, and true Christlikeness.

OUR PURPOSE

The chief end of all mission work is the Glory of God. Our greatest concern is that His Name be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun (Malachi 1:11), and that the Lamb who was slain might receive the full reward for His sufferings (Revelation 7:9-10). We find our great purpose and motivation not in man or his needs, but in God, His commitment to His own glory, and our God-given desire to see Him worshipped in every nation, tribe, people, and language. We find our great confidence not in the Church’s ability to fulfill the Great Commission, but in God’s unlimited and unhindered power to accomplish all He has decreed.

OUR CHURCH

The HeartCry Missionary Society is not a para-church organization; rather, we are a ministry under the authority and supervision of a local New Testament church and its elders. We call ourselves a society simply because the word denotes a proper association of people with similar interests, purposes, or passions. Those of our church and those who faithfully support this ministry have one abiding purpose: that God’s Name be great among the nations through the redemption of men and the building up of Christ’s bride.

OUR MISSION

The goal of our ministry is to glorify God through the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of biblical churches throughout the world.

Reasons:

- A biblical church is the will of God. The establishment of local churches was the goal of apostolic ministry (Ephesians 3:10-11, 21; 4:11-13).
- A biblical church is the result or ‘mature fruit’ of a genuine work of God. Therefore, the goal of planting a biblical church will be the means of guiding and validating all our missionary efforts.
- A biblical church is the “pillar and support” of truth. Therefore, it is the great and enduring bulwark against error (I Timothy 3:15). The church is the “salt of the earth,”

and the only entity that can preserve a nation or people from self-deceit and self-deception.

- A biblical church is the only means of creating a self-sustaining, ever-multiplying mission effort.

Nature of the New Testament Church:

- It is local and visible.
- It is spiritual and organic. It is more an organism than an organization, institution, or mechanism.
- It is autonomous—the fellowship is self-governing and self-supporting.
- It is collective or communal. Its members are interdependent, ministering to one another according to their callings and giftings.
- It is doctrinally or theologically driven (vs. pragmatism and cultural sensitivity).
- It is missionary—the fellowship is directly involved in the establishment of new churches of like faith and practice.
- Its chief end and motivation is the glory of God in Christ.

ESSENTIAL CONVICTIONS OF HEARTCRY MISSIONARY SOCIETY

1. **Missions is an Impossibility apart from the Power of God.** All men of every culture are born radically depraved, at enmity with God, and restraining the truth. The conversion of a man and the advancement of missions are an absolute impossibility apart from the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Modern church growth strategies and many new mission methodologies often overlook this essential truth.
2. **A True Gospel must be Proclaimed.** The Gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16) and the preaching of the Gospel is the great *means* and *methodology* of missions. The Gospel is, first and foremost, God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). It answers the eternal question of how a just God can rightly justify wicked men (Romans 3:26). It points to Christ alone, who bore the sins of His people upon the cross, was forsaken of God, and crushed under the full force of His just wrath against sin. The Good News of the Gospel is that through Christ's death, the justice of God was satisfied, and salvation was won for a great multitude of people. This is evidenced by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—"He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).
3. **The Gospel Transcends Culture.** The greatest need of all men of every culture is the clear proclamation of the Gospel. Men are saved through the Gospel and continue in sanctification through continued growth in the full counsel of God's Word. Although differences in culture are to be considered, it is more important for the missionary to

be biblically sensitive than culturally sensitive. A missionary was once asked how he preached the Gospel to a certain remote tribe. He declared, "I do not preach the Gospel to a remote tribe. I preach the Gospel to men!"

4. **Incarnational Missions is Essential.** Although there may be some effective non-personal means of communicating the Gospel, there is no substitute for one man living among a people, teaching the Gospel to them, and living out his faith before them. God sent his own Son, and He became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1,14; 3:16).
5. **Superficial Evangelism is one of the Great Obstacles to Missions.** Non-theological preaching, entertaining skits, and Gospel films are no substitute for the biblical exposition of the Gospel. Inviting men to raise their hands and pray a prayer is no substitute for the biblical call to repentance, faith, and personal discipleship. Biblical assurance of salvation does not flow from a past decision or a prayer, but from the examination of one's enduring lifestyle in the light of Scripture.
6. **Church Planting is the Primary Work of Missions.** There are many gifts and callings in the body of Christ, but on all of them are to work together on the mission field with the primary goal of planting a biblical church. It is one thing to do mass evangelism and to boast of the numbers of decisions; it is quite another to establish a biblical church.
7. **True Missions is Costly.** Amy Carmichael explained that missions is no more and no less than an opportunity to die. We live in a fallen world that is at enmity with God and opposes His truth; therefore, missions and suffering go hand in hand. Any advancement of the kingdom of Christ into the dominion of the devil will be met with warfare. There are many countries and people groups where martyrdom cannot be avoided.

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER



It is our great aim to see the praises of our God upon the lips of His people. Since its inception, Granted Ministries has sought to further the influence of those whom God has wonderfully used for our own personal growth in the faith. We do this through the Word of God, taught by men whom God has already raised up in His church for such a task. We are not attempting to expand our own influence, but rather to be of service to the body of Christ by making such teaching available. It is the truest need of the church that she would more completely and deeply know her blessed God. In this effort we join our Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17).

I have known Paul for nine years now and have seen the influence of his ministry greatly enlarged. Our part in that growth is undoubtedly small, but we are thankful to have been engaged in the service of Christ in this way for the past six-and-a-half years. The phone calls and emails continue to encourage us, and the work still grows. We encourage you to visit our website www.grantedministries.org and avail yourself of what is there.

WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD POLICY

As with all of the resources that we make available, this book is offered to any who believe they can benefit from it, whether they can pay for it or not. There is a cost for the book, but we do not want this to be an obstacle to anyone. If you cannot afford to purchase a copy, or if you can only afford a portion of the price, we ask that you write and give us the opportunity to serve God by providing for His people. Our only stipulation is that you not request the book unless you are certain to read it within six months. We do not want to generously enlarge your library, but to generously enlarge your spiritual condition.

—C.T. February, 2009

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