



THEOLOGY PROPER

THE STUDY OF GOD

Training the next generation

For small groups, Sunday school, mentoring, personal study



By Rev. Bob Schneider

This study is dedicated to my wife Karon, my best friend ever, mi querida. Your parents gave me the best gift a man could ever receive. You've helped me grow so very much, you've walked with me through the good times and the bad times. You are such a joy to me! I am so very grateful for you. You have encouraged me, especially as you have served as my editor and are also translating these studies into Spanish.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY

"Bob Schneider has blessed the church with his studies in theology. I am quite impressed by their clarity, simplicity, and depth! It takes a good teacher who knows his stuff to make complicated ideas clear and he has accomplished this in his study. Well done!" **Dr. Richard Bargas - President of IFCA, International.**

"These studies will cause the believer to catapult forward because they learn to think and wrestle with the text. All believers need this kind of theological foundation for their lives." **Paul Seger, Mission Consultant and Former director of Biblical Ministries Worldwide.**

The Bible studies Bob has put together are very well organized and structured. They can be used in a variety of different ministry settings for both teens and adults. The lessons are designed to prompt discussion and interaction with the biblical texts by placing thoughtful discussion questions into each section. Thanks, Bob, for providing such biblical and practical material for our churches. **Pastor Ron Smith - Curtiss Street Bible Fellowship.**

These courses provide a useful framework as a base for a wide variety of Bible studies. Whether it's a quick survey for a new believer or a deeper challenge to a maturing teen, these courses are carefully thought through to help leaders of all skill levels provide a consistent and thorough grasp of each topic. **Brendan Yoder, friend, father of eight, elder in his church, man of God.**

I like how the topics are divided, it makes analysis, discussion, and teaching so much easier. The time flies by so quickly, I just don't want to stop. **Jasmine, a sister in our church.**

I appreciate that the material is well organized and that the Bible texts are the ones I need to study that topic. **Minerva leads ladies' studies in our church.**

Bible translations - The main Bible used in this study is the New American Standard Bible. At times, we use the New Living Translation, which often does an excellent job of making things clear. This has been especially helpful for the teens in our church who use these studies.

For the teacher. Some people will do this study on their own, and then meet with a teacher to go over any questions they might have. There are **questions at the end of this file**. These will help you work with your student.

My good friends **Brendan Yoder and Pastor Ron Smith** have been instrumental in walking through these studies with me, looking for accuracy and thought flow. Their support has been of immense value! Thank you, men.

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What's unique about this study is that it is centered around the Bible. So, as we look at different passages, take the time to think through *each phrase* of each verse. **WHAT IS THIS VERSE TEACHING?** Take time to meditate on God's Word.

Also, there are times when I only include one verse. You may need to look up that verse in your Bible in order to understand the context.

Read what others have to say about these themes. Check out excellent study Bibles and websites.

- GotQuestions.org. / Biblehub.com / PreceptAustin.org / FOI.ORG - Friends of Israel
- E-sword and Olive Tree are free Bible programs.

Theology Proper - The doctrine of God.

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Psalm 8 - New Living Translation - *from now on it's known as NLT*

David For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument.

1 O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. 2 You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.

3 When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place— 4 what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? 5 Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.

6 You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority— 7 the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, 8 the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.

9 O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

"God, I want to know YOU", I want to learn about YOU, I want to learn what YOU are like. There are so many ideas out there.

Let me say this, God is amazing! As you get to know Him, you will be enthralled. When you go to live in His presence, you will be overwhelmed with wonder forever because God is awesome and wonderful and marvelous. Let's learn about God.

1. How do we know about God?

There are two main ways of learning about God. General revelation and special revelation.

1.1. GENERAL REVELATION.

It is *general* information about God available to every person on the planet, in every age. God uses the **creation**, our **human conscience**, and **providence** to teach us about Himself. Providence is God's control of all that happens. Let's look at one example of providence.

The **human conscience** tells us what is right and what is wrong. The British author C.S. Lewis came to Christ because he knew that there was a right and a wrong. That meant that there must be Someone who declared what was right and what was wrong. What does the human conscience tell us about God? Take a moment to think this through.

Joseph was sold as a slave in Egypt, but later became second to Pharaoh. God sent Joseph ahead so that he could save the world. This is an example of **providence**.

Genesis 50:15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did

to him!” 16 So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father charged before he died, saying,

17 “Thus you shall say to Joseph, “Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.” And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18 Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.”

19 But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

- Please explain verse 20.
- How has God blessed you through some bad things that have happened to you?
- What does providence tell us about God?
- An example of providence is your birth. Of the 80-300 million sperm present in conception, God chose one that would form your life. God knew you before your parents were ever born. That is providence.
- God has been guiding your life these many years. He has provided for you and watched over you. What have you learned about God as you see His control of all the events in your life?
- Joseph’s attitude is astounding. It is the fruit of years of suffering. Notice the depth of Joseph’s wisdom and character in comparison to his brothers. Joseph knew that his sufferings were part of God’s plan, and that God was working to bring about something good. This is also true of your sufferings. God is working to form your character, to transform you into a wise and godly person.

Quiz - What is general revelation? What are the three areas of general revelation?

- Do you have any questions?
- We will talk about creation in just a moment.
- We study general revelation and special revelation in depth in our study of the Bible, Bibliology.

1.2. SPECIAL REVELATION

While general revelation is general information and available to everyone, special revelation is detailed information from God, but it is not available to all. Not all have access to the Bible.

Few people have seen angels, talked to Jesus or gone to heaven. You are blessed to have access to God's Word and to be full of God's Spirit.

Special revelation teaches us the profound things of God, it teaches us about salvation and man, the past and the future, the creation of the world and judgment day, the end of all things, heaven and hell. Not all people have access to this information. It is very special, highly prized.

Special revelation has come to mankind through the Bible, through angels, through dreams or visions like Jacob or Joseph had, or a vision of heaven like the apostle John had. But the greatest revelation from God is Jesus. And his apostles and prophets gave us the New Testament. But **Jesus Himself is the highest form of special revelation.** And Jesus' apostles gave us the New Testament.

- What is special revelation?

- How would your life be different if you didn't have special revelation?

A HEART LIKE KING DAVID

David had his failures, but he was a man after God's own heart, and probably the godliest king to ever walk the planet. He often praised the Lord, even in the midst of hardship, and that is a good example for us to follow. That is why, after each section, you will find a point called **A heart like King David**, which will encourage you to praise the Lord.

A heart like King David - As you think of the creation of the world and everything in the universe, why do you praise the Lord?

King Jesus - As we think about God, we see that He is absolutely incredible! If you could spend just a few minutes with Jesus, it would change your life forever. You would never forget his words to you.

Now let's think about the future, when Jesus is living on this earth, reigning over the whole world. People will see Jesus. They will talk to Jesus, to the angels, to the apostles, and to all the Christians who have lived throughout the ages. They will have visions and dreams.

- How would your life change if you were living in the millennium, surrounded by godly wise people, with no evil influence?

- What would it be like raising children in a world where Jesus reigns?

When Jesus returns, everything will be RIGHT! Life will function as it should. I can hardly wait for Jesus to return and reign upon this earth! Our God is amazing. Come, Lord Jesus!

We've talked about general and special revelation. Through the creation, the conscience and providence, every person on the planet knows about God, and only a fool would deny God's existence. The Bible provides us with detailed information about God, and Jesus is the greatest revelation of God. Let's look at other ways we learn about God.

1.2.1. Miracles show us what God is like.

When Jesus raised someone from the dead or healed people, what did that tell them about Jesus?

Matthew 15:30 And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. 31 So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

- How did the crowds respond?
- How would you respond if you saw Jesus do these miracles?

Now, sometimes, God allows Satan to do miracles. Demons can do miracles. Pharaoh's magicians turned water into blood and did several other miracles. The Antichrist will do many miracles. That's why we need the Bible, a revelation from God that is greater than miracles.

- Why is the Bible greater than miracles? Why would we trust the Bible, more than a person who does miracles and contradicts the Bible?
- How do we know that the Antichrist is not from God, even though he will do miracles?
- It's helpful to realize that Jesus fulfilled hundreds of **prophecies** from the Old Testament. This proves that He came from God. All of **His teachings** were in agreement with the Bible, plus He also did **miracles**, which proved that His message was true. How do miracles prove that Jesus is from God, and what do miracles tell you about Jesus, what He is like?

A heart like King David - why do miracles lead you to praise the Lord?

1.2.2. Prophecies in the Bible tell us about God.

The Bible has something that no other religious book in the world has, a massive number of prophecies. At least 27% of the Bible speaks of things that will happen in the future. Some of these prophecies have already been fulfilled, such as the first coming of Jesus. When God causes a prophecy to be fulfilled, it tells us that the Bible is true and that God is all-powerful and wise. I can trust the Bible, but I do not trust other religious books. No other religious book in the world has prophecies like the Bible, they don't even come close.

I would like you to write a prophecy that includes eight factors. Here is one that a friend helped me invent. I actually found it difficult to do.

You are currently three years old. You will move to Chicago at the age of 19 to get your degree in basket weaving. Furthermore, you will meet and marry a girl from Taiwan. You will both move to Mexico City, where you will become a professional video game player.

You will have your own line of clothing and have one million followers on Facebook and X, formerly called Twitter. Your twin daughters will star in a virtual reality remake of Spider-Man.

- * What are the chances that this might come true?

- * Do you see how complicated prophecies become? Now it's your turn to write a story with eight predictions that all fit together. Please take a moment to write out your imaginary prophecy.

Here are some prophecies from the Bible.

Micah 5:2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

- Where was Jesus born?

- What does this say about Jesus - His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity?

- What does prophecy tell us about God?

Please underline all the parts that have to do with Jesus in the following passage and share them with others as you read this Psalm during the class.

Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. 2 O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; And by night, but I have no rest.

7 All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 8 "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."...

12 Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. 13 They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; 18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

- In what year was this Psalm written? (Check your study Bible.)

- What do we learn about God through this Psalm and the fulfillment of these prophecies?

- MacArthur Study Bible: “This psalm presents the reader with a great contrast in mood. Lament characterizes the first 21 verses, while praise and thanksgiving describe the last 10 verses. Prayer accounts for this dramatic shift from lament to praise. It is the story of first being Godforsaken and then God-found and filled. It was applied immediately to David and ultimately to the Greater David, the Messiah. The NT contains 15 messianic quotations of or allusions to this psalm, leading some in the early church to label it “the fifth gospel.”

Ligonier.com says that there are more than 1,800 prophecies in the Bible. Some 300 of them are about Jesus.

Isaiah 53 - New Living Translation - as you read this beautiful chapter, talk through each phrase or verse. Do your best to understand it. You might want to consult your study Bible. What does this prophecy teach us about God?

1 Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm? 2 My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.

- How did Israel respond to Jesus' message that the kingdom of God was near?
- What does the dry ground refer to?
- What was Jesus' physical appearance?

3 He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. 4 Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!

- What do these verses teach us?

5 But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. 6 All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.

- What do these verses teach us?

7 He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 8 Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.

- What do these verses teach us?

9 He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave. 10 But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.

- What do these verses teach us?

11 When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. 12 I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

- What do these verses teach us?

As you look at the numerous prophecies contained here, what does it teach you about God? Name at least three things.

There may be times in your life when doubts creep into your mind about God or the Bible. Fulfilled prophecy is something you can use to chase them away. To have so many prophecies come true is impossible. It clearly tells us that a very wise, loving God is in control, and it clearly shows us that the Bible is God's Word. Prophecy has often bolstered my faith. Our study on eschatology, the future of the world, will go into great detail about many of the Bible's prophecies.

Imagine that a friend of yours is struggling to believe that God's Word is true. How could you use the many prophecies of the Bible to convince him of the Bible's truthfulness? How do prophecies strengthen your faith?

A heart like King David - As you see how God has decreed things that will happen in the future and then brings them to pass, why do you praise the Lord?

What is one of your favorite prophecies?

The Word of God is the greatest way that we learn about God today, it's there that we learn about Jesus. We talk about the Bible in depth in our study on Bibliology.

1.2.3. Jesus helps us understand what God is like.

Throughout the last 6,000 years, God has allowed man the freedom to choose evil. From the very beginning, man became so very cruel and wicked. In fact, the very first person to be born was a murderer, even after God tried to talk him out of it. God was so grieved with man's

constant wickedness that He sent the flood. Some people think that God is evil or cruel because He allowed the flood, or because He allows terrible things to happen. These things might cause us to question what God is really like. But Jesus gives us a clear picture of what God is like.

Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- What are these verses teaching us?
- Why is Jesus a better revelation than a prophecy or a vision, than talking to angels or any other means we might have?
- What would it be like to walk through life with Jesus? What would Jesus say about the news, about current events, about your struggles, about life, about God? Why is Jesus, God's greatest revelation?

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

- Why is Jesus, God's greatest revelation?
- Can you give an example of how Jesus helps us understand what the Father is like?
- This translation calls Jesus the only begotten God. Other translations call Jesus, the unique God or the one and only God. Jesus is Jehovah, the One and only God. Jesus is unique in that He is God in the flesh. The invisible God is now visible. God became a man.
- What does it mean that no one has ever seen God?
- The Holy Spirit descended from heaven as a dove and landed on Jesus at His baptism. Is the Holy Spirit a bird? Did John the Baptist really see God when he saw the dove? Even if God took on the form of an angel, you couldn't really say that you'd seen God. God in His essence is invisible. But through Jesus, we've "seen" what God is like. We see how God would react to so many of life's circumstances. Jesus has explained God to us. And because Jesus is God, He is the perfect explanation.

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

Jesus saw that the 5,000 were hungry, and so He fed them. This teaches us that God is merciful and that He provides for us. Give three examples of things that Jesus did that tell us what God is like.

- We will study more about Jesus in our Christology study.

In this section, we have been talking about special revelation, which is special because it is truth that can't be made known through natural means; it must be revealed directly by God. Special revelation tells us how to be saved and how to please God.

Review:

- What is special revelation?
- Name one thing the Bible has that no other book has.
- Not all have access to God's Word or the gospel. That's why God has commanded us to go and share it with others.

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.

A heart like King David - As you look at the person of Jesus, why do you praise the Lord?

We learn about God through the creation, through our conscience, and as we see God's dealings throughout history - providence. But the Bible is our greatest source of truth today. It is where we learn the deep things of God.

1.2.4. The Bible tells us about God.

The Bible is where we learn the most about God. It's in the Bible that we learn of Jesus and we see His life.

David speaks of both general revelation and special revelation in Psalm 19.

Psalm 19:1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.

- Do the heavens give us general information about God or detailed information about God?
- According to these verses, what do the heavens tell every man everywhere?

3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

- Are these verses referring to general revelation or special revelation?
- What does the world learn about God from the stars, the sun, the heavens?
- **Take a moment to think this through.** What things could any person learn from the creation? As an example, what could a person learn about God from humanity?
- The following list is an example of general revelation. What do these things, which are part of God's creation, teach us about God?
 - * A mother's love
 - * An endless universe
 - * A very complex creation--DNA uncoiled is about 6 feet long and is massively complex...a living cell is mind-boggling in its complexity. What does this teach us about God?
 - * A beautiful creation
 - * Seasons of the year
 - * Marriage and love
 - * Children
 - * The pleasures of food, art, friendship, marriage, nature
 - * Death
- How would you use the creation to show an unbeliever that a wonderful God exists and what He is like?

Psalm 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

- * Why does God call this person a fool?

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

- Please explain verse 7.
- Please explain verse 8.
- Please explain verse 9.
- Please explain verses 10-11.
- The Bible provides us with detailed information about God. This is a study about God. What do the above verses tell us about our Lord?

2. Can we prove God's existence?

Can we prove to others that God exists? No, we cannot. Nor can anyone prove that God does not exist or that evolution is true. The Holy Spirit has opened our eyes, and we know that God is real, but others don't see it. Let's talk about some logical arguments which point to God's existence.

1 - Where did the universe and our world come from? Did they come from the big bang? And where did the big bang come from? Are space and matter eternal? This is really the crucial question. So the first argument has to do with **the origins of the universe**. Is the universe eternal, or is God eternal? This is called the **cosmological argument**. The Greek word *cosmos* means "world." Where did the world come from?

2 - In simple terms: If you had a billion monkeys, banging the keys of a billion pianos, they would never play Beethoven's 5th symphony. Our creation is so complex/complete/mature, it could never come to pass by random chance. As an example of complexity, we look at the machinery within a living cell. You'll find that if you remove one small part, the whole cell ceases to function. It's simply impossible that a living cell would evolve, it's too complex. Creation is not the result of unguided random flow and incremental change. Rather, we see in creation the fingerprints of the Designer/Creator. This is called the **teleological argument**. The Greek word **telos** means complete or perfect. The complexity of our full and complete creation tells us that there is a very wise designer: God.

3 - Was Adolf Hitler a good person or an evil person? Most would agree that he was evil, and that is the function of our conscience. My cat does not have a conscience. She kills lizards just for fun; in reality, she is instinctively quite cruel. We are made in God's image, and we inherently know right from wrong. My computer, on the other hand, does not have a conscience. It destroyed a year of my pictures and never apologized. A lifeless big bang could never produce a computer, much less life or a person with a conscience. This is called the **moral argument**. Logic & instinct alone cannot tell you what is right and wrong. There must be a God who writes on our hearts what is right and wrong.

4 - **In our hearts, we are born knowing that God exists.** God has placed this information inside of us. This is called the **ontological** argument. The Greek word **ontos** is a participle for the verb “to be”. We know that an **eternal Being** exists, whom we call God.

Most atheists will tell you of a time when they went from believing in God to not believing in God. As a rule, five-year-old children believe in God. Throughout time and in all cultures, the default state has been to believe in God.

Do you understand these four arguments?

- What is the cosmological argument, which provides evidence for God's existence? It has to do with the origins of the cosmos.
- What is the teleological argument, which provides evidence for God's existence? It has to do with complexity and completeness.
- What is the moral argument, which provides evidence for God's existence?
- What is the ontological argument, which gives evidence for God's existence? It has to do with our innate knowledge that God exists.

A heart like King David - as you look at the evidence for the existence of God and how God has opened your eyes, why do you praise the Lord?

3. What is God like?

We are going to study some of God's characteristics, which are also called attributes. But first, please tell me:

- How would you describe God?
- What most impresses you about God?
- Is there anything about God that is difficult for you?

3.1. Incommunicable attributes.

God has some wonderful attributes or characteristics **which cannot be possessed by anyone else**. They belong to God alone. They are called incommunicable attributes.

3.1.1. God is Self-existent.

You are alive because your mother gave birth to you and because God created Eve. God created the angels and all mankind, but no one created God. **God has life within himself.** He exists, He is alive, no one can kill Him. God is self-existent. He exists because He exists. "I am who I am." Only God possesses this attribute. God is life. No one can kill Him. And because God is life, He alone can create life. He gives life to all things.

John 1:2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

- What do these verses teach us about God?

Exodus 3:13 Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD (Yahweh or Jehovah), the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

- Please explain verse 13.
- Please explain verse 14.
- Please explain verse 15.
- Dictionary.com says this about the word Jehovah: "The literal meaning of the name is "I am the one who is".
- We see in these verses that God is eternal. He is the same God throughout the ages. He does not change and because of this, Israel can trust Him.
- Smith's Dictionary says this about Jehovah: "(I am; the eternal living one). The Scripture appellation of the supreme Being, usually interpreted as signifying **self-derived** and **permanent** existence."
- Why does God refer to Himself as "I AM?" What does this tell us about God?

John 5:25 Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

- Here we find Jesus speaking about Himself. What are these verses teaching us?

- Who will raise people from the dead? Who specifically will give them life?
- What does verse 26 tell us about God the Father?
- Because Jesus is self-existent, He will give life to the dead at the resurrection. Even though Jesus emptied Himself and became submissive to the Father, the Father granted that Jesus would give life to the dead. Jesus has life in Himself. This shows us that Jesus is God.
- We will be alive forever because God wills it. Our eternal existence depends on the Eternal One, the one who is alive and gives life to all things.

Review: What does it mean that God is self-existent?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.1.2. God is Immutable.

This means that He cannot change. God cannot become smarter; He cannot become better or worse. He is the Supreme, most perfect Being, and he will never ever change. Only God possesses this attribute.

Psalm 102:25 “Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 26 “Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. 27 “But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end.

- What two things will perish?
- What does this verse specifically tell us about God?

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Humans change all the time, but God does not change, ever. We can always trust him. Some people promise to be married forever but a day later they get a divorce. Good angels can become bad. God can make bad people into good people who sometimes do bad things. But God does not change. He is always good and this is absolutely astonishing! God is the measure of perfection; He is incomparable and matchless. It is impossible for God to be better, and this will never change. This is why we worship Him!

Let's play an impossible game. Write down two catastrophes that would happen if God changed. For example, let's say that God lied, or it turns out that He is not all-powerful. What would be the effect of that?

Review: What does it mean that God is immutable?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.1.3. God is Eternal. He has no beginning or end.

This means that God has always existed, and He will always exist. Only God possesses this attribute.

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

- Can you explain how God has no beginning? Where did He come from?

- What does this tell us about God, the fact that He has no beginning?

The clouds are mesmerizing. Many times we just look at the clouds and enjoy their beauty. The stars are also above us and strangely full of awe. God is like that! He is beyond our comprehension, and this includes the fact that He is eternal. He is so far above us and so full of wonder. When the angel of the Lord (Jesus) talks to Samson's parents, the angel says this in **Judges 13:18:**

"And the Messenger of YHWH says to him, "Why do you ask this, My Name, since it [is] incomprehensible?" Literal Standard Version.

YHWH is pronounced Jehovah or Yahweh and here is referring to God.

Other translations say his name is miraculous, hidden, beyond understanding, secret, glorious. The idea is that you couldn't understand it. That is our wonderful God. The reason we worship God is simply because He is so wonderful. He is the highest, the best, the greatest. When you finally meet Jesus, you will be so full of love for Him and wonder because He is amazing. I can hardly wait!

Review: What does it mean that God is eternal?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.1.4. God is Omnipresent.

This means that God is present everywhere at the same time. There is no place where God is not present all the time. Only God possesses this attribute.

Psalm 139:7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

10 Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night, 12 Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You."

- Where could you go to escape from God? Is there any place where God does not exist?
- Think of the universe as a box. All creation fits inside that box, such as time, space matter, and history. But God dwells inside and outside the box. And because God is everywhere, everything is under his control, and progressing according to His plan. Nothing is a mystery or a chance to Him.
- Where have you been that God is not there?
- Here's the thing, you can have peace in your life when you realize that God is with you wherever you go, that He is in control, and you rest in Him. That's what Jesus did when the soldiers came to arrest Him. So what things do you let steal your peace?

What does it mean to you that God is eternal?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.1.5. God is Omniscient.

He knows everything. He knows what could happen if you made a different choice. Not only that, but he knows what you will eat for breakfast one year from today and what you will be doing a million years from now. Only God possesses this attribute.

Psalm 139:16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

- What does this verse teach us?
- Does God know what your last day will be like?

Matthew 11:21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

- So what is Jesus teaching in this verse?
- Jesus not only knows what will happen, but what could happen if you made a different choice. How many decisions do you make in a day?

- So instead of waking up by 5AM, you decide to shut off your alarm and get up at 8AM and are very late to work. Does God know all the ramifications of that decision?
- A major snowstorm blows through, stopping all traffic and airline flights. Does God know how that will affect every person?
- God has shared some of his profound knowledge with us. But we will never be all-knowing.
- How does it bring comfort and stability to your life knowing that God is omniscient?
- God is awesome!

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.1.6. God is Omnipotent.

God can do anything He wants. His power has no limitations. He will not do anything against His nature, such as sin, or anything that is logically self-contradictory. For example, God won't make a stone so big that He can't pick it up. God can do anything He wills to do. He is all-powerful. Only God possesses this attribute.

Job 42:2 "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted."

- What is the Lord teaching us here?
- Do bad decisions on our part stop God's plan?

Psalms 2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

3 "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury.

- Study this passage. What are these verses teaching us?
- Give three examples of God's great power.

What does it mean to you that God is omnipotent?

Review: In this section, we have been talking about God's attributes which cannot be shared with anyone else; they are incommunicable. What are those six attributes?

Before we go on, what is it that most amazes you about God?

3.2. Communicable attributes.

God also has attributes or characteristics that he shares with others to a limited degree. These are called communicable attributes. Let's talk about them now.

3.2.1. God is perfectly wise.

Would you agree with this definition of wisdom?

Wisdom is doing what is right, just, and fair with God, with others and ourselves.

NLT Proverbs 1:3. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair.

Wisdom means that you know what pleases God the most and what is truly best for everyone involved in that particular situation.

Let's say that you walk over to a friend's house who is a large, powerful man. He is abusing his son with his words and his fists. What would be the wisest way to handle that situation?

God is perfectly wise. He knows what is right and just and fair, for everyone involved. As Abraham said: "**Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?**"

God's wisdom is astounding, and it is pure and just. Jesus was always perfectly wise, and God always knows what is best for you, always.

- How will the seven-year tribulation show the wisdom of God?
- How will judgment day show God's wisdom?
- How did the cross show us the wisdom of God?

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

- Think carefully through these verses. What do they tell us about God?

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

- What does this verse teach us?
- What does this verse tell us about God?

Joseph was sold as a slave in Egypt, but God in His wisdom used this to save the world from famine.

God in His wisdom has guided your steps, He's never let go of your hand.

Can you give an example of when God in His wisdom caused something bad to work out for your good, your growth?

What does it mean to you that God is perfectly wise?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.2. God is holy.

What comes to your mind when you hear that God is holy? Is it a good or bad concept for you? Can you name some people or some "gods" that are not holy? How about you, what are you like when you are not holy?

GotQuestions.org says this: "The holiness of God refers to the unparalleled majesty of His incomparable being and His blameless, faultless, unblemished moral purity."

Okay, that was a bit deep! Let's try and reword it. Holiness tells us that God cannot sin. That is the main emphasis in the Bible, but it also means that God is unique. He is the best, the highest, the greatest, different from everyone else. Nothing else can even start to compare with God. So the holiness of God refers to two things. He cannot sin, and He is the best - the Most High God.

1 Samuel 2:2 "There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.

Leviticus 11:44 For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.

- What are the two things that God tells them to do?
- How can we be holy today?
- Care to share? Where do you most struggle with holiness?

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

- What does this verse mean?
- Why would John have to say that there is no darkness, no sin in God?
- What does this tell us about God's holiness?

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

- What is this verse teaching us?
- Why would James have to say that God does not try to get us to sin?

God is not our tempter! He is our redeemer through His holiness! The main idea here is that God cannot sin. It is impossible for him to sin. The highest angels fell into sin, and man fell into sin, but God cannot sin. He is holy. God will never do wrong. That's why the Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy!

- Why is it so important that God cannot sin?
- What are the wages or consequences of sin?

Once we get to heaven, we will never sin again, but that is because God will keep us from sin. Interestingly, the angels who did not fall into sin are called the elect angels in 1 Timothy 5:21.

What do the following verses tell us about God?

Psalms 77:13 Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God?

Exodus 15:11 "Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?"

Our God is not like the gods of this world. He is not like the Greek gods, who were very immoral. He is not like the god of the Koran or the god of the Mormons. Our God is unique. There is none like Him!

Can you be perfectly holy in every situation without being perfectly wise? Why or why not?

Between 1692-1693, more than two hundred people were accused of witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts, USA. Nineteen died from hanging. Up to 80,000 "witches" were put to death in Europe. Some thought they were doing the will of God by putting them to death, that they were doing what was holy.

- How is wisdom related to holiness?
- If Jesus had lived during the time of the witch trials, what would a wise holiness have led Him to do if He were a judge or mayor or governor?
- Think through how Jesus responded to the woman caught in adultery in John 8. How do we see His wisdom balanced with His holiness?
- Has anything caused you to question God's wisdom, goodness or holiness?
- How have you found a lack of wisdom to affect your obedience to the Lord?
- What does it mean to you that God is holy?

Review:

- The holiness of God refers to two things or speaks of two things about God. What are they?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.3. God is Love. God is incomprehensibly active for our good.

We struggle with the concept of love because we are so selfish. We are always thinking about ourselves. But God has no selfishness whatsoever. He doesn't love you because He will get something out of you. God is love. God wants what is best for you, and God is acting to bring about what is best for you! God wants the very best for us, so much so that Christ gave up His life for us in a very cruel death.

"Jesus loves me" is one of the most profound truths in the universe.

1 John 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- What is this verse teaching us?

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails;

- What does this passage tell us about God and His love?
- Would it be correct to say that you are love?

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

- How do we know that God loves the wicked?

NLT 1 John 4:7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- What are these verses teaching us?

9 God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10 This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

- What are these verses teaching us?

11 Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 12 No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

- What are these verses teaching us?

13 And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. 14 Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. 16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

- What are these verses teaching us?

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

- What are these verses teaching us?

18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19 We love each other because he loved us first.

- What are these verses teaching us?

20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

- What are these verses teaching us?

How do you see God's love for you in your life?

How do you struggle with thinking that God loves you immensely?

What does it mean to you that God is love?

God is the most wonderful person you will ever know. All He does is infused with His deep and wonderful love.

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.4. God is grace, which means unmerited favor.

Grace is getting something good that we do not deserve. Mercy is not getting the punishment or consequences that we do deserve.

It is God's nature to help people, to be kind and forgiving, to give us good things that we don't deserve. God has no pleasure in destruction, death, nor our punishment. These bad things are called his "strange" works. God wants to help mankind. He is a God of grace!

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- Explain each phrase in these two verses.

- What saves us? Grace or faith? Read the text carefully.

* If you need open-heart surgery, you must first sign a release form. Signing the form doesn't save you. The operation saves you. Our faith is like signing the form. God's grace is like the surgery which actually saves us from hell.

* Here's another example. Electricity is what makes a light bulb light up, but you also have to turn on the switch. Faith is the switch that allows God's grace to flow into our lives. But God's grace is what saves us, not our faith. Faith is only the switch.

- How has God shown his grace to you?

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. **16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- Please explain verse 14.
- Please explain verse 15.
- Please explain verse 16.
- How is Jesus described here, and how does that affect us?
- Mercy is part of grace. It means to help people in misery.
- Can you give some examples from the Bible of people in need who cried out to God?

Do you see God as being gracious and kind or harsh and demanding, ready to hit you if you mess up?

What does it mean to you that God is grace?

Matthew 11:28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.** **30** For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- This is a beautiful passage. Walk through and explain each phrase.
- What is Jesus like?

Many gods are evil and mean. How would your life change if Satan were God?

How do you see God's grace in your life every day?

Food for thought:

- Does anyone deserve to be saved?
- Was Jesus obligated to die for us?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.5. God is mercy.

There are actually several aspects to mercy.

- Mercy is not giving us the consequences that we deserve.
- Mercy is helping people in misery; it is having compassion for them.

Psalm 103:10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. 14 For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.

- What are these verses teaching us?
- What do our sins deserve?
- How do we see God's mercy?
- What does it mean to you that God is merciful?

James 5:11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

- How was God merciful to Job?
- Can you tell of two ways that God has been merciful to you?

Exodus 34:4 So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand. 5 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD.

6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." 8 Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.

- Please explain verse 4.

- Please explain verse 5.
- Please explain verse 6.
- Please explain verse 7.
- Please explain verse 8.
- This is how God describes Himself. Would you describe yourself as compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth?
- How would you describe Jesus?
- Are you afraid of God? Should we fear God?
- When are you afraid of electricity?
- How would you explain to a friend that God is merciful?

Exodus 32:1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

2 Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

- What's happening in these verses?

3 Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt."

- What's happening in these verses?

5 Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." 6 So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

- Please explain these verses.
- What we understand from this section is that they got drunk and had sex with anyone. Would you like to see your parents drunk and having sex with anyone?

- God was outraged. He had done so much for them, and they so quickly fell into gross sin. In the end, about 3,000 people died. But God was merciful. How was God merciful?
- What do you think about Aaron? Would you like him to be your leader?
- What kind of leader will you be?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.6. God is Long suffering, extremely patient.

This means He is self-restrained when provoked.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. / 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you.

- How do we see God's great patience in these verses?

Can you give some examples of how God is long-suffering with the world?

How has God been long-suffering with you?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.7. God is just

This means that God is perfectly righteous and exact in His dealings with man. He always does what is right.

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

Is God being fair with Satan and the demons, is He just?

Was God fair with Pharaoh when he refused to let the Israelites go?

Was Jesus fair with Peter when he denied Jesus?

Can you give an example of a decision God has made that would not seem fair?

The world often says that God is not fair. Can you give an example of what some might say?

Why is it important to know that God is perfectly fair in all that He does?

In your life, have you ever been tempted to say that God has been unfair with you?

Genesis 18:24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike.

Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” 26 So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.”

- Can you explain this passage?

- What did Abraham expect from God?

We can always know that God is fair. He will always be just in His dealings with you and with all mankind. God is always fair.

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.8. God is sovereign.

God is the final authority – the ruler over all the affairs of the universe. God has created natural laws like gravity, but God controls those laws and all that happens in this universe. God controls the demons, the angels, the nations, and every human being. Jesus knows where every atom in this universe is at. He knows and controls all that happens. He knows if a molecule of water, that passed through Adam's body, has also passed through your body.

King Nebuchadnezzar was very proud, powerful, but also cruel. God gave him the mind of an animal, and he lived in the fields for seven years.

Daniel 4:34 “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.

35 “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?’

- Please explain verse 34.
- Please explain verse 35.
- What does this passage teach us about God's sovereignty, his control of all things?
- Can you give an example of God's sovereignty in the world today?

This doctrine causes a lot of trouble for people. If God is in control, then why did He allow evil? Some people hate God because their parents or their child died. God is in control. He did allow evil in this creation, but...

1 - He never desired evil.

2 - He didn't cause evil.

3 - God will bring good out of evil.

Once this creation has ended, God will never allow evil again. I rejoice that I'm a son of God and that God saved us from evil. We'll talk more about evil in our study about sin.

If you too have trouble with this, I can only encourage you to: Trust the Lord. Trust that He is good. Trust that He is sovereign.

Review: What does it mean to you that God is sovereign?

Do you have any questions?

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.9. God is a God of wrath.

Every day, people commit horrible crimes and countless other acts of evil. Would it be right if you were beaten and abused and nothing ever happened to the offender? Of course not! It is correct; it is right for justice to take place, God must be a God of wrath, in order to be just.

So, is God right to be angry?

Would it be right if He did nothing?

Why is God angry? Let's study the following passage. First, we'll read it, and then we'll study it further down below.

NLT Romans 2:1 You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. **2** And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. **3** Since you

judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God's judgment when you do the same things?

4 Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? 5 But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 He will judge everyone according to what they have done.

7 He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. 8 But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness. 9 There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. 10 But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.

In order to understand chapter two, we need to include the end of chapter 1.

NLT Romans 1:28 Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. 29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.

NLT Romans 2:1 You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things.

- Try to put yourself in the shoes of an unbeliever and think like he does. He looks at the man who sleeps with a different woman every night and judges that man as being wrong, but in his mind, he does the same thing.... He thinks about women, he might watch a girl walk down the street, he might look at porn, or maybe he flirts with the girls at the office, or he watches sexual content on TV or the internet. In reality, he commits the same sins, just to a lesser extent. So when he condemns the man who is always sleeping with a different woman, but then does stuff himself, he condemns himself.
- So Romans 1 is talking about the perverted person, whereas Romans 2 is talking about the religious or moral person. It turns out that he is just as bad as the perverted person from chapter 1.
- We need to be clear. Romans 2:1-4 is not saying that we should not judge our neighbor and that if we do judge our neighbor, we'll be judged. So what is Romans 2:1 teaching us?
- Romans chapter 2 is talking about the upright or moral man without Christ. In what way does he practice the same things as the people in chapter 1?

2 And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things.

- Will all people be punished for their evil?
- When will this punishment take place?

3 Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God's judgment when you do the same things?

- Please explain verse 3.
- What's the problem here, the conflict?
- Can you give an example of a religious unbeliever judging a perverted man?

4 Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

- Can you give some examples of God's kindness that seeks to turn people from their sin? One example would be rainfall and harvest.
- Why doesn't this kindness bring everyone to Christ? Why do most people not see His goodness?
- How could our kindness help bring people to trust in Jesus?
- Many believers are very kind, but they don't share Jesus. Name a way that we could truly help others but share Jesus at the same time.

5 But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

- Why is God angry?
- Please give an example of someone who is stubborn and refuses to turn from his or her sin.
- Would you kindly give an example of when you have been stubborn and refused to turn from your sin?

6 He will judge everyone according to what they have done. 7 He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers.

- We know that salvation is by faith and not by works, so why does God talk about people doing good and seeking immortality?

- Christians aren't perfect, and many give a lousy example of what it means to follow Christ, but would you say that, as a rule, Jesus makes a person better after they come to Christ? Can you give an example of that?
- God changes a person when they get saved. The Christian who obeys Christ is looking forward to eternal life.

8 But He will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness.

- When will mankind be judged?
- Why is God angry with them? What are they doing?
- Why is it so wrong to sin against God? Why is it so wrong to sin against other people?
- Can you give an example of sins that hurt people?
- Would you like to live in a world where people commonly lie to you, people and businesses cheat you, your kids hate you, your spouse abuses you, and your parents abandon you? What was life like in the days of Noah?
- Why would it be better to live in a world where people love Jesus and are truly honest, kind, hardworking, and wise?

9 There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. 10 But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.

- Why does he say for the Jew first?
- What will judgment day be like for those who do evil?
- What will it be like for the sons of God?

My grandpa was abusive. My grandma warned him to stop being so cruel to the kids or God might do something, but he didn't listen. Not long after that, a piece of farm machinery fell on him, and he became an invalid and a very bitter man. As of today, my father is 89, and he still vividly remembers the many cruelties of my grandfather. His cruel actions did a lot of damage to my father and his siblings and their children. His cruelty messed up his whole family. His sons did evil things. By God's grace, my parents became part of a church where the Bible was taught. They also went to Bible college for two years, and it changed their lives and impacted mine--maybe even yours!

Millions of Jews were abused and murdered. This created terrible scars for those who survived, physical and emotional scars that would last their whole life long. When the allied soldiers liberated these Jews from the concentration camps, they were horrified. Can you imagine how angry God is with Hitler? What do you think should happen to the person who might kill your family and abuse you?

It's kind of shocking, but Jesus became the guiltiest person who ever lived. Every sin that ever took place or ever will be committed was placed on Jesus. He bore the great wrath of God for all of our sins.

1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Try and name all the things that Jesus saved you from.

If you never understand the wrath of God, then you'll never understand the mercy of God. God is a God of wrath. What do the following verses teach us about the wrath of God?

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

- Can you explain this verse?

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.

- What is this verse teaching us?

It's important to understand that God's wrath is part of His love. His wrath protects His children, and His wrath is never unjustified. If you were perfect, it's the way you would feel and act as well.

Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

- It's very possible that the rich man was a Pharisee. Read this passage carefully. What was the rich man's life like?

- If this rich man had been Job or Jesus, what would he have done to Lazarus? Job was known for helping the poor. Was this rich man like either Job or Jesus? Why or why not?

22 Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

- What will happen to you when you die?

23 In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

- What does this verse teach us?

24 And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

- What does this verse teach us?

25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.'

- What do these verses teach us?

27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

- What are these verses teaching us?

- Notice that the rich man does not say, "I shouldn't be here, I don't deserve this, it's not fair." And notice that Abraham doesn't say that, either.

Some people are terrified of snakes, even harmless snakes. That's an unreasonable fear. Can you give an example of an unhealthy fear of the Lord?

Others are afraid of deadly spiders, which is a healthy fear. How is the fear of the Lord different from just plain fear? What would you consider to be a balanced fear of the Lord?

It's good to remember that Adam did not fear the Lord until after he had sinned. Do you think we'll fear the Lord once we get to heaven?

My father has always been a very gentle man. At the age of ten, I got a hold of an older man's checkbook and wrote a check, signing the owner's name. That's a Federal crime and my dad had to go to court. He gave me three swats on my bottom for that. A week later, I stole something from the store. My dad was very disappointed in me, and he disciplined me in a way that I wouldn't forget. The thought of stealing didn't even enter my mind for two years, and when it

did, I pushed that thought out of mind as quickly as possible because of the pain I had gone through. That discipline was good for me--exactly what I needed!

TeachingHumbleHearts.com said this. "A good and healthy fear of God brings immense blessings. It is the lack of fear or even an exaggerated fear of God that can destroy us. God is capable of incredibly tender and loving patience. At the same time, He is capable of intense, fiery judgment. It is terrifying for anyone to fall on the wrong side of God's fiery judgment."

Deuteronomy 6:24 So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today.

- How does the fear of God protect us?

- Can you give an example?

Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

- Can you give an example of fearing the Lord?

- Can you give an example of an unhealthy fear of the Lord?

What have you learned, or what has impressed you about this study on the wrath of God?

I like to work with my hands, which includes working with electricity. I've been shocked a number of times and I have a healthy fear of electricity, but only when I don't treat it with respect. When I treat it correctly, then I am not afraid.

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

3.2.10. God desires to bless.

God has an intense desire to see you do well. Whatever pain or suffering you go through brings Him no pleasure. He doesn't want the pain, but he wants the depth, humility, and wisdom that it brings to your life. It was this desire to bless you that led Jesus to the cross. God desires to bless every last person in this world! That's why Jesus went to the cross.

Psalm 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

- How do we see in these verses, God's desire to bless your life?

- What would hinder the Lord from blessing a person?

1 Peter 5:5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

- These verses are beautiful! Please explain verse 5.
- Please explain verse 6.
- Please explain verse 7.
- Can you give an example from the Bible of God opposing a believer or unbeliever and an example of God blessing someone?
- Have you ever seen God oppose you? What did that look like?
- How have you seen God bless you?
- What are some examples of pride, things that God would oppose?
- What are some examples of humility, things that God would bless?

Matthew 11:28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- How does God bless us according to these verses?

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- Can you give an example of things that distract us or keep us from serving the Lord and making disciples?

- How is Jesus an example for us because we are told to fix our eyes on Him?
- So what does it mean to fix your eyes on Him? Let's say that people are rude to you, or you get in a fight with someone, or maybe you're sick. What does it look like to fix your eyes on Him?
- What was the joy set before Jesus? Think about this one.
- What does it mean to despise the shame?
- What things make you weary and lose heart?

I suppose that technically, this point would fall under God's compassion, His mercy or His grace, but it's just so essential for us to realize that God is our best friend, and I wanted to repeat it here. He wants to be with us. When we get to heaven, Jesus looks forward to spending time just with you. You're not a number. You're not just another person. Furthermore, you're someone that Jesus loves deeply, and He leads you through good times and bad, with nail-scarred hands; His desire is your joy, that you excel, that you are blessed. You might go through some very hard times during these fleeting years on earth, but His goal is to share His wisdom with you, His goodness with you. Walk closely with Him and He will bless you! Run the race and don't grow weary.

A heart like King David - as you study this attribute of God, why do you praise the Lord?

So far, we've looked at general and special revelation. We've studied four lines of reasoning that show the existence of God, and we just finished looking at the attributes of God. The next section is important because God's names also show us what God is like. It's good to drink deep of God, to study what He is like.

4. What are God's names?

The vast majority of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. (The book of Ezra and most of Daniel were written in Biblical Aramaic.) In Hebrew, we see that God has different names. These Hebrew names help us understand what God is truly like. They emphasize who He is and what He does.

4.1. The Hebrew word for God is El. Elohim is the plural form and means Gods.

This word/name stresses His power, rulership, and majesty.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.

The word Elohim is used approximately 2500 times in the Old Testament.

- Why do you think God uses the plural form, Elohim, in the very first verse of the Bible? What does this tell us about Him?

4.2. El-Shaddai.

“God on the mountain” it signifies strength, control and therefore, comfort.

Psalms 91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty (El-Shaddai). 2 I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!”

- Notice the different names for God in these verses. The Most High - El Elyon / Almighty - El Shaddai / LORD - Jehovah / God – Elohim.
- El Shaddai means God on the mountain. Notice how the author abides in the shadow of the mountain – El Shaddai.
- What are these verses teaching us?
- In what sense do you abide in the shadow of the Almighty? How has the Lord protected you?

4.3. Adonai.

This word/name stresses that He is Lord, Master.

Joshua 5:14 He said, “No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, “What has my lord to say to his servant?”

- Joshua met an angel who was the commander of God's army. Joshua calls him Adonai.
- In what sense is God your Adonai, your Master? And when did He become your master, your Lord?

Deuteronomy 3:24 ‘O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?

- What does this verse tell us about Adonai?

4.4. Jehovah - Yahweh - YHWH.

Do you have any idea why there are at least three different spellings for this name?

It's commonly known that the Hebrew alphabet has no vowel letters, such as a, e, i, o, u, y. The letters only mark consonants, which means that you would have no idea how it is pronounced when you look at a word. Such alphabets are known as "abjads". For this reason, some people say Jehovah and others say Yahweh or some other pronunciation.

For Jewish people, YHWH is the holiest name of God, as written in the ancient Hebrew language. The written language showed no vowels, so the pronunciation is not agreed on. ... Traditionally, religious Jews today do not often say this name aloud. This is because it is believed to be too holy to be spoken.

YHWH - This name means self-existence. He is the eternal God. God exists because He exists. **He is life.** This name is used over 6,800 times in the Old Testament. It is not used in the New Testament at all, but we do see God's name, I AM, in the New Testament. Who is called I AM in the New Testament?

Jehovah means "He is." The name Jehovah and the name I AM are basically the same thing. So when we speak of God, we say Jehovah or He is. But when God speaks of Himself, he says, "I AM." Jesus often claimed to be "I AM."

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD - "Jehovah", the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

- Why would God's primary name be "I am, or He is"? What is He trying to tell us?

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

- What was Jesus telling them when He said: "I am"?

- Why did they pick up stones? What's He doing that is worthy of death?

- The Jehovah's Witness Bible uses the words "I have been" instead of "I am." How does that change things?

- Why do you think the Jehovah's Witness Bible changes this to say, "I have been" when it is very clearly a present tense verb – "I AM"?

John 18:4 So Jesus said to them, "Whom do you seek?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. 6 So when He said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground.

- What happened to these Roman soldiers when Jesus used the name "I am"?

So Jehovah means that God is eternal; He has life in Himself. He is the self-existent God. He cannot die. You cannot take His life away from Him.

This also means that God must be the most powerful being in the universe because if there were a God stronger than Jehovah, the other God might kill Jehovah or control Him.

It means that Jehovah must be the most powerful, the smartest and that He is omnipresent. If Jehovah is not omnipresent, then maybe another being, greater than Him, exists out there and would make Jehovah change.

No, our God is God alone. Apart from Jehovah, there is no other god.

4.5. Additional names of God.

1. *Jehovah-Jireh* - “The Lord will provide” (Genesis 22:14)
2. *Jehovah-Rapha* - “The Lord who heals” (Exodus 15:26)
3. *Jehovah-Nissi* - “The Lord my banner” (Exodus 17:15)
4. *Jehovah-Shalom* - “The Lord our peace” (Judges 6:24)
5. *Jehovah-Ra-ah* - “The Lord my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1)
6. *Jehovah-Tsidkenu* - “The Lord our righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6)
7. *Jehovah-Shammah* - “The Lord is present” (Ezekiel 48:35)
8. *Jehovah-Sabbaoth* – “The Lord of hosts” Commander of the armies of Israel (1 Samuel 17:45)

What do these names teach us about God?

If you search the web, you'll find that Jesus had 50 names, such as Bread of Life. Can you name five of them?

A heart like King David - as you study the names of God, why do you praise the Lord?

We've looked at the names of God, now let's take some time to study His person.

5. In What Form Does God Exist?

5.1. God is a “personal” Being.

God is not human, yet He is a “person” in that He has **intellect, emotions, and will**. It is in this sense that we are made in the “image of God”. He does not share our imperfections, but He does

share our personal nature. God is not a “force” like a bolt of lightning or a mindless hurricane. He is a person.

- Can you give an example from the Bible which shows that God has **intellect**, that He is intelligent?
- Can you give an example from the Bible which shows that God has **emotions**?
- Can you give an example from the Bible which shows that God has a **will**?
- What does it mean that God is a personal being?

5.2. God is a “spiritual” being.

God does not consist of any material substance. He is spirit (John 4:24). He has no body, and as such, He is invisible. We will never see God the Father or God the Spirit because they are invisible, but we will see Jesus because He became a man!

- What does it mean that God is a spiritual being?
- How is He different from us?

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

- What is this verse teaching us? Look at each phrase.

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

- What does it mean that He alone possesses immortality?
- What does it mean that He dwells in unapproachable light?
- What does it mean that no man has seen Him or can see Him?
- Why do we say that God is a spiritual being?

5.3. God is a Trinity.

The Trinity is one God existing in three Persons. And these three Persons are one God, not three Gods.

God the Father is a person. God the Son is a person. God the Holy Spirit is a person. And yet, they are one God, not three Gods. A great example is marriage. God makes man and woman into one flesh. They are one, and yet they are two distinct persons.

Definition of the Trinity: There is only one true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence. (B.B. Warfield).

"Keep in mind when studying this subject that the word "Trinity" is not found in Scripture. This is a term used to describe the Triune God—three coexistent, co-eternal Persons who make up God." <http://www.jctycheng.com/trinity>

The trinity is a clear teaching that we find in God's Word, and we accept it. In eternity, we'll have a much clearer understanding!

5.3.1. The "Threeness" of God or "Triunity". God exists in three Persons.

As we study the Trinity, we want to look at two aspects. God exists in three Persons. These three persons are one God.

All three Persons have all the attributes of God. Each one is God. We'll study more about the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our future studies.

Matthew 3:16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

- How is each member of the Godhead seen here?

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

- How do we see here the Triunity of God?

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

- What does God the Father do so that a person is saved?

- What does the Spirit do to save you, and what is Jesus' part in your salvation?

Notice in the Old Testament how we see the Threeness of God.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

- Why does God say "Us" and "Our"?

Genesis 3:22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—

Genesis 11:7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

How do these passages show us that God is plural?

Gary Gilley writes this: "While the members of the Trinity are found in the Old Testament, they are not usually referred to by these names. For example, the Jews normally did not call God "Father," Christ is often found in the form of The Angel of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit is called God's Spirit."

What have we studied so far that shows us that God exists in three separate Persons?

5.3.2. The "oneness" or unity of God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one!

- The word for God here is Elohim which means Gods. So the verse would read: "Hear, O Israel! Jehovah is our Gods, Jehovah is one! So this verse clearly shows us that God is plural. But this verse also clearly states that Jehovah is one.
- Let's reread it. Jehovah is our Elohim - our Gods, Jehovah is one.
- What is this verse teaching us?

Isaiah 45:14 And the Sabeans, men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours; They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains And will bow down to you; They will make supplication to you: 'Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.'

- What does the last part of this verse tell us about God?

James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

- What does this verse tell us about God?
- Why do the demons shudder or tremble? What do they believe that makes them so scared?

NLT Isaiah 48:16 Come closer, and listen to this. From the beginning I have told you plainly what would happen.” And now the Sovereign LORD and his Spirit have sent me with this message.

- Notice how God refers to Himself as I, and yet refers to Himself as two people. What do we learn from this?

Psalm 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

- This Psalm was written by David. Here, David calls Jesus “My Lord.” And David tells us what Jehovah says to Jesus. Jehovah tells Jesus to “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.” So God the Father is talking to God the Son. Both are God. God is plural, and God is one. Do you have any questions?
- Jesus quotes this Psalm. He shows us that David’s Lord is also his son. Jesus is God but He was also born a son of David. You might want to read Matthew 22:41-46

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

- Why do we find the word name and not names?

How would things be different if there were thousands of gods?

5.3.3. The Father is God.

Romans 1:7 – “God (who is) our Father.”

John 6:27 – “the Father (even) God”

Except for atheists, no one in Christendom questions the deity of the Father. The cults deny the deity of Jesus and the deity of the Holy Spirit.

5.3.4. The Son is God.

Notice that Jesus has qualities that only God possesses and He does things that only God can do. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. We'll go over this in detail in our studies about Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

A. Jesus possesses incommunicable attributes. These are things that God will not share with anyone else.

- a) Self-existence (Heb.7:3; John 5:26)
- b) Immutability (Heb.1:10; 13:8)
- c) Infinity
- d) Eternality (Heb.7:3)
- e) Omnipresence (Matt.28:20)

B. Jesus does things that only God can do.

- a) He created the world (John 1:13)
- b) He sustains the world (Col.1:15-17)
- c) He forgives sins (Matt. 9:1,2)
- d) He performs final judgment and raises the dead. (John 5:22; Rev.19:16)

C. Jesus receives worship.

- a) Of angels (Heb.1:6; Rev.5:12,13)
- b) Of men (John 9:38; 20:28; Matt.28:9)

If He were not God, He never would have allowed others to worship Him. This is critical.

D. Jesus has divine titles.

- a) Jehovah (Luke 2:11; 5:8)
- b) Son of God (Luke 1:35; John 5:18)

E. Jesus claimed to be God.

John 5:18 For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

- Why did the Jews want to kill Jesus?
- Why didn't Jesus ever recoil at their accusations and clearly declare that He was not God?

John 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins."

- Many English Bibles says, "I am he," but the Greek text simply says - I am, which is the name for Jehovah God. So what was Jesus saying in this verse?

- If Jesus were not God, He would never claim to be "I AM."
- Does Jesus ever deny being God? Does He ever say: "No, you don't understand me, I'm not God"?
- And where does the Bible teach us about the creation of the Son of God?

John 8:28 So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

- Can you explain this verse?
- When Jesus was crucified, what things happened that would make them think that He was God?

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

- Can you explain these verses?

John 10:30 I and the Father are one." 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

- If Jesus were not God, what would you expect him to do or say when accused of blasphemy?
 - * Consider how Paul and Barnabas responded in Acts 14 when the people of Lystra said that the apostles were gods and brought sacrifices to them. They later stoned Paul.
- Where in the Bible does Jesus teach that He is God?

F. The Bible says that Jesus is God.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

- Could Jesus be the Creator of all things if He Himself were created?
- John 1:1-3 are clear verses, proving the deity of Christ.

Romans 9:4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

- How does this verse show us that Jesus is God Almighty?

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

- What does Peter clearly call Jesus in this verse?

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

- How does this verse show us that Jesus is God Almighty?

We've seen that:

- Jesus possesses incommunicable attributes.
- Jesus does things that only God can do.
- Jesus receives worship.
- Jesus has divine titles.
- Jesus claimed to be God.
- The Bible says that Jesus is God.

Do you have any questions?

If you'd like a more in-depth explanation of these concepts, please see our study on Christology, the study of Jesus found at www.mentormaterial.com

5.6.5. The Spirit is God.

A. The Bible calls the Holy Spirit God.

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? **4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

- What's happening here?

- How do these verses show us that the Holy Spirit is God?

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

NTV 17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

- What are these verses teaching us?
- How do these verses show us that the Holy Spirit is God?

B. He is called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus.

Romans 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him... 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

- What are these verses teaching?
- How do these verses show us that the Holy Spirit is God?

C. He possesses incommunicable attributes. They can't be transferred or shared with another.

- a) Self-existence (Rom.8:2)
- b) Omnipresence (Ps.139:7 ff)

D. He performs incommunicable works (no one but God can do them).

- a) Creation (Gen.1:2)
- b) Resurrection (Rom.8:11)

Why do you believe that the Holy Spirit is fully God, equal to the Father in all ways, and worthy of all of our worship?

5.6.6. Summary of the Trinity.

Sid Litke writes: *The doctrine of the trinity is “knowable” and “believable” but will never be completely “explainable” by human minds or human words. The mechanics of how the Trinity*

exists and functions remains a mystery to us, just as how the Incarnation does (Christ is both God and Man). We know God is One. We know He is Three. Thus, we know the Trinity is true.

5.6.7. False teachings about the Trinity.

A. There is a group in the Pentecostal church that denies the Trinity. They only baptize in the name of Jesus. It's referred to as "Jesus Only" and this group teaches that Jesus is the Father and Jesus is the Spirit. There is one God who reveals Himself in different "modes." Sometimes Jesus reveals Himself as the Father, and sometimes as the Spirit. This is different from the Jehovah's Witnesses. They teach that Jesus was created, that He is not the Creator of all, that He is not God. Both of these teachings are heresies. This is not a doctrine that you dismiss lightly. It's important to understand the Trinity.

B. "There are 3 different Gods." Why is this a false teaching?

C. "The Son and the Holy Spirit are less than God" or "they are creations of God." This is a false teaching as well.

D. Some people teach that all Three together make up God, that each one is only 1/3 of the equation. Why is this a false teaching?

"We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – coeternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections." IFCA International.

A heart like King David - as you study the Person of God, why do you praise the Lord?

While studying the attributes of God, we saw that God is sovereign. The final section will touch on this complex concept.

6. God's sovereign will.

Some things about God are difficult to understand, and theologians wrestle with them. Satan sinned and that was part of God's plan, but it wasn't God's desire. He didn't want it.

- How can it be that God doesn't want something, and yet, it's part of His plan?
- Can you give an example of something you might not want to happen, but you incorporate it in your plan? For example, would you want your children to have an easy life where everything went their way?
- And why would you include something bad or negative in your plan?

6.1 Before the universe began, God designed the future.

God knows and is in control of every thought, every action, everything that happens. This doesn't mean that He causes all of these things, but He controls them. God either allows evil, limits evil or stops evil, and God works to bring good out of evil.

Isaiah 46:8 “Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. 9 “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

- What are some good things that God did for Israel in their past?
- When God delivered Israel from Egypt, how did this show that God was the only true God and that the gods of Egypt were false?
- What does verse 10 teach us?
- Please give three examples of things that God has declared will happen in the future?
- How does declaring these things beforehand show that God is God alone, there is no other God?
- What's happening in verse 11?
- The MacArthur Study Bible: "Cyrus was this man whom God summoned to conquer Babylon and return a remnant of Israel to end the 70-year captivity, a century and a half after Isaiah wrote this prophecy (44:28; 45:1).
- So what is this passage teaching us about God's control of the future?

NLT Isaiah 37:21 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you prayed about King Sennacherib of Assyria, 22 the LORD has spoken this word against him:

“The virgin daughter of Zion despises you and laughs at you. The daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head in derision as you flee. 23 “Whom have you been defying and ridiculing? Against whom did you raise your voice? At whom did you look with such haughty eyes? It was the Holy One of Israel!

- King Sennacherib of Assyria was planning to destroy the tiny kingdom of Judah. In the next passage, please underline the boasts of this mighty king?

24 By your messengers you have defied the Lord. You have said, ‘With my many chariots I have conquered the highest mountains— yes, the remotest peaks of Lebanon. I have cut down its tallest cedars and its finest cypress trees. I have reached its farthest heights and explored its deepest forests. 25 I have dug wells in many foreign lands and refreshed myself with their water. With the sole of my foot, I stopped up all the rivers of Egypt!’

- So what did King Sennacherib do?
- How does God respond in the following paragraph?

26 “But have you not heard? I decided this long ago. Long ago I planned it, and now I am making it happen. I planned for you to crush fortified cities into heaps of rubble. 27 That is why their people have so little power and are so frightened and confused. They are as weak as grass, as easily trampled as tender green shoots. They are like grass sprouting on a housetop, scorched before it can grow lush and tall.

- What is God saying here?
- When did God plan all of this?

28 “But I know you well— where you stay and when you come and go. I know the way you have raged against me. 29 And because of your raging against me and your arrogance, which I have heard for myself, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth. I will make you return by the same road on which you came.”

- What is God going to do to this evil king?

30 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Here is the proof that what I say is true: “This year you will eat only what grows up by itself, and next year you will eat what springs up from that. But in the third year you will plant crops and harvest them; you will tend vineyards and eat their fruit. 31 And you who are left in Judah, who have escaped the ravages of the siege, will put roots down in your own soil and grow up and flourish.

- What is the teaching here?

32 For a remnant of my people will spread out from Jerusalem, a group of survivors from Mount Zion. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen! 33 “And this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: “His armies will not enter Jerusalem. They will not even shoot an arrow at it. They will not march outside its gates with their shields nor build banks of earth against its walls. 34 The king will return to his own country by the same road on which he came. He will not enter this city,’ says the LORD.

- Who is going to defeat this evil king?
- What will this evil king not do?

- How do you think this encouraged good King Hezekiah?

35 'For my own honor and for the sake of my servant David, I will defend this city and protect it.' 36 That night the angel of the LORD went out to the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. When the surviving Assyrians woke up the next morning, they found corpses everywhere.

37 Then King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and returned to his own land. He went home to his capital of Nineveh and stayed there. 38 One day while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with their swords. They then escaped to the land of Ararat, and another son, Esarhaddon, became the next king of Assyria.

- Please explain this passage.

- What does this passage teach us about God's power and control over all things?

Is God in control of whom the next president will be, or of when the next war will take place? Does God control whether someone will get sick, have an accident, or fall in love?

We know this. God designed the future! He planned it! God's not just watching to see what will happen. He is involved in the life of every person, animal or angel. God controls all that takes place. Every atom is under God's control. Let's look at some more examples of how God plans the future.

Before God created the universe, He planned that Jesus would die on the cross. That's why the Bible says this:

Acts 2:22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

- What are these verses teaching us?

- What was man's part in the death of Jesus?

- Here's a difficult question. Did the Father want Jesus to die? Did it please Him?

Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. 10 But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as

a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

- Why did it please the Father to crush Jesus? Was the Father happy to see Jesus suffer so badly? What is this passage teaching us?
- Did God put Jesus to death? Is He guilty?

Here are some more verses concerning God's control of all things.

Acts 21:13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

- What is verse 14 teaching us?
- How did their knowledge of God's will impact their thinking?

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

- What does this verse teach us?
- Did Jesus lack faith? Why wasn't His prayer answered?

Walk through this passage. Talk it through as you read it.

Daniel 4:28 "All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. 29 Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'

- What does this tell us about the king?

31 While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, 32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.'

33 Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

34 “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. 35 “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?’

- What's happening in these verses?
- What did this mighty king learn?

36 At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”

- Daniel wrote this book. What did he want the people of Israel to know?
- What do we learn from Nebuchadnezzar?

Joshua 24:12 Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow.

- How did God convince the kings to leave their land of their own free will?
- Give two examples of how God could move your heart to memorize a book of the Bible. How might God motivate you?

Revelation 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”

- What is happening here? Can you explain it? Answer this before going on.
- Jesus is about to start seven years of tribulation. During this time period the world population will be decimated, the earth will be burned up, the seas turned to blood, a mighty earthquake will destroy all the cities of the world--among many other plagues.
- Is God evil for doing this? Is He wrong for pouring out His wrath on a wicked planet?

- These four living beings are the highest in heaven, they are always in the presence of God. They see everything that God does, that's why they are covered with eyes. As they constantly analyze God, what do they say about Him?
- Why do you think God would assign the highest angels in heaven to analyze all that takes place and give their opinion of what God is doing?
- It's normal for mankind to blame God and accuse God of evil. It's one of Satan's greatest lies. Have you ever blamed God, questioned God, or been angry at God?
- If you were in heaven, do you think you would agree with these four mighty living ones?
- Here's a hard question. A 12-year-old girl in our church was going to start teaching Sunday School the very next Sunday. But before that could happen, she was hit by a car traveling at 70 m.p.h., as she crossed the street, close to her school. Angels were there. They knew what would happen, but it was God's plan for this girl to die. If you were an angel, would you have obeyed God and let this happen?
- Why do the angels allow evil to happen when they have the power to stop it?
- Do you have any thoughts or questions before we move on?

Our point in this first section is that God is in control of all things. He designed the future, every minute detail. In fact, it was God's will that you are part of this study. Nothing is outside His control! Remember, God either allows evil, limits evil or stops evil. And, God always brings good out of evil.

A heart like King David - as you study God's design of the future, why do you praise the Lord?

6.2 God does not desire evil, ever.

Even though God has allowed evil, even though He has included evil in His design, God does not want evil. God hates evil, He hates evildoers. Why is it important to know that God does not desire evil, ever?

2 Peter 3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

- What is Peter teaching us here?

- How do we know that God wants every last person to be saved?
- Is there any person that we should not pray for their salvation?

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

- What do these verses teach us?
- Does God want anyone to sin?
- Did God want Satan to sin, or Adam and Eve?
- Did God even indirectly tempt them to sin?

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

- Describe what God would be like if He had just a little bit of darkness in Him.

Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

- What did God want?
- What did Israel want?
- How did God bring good out of this evil happening, the death of Christ?

The following passage takes place during the seven-year tribulation.

Revelation 17:16 And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot (the harlot is the false wicked and cruel church) and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

17 For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. 18 The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

- Is God doing something wrong here? What's happening?

- You'll want to know that God doesn't desire evil, but God does bring punishment.

Ezekiel 33:10 “Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus you have spoken, saying, “Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?”’

11 Say to them, ‘As I live!’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?’

- Is God happy when people go to hell? Does He laugh or smirk? What is His attitude?

It's important to know that God has no delight in evil. It brings Him no joy to see evil or sin or bad things happen. He doesn't delight when His enemies are destroyed, God doesn't delight in hell. During the time of Noah, man had become so very wicked and it grieved His heart. That's what God is like. God does not desire evil, ever.

Imagine that you are standing in front of the door that opens to a large palace. There is a lavish ball going on inside, with lots of food and people, there is beautiful music and delightful times. The loveliest people in the world are there. But the door is locked, and there's just a tiny hole with a thick colored glass, and you can barely make anything out. You just wish you could open the door, but it is locked. Well, God has many doors like that, and we wish that we could open the door to understand the mysteries of God. But the door is locked and God won't open the door for us until the day we die, then we will understand. These are the mysteries, the deep things of God. As for now, we see through a dark glass but in the future, we will understand these difficult things.

A heart like King David - as you see that God is holy and never desires evil, why do you praise the Lord?

6.3 God includes the right and wrong decisions of men and angels in His plan.

Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

- We saw this passage earlier. God wanted one thing, but man was rebellious and God allowed men to have their way and reject Jesus. But this was part of God's plan.
- Why didn't the Jews accept Jesus? Was it God's fault?
- When someone doesn't get saved, is it ever God's fault?

- God wants people to be saved. God made creation so that men would see Him and find salvation. God sends good things to men so that they will search for God and be saved. God Himself came to earth. Jesus died for all men so that all could come to salvation.

Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

- It was God's plan for Jesus to die. What was man's part?
- Did God do anything wrong?

Acts 27:18 The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo; 19 and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20 Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.

21 When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, “Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. 22 Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, 24 saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’ 25 Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. 26 But we must run aground on a certain island.”

- What was Paul's prophecy?
- Will anyone die in this shipwreck? Why or why not?

29 Fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak. 30 But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, “Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved.” 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it fall away.

- Paul said that they would die if the sailors escaped. Was he not trusting God, who said that none would die? What is this passage teaching us?

41 But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern began to be broken up by the force of

the waves. **42 The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away and escape; 43 but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, 44 and the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And so it happened that they all were brought safely to land.**

- Did they all make it safely to land?
- Why?
- Would they have made it to land if the sailors had escaped?
- In the end, Paul did his part. Was God's will fulfilled? Did anyone die?

So here's the thing, we work together with God and in the end, God's plan takes place. We **WORK HARD** and God's plan works out. We pray, we evangelize, we give, we work hard. We **work** with God. We do our part.

Some people say: "why should we pray or tell others about Jesus if God already has things planned out"? The answer is that God takes our will into account. What we do is part of God's sovereign plan. We work together with God so that good things happen!

But we don't believe in fatalism. Some years ago, a number of Muslims were killed when they trampled on one another while trying to escape through a tunnel. Fatalism would say that it was simply their time to die, and they would have died even if they'd been somewhere else.

- As you look at Paul on the ship, did he believe in fatalism?
- Do our decisions affect the future?

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. 10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

- In verse 10, why does Paul endure all things?
- If Paul hadn't endured, if Paul hadn't been faithful to preach the gospel, would these people have been saved anyway?
- When Paul speaks of the chosen, what does that tell us about God's decision?

Romans 10:14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

- Here's a good question: Will people get saved if we don't share the gospel with them?

The future is mapped out 100%, but when God designed the future, He took your will into account. Your decisions are part of God's plan. We need to have a balanced view of God's plan. Prayers don't get answered because no one asks - **James 4:2 "You do not have because you do not ask."** We must do our part so that people will get saved, so that prayers are answered, so that God's will is done here on this earth.

On the other hand, we need to keep in mind that God will do what God will do, regardless of what man does. God does not depend on man, and He doesn't need man. God is absolutely sovereign and will always accomplish His will. If God wants someone to get saved, He will move heaven and earth to accomplish His will. If He has to create a storm so that the sailors throw Jonah into the ocean, and then bring along a fish that swallows Jonah and then spits him up, so that Jonah is finally ready to go to Nineveh, God will do it! No one can resist his hand.

These are the hard questions, and there is a limit as to how far we can "reason" things through.

Review:

- What have we learned in this section?
- Did God want Satan to sin?
- How did God use Satan's rebellion to bring about good things?
- What has God taught all mankind about evil and mercy through Satan's sin?

A heart like King David - As you see how God incorporates the will of His creatures into His sovereign will, why do you praise the Lord?

6.4 God always brings good out of evil.

Do you know the story of Job? What happened? What was the good that God brought out of this terrible situation?

Do you know the story of Joseph? What happened to him? What was the good that God brought out of this terrible situation?

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

- What is this verse teaching us?

Ephesians 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

- What are these verses teaching us?

- God was very lavish in our salvation. Just wait until you get to heaven and then you'll see these unspeakable glories! What good did God bring out of all of this evil?

We were missionaries in Spain for 11 years, and during that time, our family was poisoned with lead and mercury. This has caused great anguish for my entire family, incredible pain and hardship. God is blessing, but it's been very hard. People that might have been saved, never heard the gospel because I didn't have the energy to witness to them. Others who might have grown more, did not receive that pastoral care, simply because I couldn't do it. It's been very difficult to understand what God is doing. I will say it again, this has been very painful. But God has blessed. These studies are actually the fruit of these times of suffering. I don't have the energy to evangelize very much, but I do have the clarity of mind and the strength to write these studies. May the Lord use them for His glory.

A heart like King David - As you see how God is rich in mercy and how He brings good out of evil, why do you praise the Lord?

7. Final remarks

Imagine that a 5-year-old boy is given an island in the tropics which measures 35 miles by 100 miles. It has mansions and pools, horses and wild animals as well. Motorcycles, 4 wheelers, playgrounds, tennis courts and basketball courts, servants and banquets, mountains and lakes, trees and plains. He is also given great amounts of money. There is no crime, no sickness, no sin. There are 1 million people on the island with 400 cities and this little boy is the owner and ruler. Would this five-year-old be able to appreciate all that he has?

In a sense, that's the way it is with us and God. God is wonderful, delightful, full of life and creativity. In God's presence, there is boundless joy, all kinds of pleasures and treasures. And this God has come to save us and invite us to live with Him forever! During this life, God is inviting you to come to know and trust Him. He will lead you through hard times and good times. He will bless you. He will make you prosperous, in His own way and in His own time. Now, prosperous may or may not mean money. One penniless older lady in India got saved. Her job was to follow the cows and pick up dried cow manure to be sold for "fire wood". After she

got saved, she said that God helped her pick up twice as much manure. You will flourish, if you learn to delight yourself in the Lord and obey His commands. God promises that His child who stays away from evil and delights himself in God's Word, that child will prosper! Will you walk with God?

I am personally so amazed at God. I can hardly wait to meet Jesus!

I hope you've enjoyed this course. I pray that it has been a blessing to your life. Pastor Bob. Sept. 17, 2021. If you have any questions, feel free to email me. **MentorMaterial@gmail.com**. As time goes on, I'll be adding more courses like this one at www.MentorMaterial.com. There will also be a **Spanish** edition.

In this course, I have followed and expanded on the works of Sid Litke, Th.M., a 1984 graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, and also the writings of Gary Gilley from Southern View Chapel in Illinois.

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About the author.

Hi, I'm Bob Schneider. I grew up in McCook, Nebraska, USA. I came to Christ at the age of 14. My parents encouraged all of us kids to attend one year of Bible college, which is where I met my wife, Karon. She grew up in Barcelona, where her family served as missionaries. In 1991, we moved to Barcelona, Spain, with our two-year-old daughter, Elyssa. During those years, Daniel was born, and then we moved to the south of Spain, where Jonathan was born. In 2002, we moved to Puerto Rico, where we currently serve as missionaries with Biblical Ministries Worldwide.

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8. Review questions.

Page 4

- What is general revelation?
- What are the three areas of general revelation?

Page 5

- What does God use to teach all men everywhere about Himself?
- How do we see God's wrath on the wicked today?
- How do men suppress the truth?
- What are the three steps to a twisted mind/life?

Page 9

- What did God write on the heart of every man?
- How can a person damage their conscience?

Page 10

- Why isn't our conscience perfect?
- How can we train our conscience?

Page 12

- What is providence?
- Can you give an example of providence.

Page 16

- What is special revelation and how is it different from general revelation?

Page 20

- How do prophecies strengthen our faith?

Page 21

- What is the cosmological argument, which gives evidence for God's existence? It has to do with origins.
- What is the teleological argument, which gives evidence for God's existence? It has to do with complexity and completeness.

Page 22

- What is the moral argument, which gives evidence for God's existence?
- What is the ontological argument, which gives evidence for God's existence? It has to do with our innate knowledge that God exists.

Page 23

- What are incommunicable attributes?
- What does it mean that God is self-existent?
- What does it mean that God is immutable?

Page 24

- What does it mean that God is eternal?

Page 25

- What does it mean that God is omnipresent?
- What does it mean that God is omniscient?

Page 26

- What does it mean that God is omnipotent?

Page 27

- What are communicable attributes?
- What did we find was the definition of wisdom?

Page 28

- Holiness refers to two things about God: what are they?

Page 31

- What does it mean that God is love?
- What does it mean that God is grace?

Page 32

- What does it mean that God is mercy? There are two aspects.

Page 34

- What does it mean that God is long suffering?
- What does it mean that God is just?

Page 35

- What does it mean that God is sovereign?

Page 36

- What does it mean that He is a God of wrath?

Page 44

- What does the name Jehovah mean?

Page 45

- God is a personal Being, not simply energy or a force like a mindless hurricane. He has 3 characteristics which identify Him as a person. What are they?

Page 46

- What does it mean that God is a spiritual being?
- What does it mean that God is a Trinity?

Page 47

- Why do you believe that God exists as three Persons?

Page 48

- Can you explain Deut. 6:4?
- What does it mean that God is One?

Page 50

- Why do you believe that Jesus is God? There are six reasons.

Page 52

- Why do you believe that the Holy Spirit is God?

Page 53

- What are some false teachings about the Trinity?

Page 64

- How do you explain the balance between God's sovereign will and our personal will?
- What was the teaching in Acts 27 with Paul on the ship?