

Program Notes

TONIGHT'S SCHEDULE

6:00 p.m.	Musical Worship
6:15 p.m.	Teaching Segment 1
7:15 p.m.	Break
7:25 p.m.	Teaching Segment 2
8:25 p.m.	Area Highlight
8:45 p.m.	Break
8:55 p.m.	Guest Testimony
9:10 p.m.	Giving Report
9:20 p.m.	Teaching Segment 3
10:20 p.m.	Break
10:30 p.m.	Prayer Time/Offering
10:55 p.m.	Teaching Segment 4
11:55 p.m.	Musical Worship
12:00 a.m.	Dismiss

BOTTLED WATER ONLY is allowed in the Worship Room. Please do not bring food or other types of beverages into the Worship Room. Beverages will be available in the lobby for attendees during the break time.

RESTROOMS are located in the lobby. Additional men's and women's restrooms are located in the Modular Building area outside the lobby to the right as you exit.

SO AS NOT TO DISTRACT FROM THE STUDY, please turn all cell phones and pagers to the "silent" or "off" position while in the Worship Room. We realize many parents need to keep in touch with baby sitters, but if you must use your phone during the evening, please go into the lobby before calling.

BIBLES are available free of charge in the lobby. If you do not have your personal Bible, please keep the Bible you receive as our gift. David will be teaching from the New International Version (NIV).

SECRET CHURCH RESOURCES are available for purchase in the lobby before and after the sessions and during the break times. Following this evening's teaching, a four-CD audio set of the sessions will be available for purchase for \$29. A two-DVD set of videos of the sessions will be available for \$39 in the coming weeks.

ONLINE RESOURCES, including free MP3 audio downloads of the teaching sessions, Quicktime (MOV) videos of the teaching sessions, study and prayer guides in Portable Document Format (PDF) and links to persecuted church resources are available at the Secret Church website, www.secretchurch.org.

Beyond These Walls...

We're glad you've decided to attend tonight's Secret Church meeting. But even if nobody showed up, it would still be worth the effort. Actually, this Bible study will hopefully benefit far more people outside this room than those present. Here's why...

You will notice video cameras in the room tonight that will be recording the teaching sessions. In the coming months, these sessions will be re-recorded and translated into many different languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Arabic. The foreign-language versions of Secret Church will be available online as translations are completed. But that is just the beginning.

Most Christ-followers around the world don't have access to seminaries or Bible colleges. In fact, most parts of the world have no formal Christian teaching at all. Dr. Platt will be leading additional Secret Church studies, creating thirty to forty hours of Bible teaching on the Old and New Testaments, Covenants, Disciple-Making, Bible Study and Teaching and other topics. We will then load all Secret Church teachings onto iPods® for distribution worldwide. These sessions together will comprise a "seminary on a stick"—a mini-course in solid Bible knowledge accessible to anyone.

During the evening we will be taking an offering. All proceeds will directly support persecuted Christians worldwide through both ongoing ministry initiatives, as well as providing Secret Church Bible teaching materials in many native languages. Imagine a house-church leader in Asia or the Middle East, now able to attend hours of Bible teaching classes as he plugs in a video iPod® with Secret Church teaching in his own language. With your help, this is quickly becoming a reality.

Who Is God?

“This is what the Lord says: “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord.”

(Jeremiah 9:23-24, NIV)

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

“Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, ‘What comes into your mind when you think about God?’ we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. Were we able to know exactly what our most influential religious leaders think of God today, we might be able with some precision to foretell where the Church will stand tomorrow.”

“It is not a cheerful thought that millions of us who live in a land of Bibles, who belong to churches and labor to promote the Christian religion, may yet pass our whole life on this earth without once having thought or tried to think seriously about the being of God. Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent self back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good – about how to build a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. For this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion and the decay of our inner lives.”

“The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him—and of her.”

—A.W. Tozer

WHY ARE WE HERE?

- To know God’s glory.
- To learn God’s Word.
- To advance God’s kingdom.

CAN WE KNOW GOD?

- The reality...
 - ▶ God is incomprehensible.
 - ▶ We can never fully understand any single thing about God.
 - ▶ We can know something about God’s love, power, wisdom and other attributes.
 - ▶ But we can never know His love, power, wisdom or other attributes exhaustively.
- The reason...
 - ▶ We can’t know God fully because of both our sinfulness and His greatness.

- ▶ Because of our **sin**, we are hindered from glimpsing the fullness of God.
- ▶ But even when all sin will be removed from us, we will still be finite and God will still be infinite.
- ▶ For all of eternity we will **increase** in our knowledge of Him.
 - ✦ If in pride we want to be equal to God in knowledge, this will **depress** us.
 - ✦ If in humility we want to live to adore and worship God, this will **delight** us.
- The resolution...
 - ▶ Though we cannot understand God fully, we can understand God **truly**.
 - ▶ So based on Scripture, even though we don't have exhaustive knowledge of God, we have true knowledge of God.
 - ▶ Though God is incomprehensible, He is **knowable**.

HOW WE KNOW GOD...

1 Corinthians 2:10-16

- Only the **Spirit** of God knows the fullness of the glory of God.
- If we want to know God, then we **need** the Spirit to reveal Him to us.
- Therefore, a people who are desperate to know God will be desperate for His Spirit.
 - ▶ If we are not desperate for His Spirit, it is a sure indicator that we have grown **content** with knowing little about God.
- Do we want to know the glory of God?
 - ▶ Then let us be a people **desperate** for the Spirit of God.
 - ▶ And when we're desperate for the Spirit, our hearts will begin to understand God with the very perspective of **Christ**.

*"We have but to want Him badly enough,
and He will come and manifest Himself to us."*

—A.W. Tozer

WHEN WE KNOW GOD...

- Routine **religion** is no longer tolerable.
- Casual **worship** is no longer possible.
- Total **surrender** is no longer optional.
- Global **mission** is no longer negotiable.

LET'S GET TO KNOW GOD...

- A humbling journey.

*“He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.”
(Psalm 25:9, NIV)*

*“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble
and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.”
(Isaiah 66:2, NIV)*

- A **personal** journey.

*“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father
knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”
(John 10:14-15, NIV)*

- An intellectual journey.
- An **emotional** journey.
- A practical journey.

- ▶ Knowledge of God produces **obedience**.

*“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our
knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”
(2 Peter 1:3, NIV)*

- ▶ Obedience to God produces knowledge.

*“If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out
whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”
(John 7:17, NIV)*

- A **thrilling** journey.

*“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you,
the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”
(John 17:3, NIV)*

- A deep journey...
 - ▶ The Names of God.
 - ▶ The Attributes of God.
 - ✦ His Greatness.
 - ✦ His Goodness.
 - ▶ The Mysteries of God.
 - ✦ The Trinity.
 - ✦ The Sovereign Will of God.
 - ✦ God and Evil.

The Names of God

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.”

(Exodus 20:4, NIV)

“From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.”

(Psalm 113:3, NIV)

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

- The names of God provide **revelation** of God.

Moses said to God, Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them:”

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’

(Exodus 3:13-14, NIV)

“Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

(Exodus 33:18-19, NIV)

“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

(Exodus 34:6-7, NIV)

- The names of God lead to **adoration** of God.

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.”

(Psalm 8:1, NIV)

“Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.”*

(Psalm 29:1-2, NIV)

- The names of God provide refuge and **protection** in God.

*“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.”
(Proverbs 18:10, NIV)*

*“He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace. When the Assyrian invades our land and marches through our fortresses, we will raise against him seven shepherds, even eight leaders of men.”
(Micah 5:4-5, NIV)*

- The names of God symbolize the **location** of God’s glory among His people.

*“But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.”
(Deuteronomy 12:5-7, NIV)*

*“The Lord said to him: “I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.”
(1 Kings 9:3, NIV)*

- The names of God demonstrate our **identification** with God.

*“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”
(1 Corinthians 3:16, NIV)*

- ▶ We bear His name.

*“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.’”
(Ezekiel 36:22-23, NIV)*

- ▶ We are **baptized** into His name.

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”
(Matthew 28:19, NIV)*

- The name of God is power for our **salvation**.

“Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might.”
(Psalm 54:1, NIV)

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”
(Acts 4:12, NIV)

- The name of God is authority for our **mission**.

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
(Acts 2:38, NIV)

- The various names of God...
 - ▶ Proper names:
 - ✦ Elohim, Yahweh, Adonai...
 - ▶ Personal names:
 - ✦ Father, Jesus, Son, Holy Spirit...
 - ▶ Descriptive names:
 - ✦ King, Judge, Shepherd...
 - ▶ Titles:
 - ✦ Creator, Christ, Messiah...

ELOHIM

- He is **God**.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
(Genesis 1:1, NIV)

- The most generic Name for God—used over **2700** times in the Bible.
- Elohim emphasizes...
 - ▶ God’s power as Creator of all things.
 - ▶ God’s sufficiency as **Sustainer** of all things.

YAHWEH/JEHOVAH

- He is the **LORD**.

“God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, 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, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”
(Exodus 3:14-15, NIV)

“God also said to Moses, ‘I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore, say to the Israelites: “I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.”’

(Exodus 6:2-8, NIV)

- The most common name for God—used over **6800** times in the Bible.
- This name was revealed at the covenant.

“And God spoke all these words: ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.’”

(Exodus 20:1-3, NIV)

- This name was revealed at **critical** times.

“You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days I am he.

No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?”

(Isaiah 43:10-13, NIV)

- This name was revealed in Christ.

“‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!’”

(John 8:58, NIV)

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

(Acts 2:36, NIV)

- ▶ Old Testament faith: Confess God as Lord.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

(Deuteronomy 6:4-5, NIV)

- ▶ New Testament faith: Confess **Christ** as Lord.

“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”
(Romans 10:9-10, NIV)

- The Lord emphasizes:
 - ▶ God’s personality.

“The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.” So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you.” For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.”
(Hosea 3:1-5, NIV)

- ▶ God’s goodness.

“So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the Lord had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”
(Exodus 34:4-7, NIV)

- ▶ God’s power.

““Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”
(Isaiah 46:3-4, NIV)

- ▶ God’s authority.

“ The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord.”
(Leviticus 18:1-5, NIV)

▶ God's presence.

“What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?”

(Deuteronomy 4:7-8, NIV)

ADONAI

■ He is Lord/Master.

“After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

(Genesis 15:1-6, NIV)

■ Adonai emphasizes...

▶ Complete sovereignty in God.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.”

(Isaiah 6:1-4, NIV)

▶ Complete submission in man.

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

(Isaiah 6:8, NIV)

■ Those who worship Adonai are stewards.

“Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.”

(Joshua 5:13-15, NIV)

■ Those who worship Adonai are servants.

“Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: “Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign Lord? What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign Lord. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.”
(2 Samuel 7:18-21, NIV)

EL ELYON

- He is God **Most High**.

“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.” But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”
(Genesis 14:18-24, NIV)

- God alone is high and **exalted**.

“At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”
(Daniel 4:34-35, NIV)

- God alone is able to meet all of my **needs**.

“They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer.”
(Psalm 78:35, NIV)

EL SHADDAI

- He is God **Almighty**.

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of

many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”
(Genesis 17:1-8, NIV)

- God is all-powerful.

“The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.”
(Ezekiel 10:5, NIV)

- God is all-**sufficient**.

“And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.”
(Genesis 43:14, NIV)

- As El Shaddai, God says...
 - ▶ I guarantee My Word.

“And God said to him, “I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body.”
(Genesis 35:11, NIV)

- ▶ I guarantee My **provision**.

Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me and said to me, ‘I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.’”
(Genesis 48:3-4, NIV)

JEHOVAH JIREH

- The LORD will **provide**.

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”
(Genesis 22:13-14, NIV)

- Provide = to **see** before.
- We will never have a **need** that was not already known in the mind of God.

JEHOVAH SABAOTH

- The LORD of hosts.

“Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord.”

(1 Samuel 1:3, NIV)

“He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—the Lord God Almighty is his name.”

(Amos 4:13, NIV)

- Jehovah Sabaoth used most often in the prophets.
 - ▶ Jeremiah – 88 times.
 - ▶ Zechariah – 55 times.
 - ▶ Malachi – 25 times.
 - ▶ Haggai – 14 times.
- God is the Lord of armies.
- God is the Lord of the multitudes.
- God is the Lord who conquers any opposition.

“In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. And she made a vow, saying, “O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

(1 Samuel 1:10-11, NIV)

JEHOVAH ROPHE

- The Lord who heals.

“Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them. He said, “If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.”

(Exodus 15:25-26, NIV)

- The Lord who restores.
- The Lord who cures.

“Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits— who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

(Psalm 103:2-5, NIV)

Jehovah Nissi

- The Lord is my **banner**.

“So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”

Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. He said, “For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord. The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.”

(Exodus 17:10-16, NIV)

- The Lord is our banner of **identity**.
- The Lord is our pole of gathering.
- The Lord is our flag of **victory**.

“In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.”

(Isaiah 11:10-12, NIV)

Jehovah Mekadesh

- The LORD who **makes you holy**.

“Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy.”

(Leviticus 20:7-8, NIV)

- The root, which means “to set apart for divine use,” is used approximately **700** times in the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament...
 - ▶ Items used in the temple were sanctified for use before God.
- In the New Testament...
 - ▶ Our **lives** are temples sanctified for use before God.

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”

(1 Corinthians 3:16-17, NIV)

JEHOVAH SHALOM

- The Lord is peace.

“The angel of God said to him, ‘Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth.’ And Gideon did so. With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the Lord touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the Lord disappeared.

When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he exclaimed, ‘Ah, Sovereign Lord! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.’ So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord is Peace.”

(Judges 6:20-24, NIV)

- God is our complete peace.
- God is our perfect rest.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

(Philippians 4:6-7, NIV)

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU

- The LORD our righteousness.

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.”

(Jeremiah 23:5-6, NIV)

- God demonstrates His righteousness to His people.

“The priests are to keep my requirements so that they do not become guilty and die for treating them with contempt. I am the Lord, who makes them holy.”

(Leviticus 22:9, NIV)

- God attributes His righteousness to His people.

“It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”

(1 Corinthians 1:30, NIV)

JEHOVAH SHAMMAH

- The Lord is there.

“And the name of the city from that time on will be: the Lord is there.”

(Ezekiel 48:35, NIV)

- Hope foretold in Ezekiel: The presence of God will return to His temple.
- Hope experienced in Acts: The presence of God is here in our lives.

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

(Acts 2:1-4, NIV)

- Hope anticipated in Revelation: The presence of God will be our light forever and ever.

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.

And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”

(Revelation 22:1-5, NIV)

JEHOVAH ROHI

“I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.”

(Ezekiel 34:15-16, NIV)

- My Shepherd’s care is extremely personal.
- My Shepherd never stops giving to me.
- My Shepherd’s provision is based on His grace, not my ability.
- My Shepherd’s grace results in my Shepherd’s glory.
- Because my Shepherd gives me everything, He leaves me nothing to fear.
- My Shepherd not only sustains me; He satisfies me.
- My Shepherd pursues me with His love.
- My experience with this Shepherd will never end.

“They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

(Revelation 7:15-17, NIV)

FATHER

*He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.'
(Psalm 89:26, NIV)*

- The contrast...
 - ▶ Used only **15** times in the Old Testament to refer directly to God.
 - ▶ In the Gospels alone, God is referred to as Father **165** times.
 - ▶ All but one of these instances occur when Jesus is specifically teaching His disciples.
- The conclusion...
 - ▶ Followers of Jesus have the unique **privilege** of calling God Father.
- When we call Him Father...
 - ▶ We express our **reverence** to Him.

*"This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."
(Matthew 6:9-13, NIV)*

- ▶ We enjoy our **relationship** with Him.

*"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."
(Romans 8:15-17, NIV)*

OTHERS...

- He is **King**.

*"For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods."
(Psalm 95:3, NIV)*

*"They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."
(Revelation 17:14, NIV)*

- He is **Judge**.

*"Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
(Genesis 18:25, NIV)*

"Present your case," says the Lord. "Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King. "Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. But you are less than nothing and

your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable.
(Isaiah 41:21-24, NIV)

■ He is **Redeemer**.

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”
(Job 19:25-27, NIV)

“But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.”
(Isaiah 63:16, NIV)

■ He is the Potter.

“Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”
(Isaiah 64:8, NIV)

■ He is **Light**.

“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”
(1 John 1:5, NIV)

■ He is the Rock.

“He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”
(Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV)

■ He is our **Fortress**.

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
(Psalm 46:10-11, NIV)

■ He is our Shield.

“O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, “God will not deliver him.” But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill.
(Psalm 3:1-4, NIV)

■ He is a Consuming **Fire**.

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and

*so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”
(Hebrews 12:28-29, NIV)*

The Attributes of God

- All of God's attributes are personal.
 - ▶ They describe **who** He is.
- All of God's attributes are practical.
 - ▶ They help us understand **how** He acts.
- All of God's attributes are **perfect**.

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
(Matthew 5:48, NIV)

- All of God's attributes are **permanent**.

“To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”
(Jude 1:25, NIV)

- All of God's attributes are **praiseworthy**.

“Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent.”
(Psalm 104:1-2, NIV)

- ▶ God's glory is His supreme **passion**.

“Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”
(Isaiah 43:6-7, NIV)

“For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.”
(Isaiah 48:11, NIV)

- ▶ God's glory is our supreme **satisfaction**.

“One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.”
(Psalm 27:4, NIV)

“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.”
(Psalm 84:1-4, NIV)

The Attributes of God ~ Greatness

“The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.”
—A.W. Tozer

The GREATNESS of GOD

- Independence
- Spirituality
- Eternity
- Omnipotence
- Omnipresence
- Omniscience
- Immutability

The INDEPENDENCE of GOD

- God is both self-existent and self-**sufficient**.
- The self-existence of God...
 - ▶ Does God exist?

*“The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.”*
(Psalm 14:1, NIV)

- ▶ Look at **creation**.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
(Genesis 1:1, NIV)

- “Ex nihilo nihilo fit” - out of nothing, **nothing** comes.
- Threefold progression:
 - Whatever begins to exist has a **cause**.
 - The universe began to exist.
 - Therefore, the universe has a cause.

“The details differ, but the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same... This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always believed the word of the Bible. But we scientists did not expect to find evidence for an abrupt beginning because we have had, until recently, such extraordinary success in tracing the chain of cause and effect backward in time... At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”
—Robert Zastrow (One-time Director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies)

- ▶ Look at **design**.
- + God leaves the **imprints** of His glory upon the design of the earth.

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”
(Romans 1:18-20, NIV)

“Through my scientific work I have come to believe more and more strongly that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact.”
—One-time Agnostic Paul Davies

- ▶ Look at **morality**.
- + The existence of **objective** moral values points to a moral Creator.

“They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.”
(Romans 2:15, NIV)

“The position of the modern evolutionist is that...morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself,’ they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction...and any deeper meaning is illusory.”
—Michael Ruse (Noted Agnostic Philosopher of Science)

- ▶ So where did God come from?
- + God was never **created** and never came into being.

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”
(Psalm 90:1-2, NIV)

- He has no **origin**.
- He is the uncaused One.
- God is entirely **independent**.
- He does not derive his life from any external source.
- God does not need **us** for anything.

■ The self-sufficiency of God...

- ▶ God has no needs.

“For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.”

(Psalm 50:10-12, NIV)

- ▶ He does not need our companionship.
- ▶ He does not need our worship.

“Were all human beings suddenly to become blind, still the sun would shine by day and the stars by night, for these owe nothing to the millions who benefit from their light. So, were every man on earth to become an atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard to any other. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away.”

—A.W. Tozer

- ▶ He does not need our discipleship.

“Who is Bill Bright? I’m a little nobody among 6 billion nobodies. God has given me several things I think he’s wanted me to do, and yet there doesn’t seem to be any assurance time will allow me to finish some of these. He doesn’t need Bill Bright any more than he needs a twig on a tree. He created us in his image, and he loves us, and he esteems us, and we are of worth to him, but he can raise up sticks and stones to worship him. So, it’s not as though my departure is going to leave a big hole.”

—Bill Bright, Founder, Campus Crusade for Christ

■ Does this make us meaningless?

- ▶ Our meaning in life is not found in God’s need for us.
- ▶ Our meaning in life is found in our need for God.

■ The search for significance...

- ▶ God is infinitely significant.
- ▶ Our significance is found in embracing His infinite significance.

■ This is ultimate love...

- ▶ God is not compelled by some need to love us.
- ▶ God chooses to love us with a totally unselfish love.
- ▶ God involves us in His mission not because He needs us, but because He loves us.

■ God needs no one, yet He works through anyone.

- ▶ God exists for Himself.
- ▶ We exist for God.

“Almighty God, just because he is almighty, needs no support. The picture of a nervous, ingratiating God fawning over men to win their favor is not a pleasant one; yet if we look at the popular conception of God that is precisely what we see. Twentieth-century Christianity has put God on charity. So lofty is our opinion of ourselves that we find it quite easy, not to say enjoyable, to believe that we are necessary to God....Probably the

hardest thought of all for our natural egotism to entertain is that God does not need our help. We commonly represent Him as a busy, eager, somewhat frustrated Father hurrying about seeking help to carry out His benevolent plan to bring peace and salvation to the world...Too many missionary appeals are based upon this fancied frustration of Almighty God. An effective speaker can easily excite pity in his hearers, not only for the heathen but for the God who has tried so hard and so long to save them and has failed for want of support. I fear that thousands of younger persons enter Christian service from no higher motive than to help deliver God from the embarrassing situation His love has gotten Him into and His limited abilities seem unable to get Him out of. Add to this a certain degree of commendable idealism and a fair amount of compassion for the underprivileged and you have the true drive behind much Christian activity today.”

—A.W. Tozer

The SPIRITUALITY of GOD

- God is both spiritual and personal.
- God as spirit...

“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”
(John 4:24, NIV)

- ▶ God is not physical.
- ▶ God is not **visible**.

*“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God,
be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*
(1 Timothy 1:17, NIV)

“God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”
(1 Timothy 6:15-16, NIV)

- ▶ God has no size or dimensions (even **infinite** ones).
- ▶ God is not limited to any geographical or spatial location.
- ▶ God is not destructible.
- God as person...
 - ▶ God is not a **force** to be reckoned with.
 - ▶ God is not an object to be manipulated.
 - ▶ God is a **Person** to be loved.
- God and images...

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”
(Exodus 20:4-6, NIV)

- ▶ God is unlike anything else in all creation.
- ▶ Therefore, God forbids using anything in all creation to “**picture**” him.
- ▶ Instead, God’s people long for the day when they will **see** him...

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”
(1 John 3:2, NIV)

“No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.”
(Revelation 22:3-4, NIV)

The ETERNITY of GOD

- God is both **infinite** and eternal.
- God as infinite...

““Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know?”
(Job 11:7-8, NIV)

- ▶ God is **unlimited**.
- ▶ God is unlimitable.
- ▶ God is **measureless**.
- ▶ God is boundless.

“It is this God, majestic and holy in his being, this God whose love knows no bounds because his holiness knows no limits, who has disappeared from the modern evangelical world.”
—David Wells

- God as eternal...

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn men back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, O sons of men.” For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered.”
(Psalm 90:1-6, NIV)

- ▶ God has no **beginning**.
- ▶ God has no **end**.
- ▶ God is Lord over **time**.
 - ✦ God has no past.

- ✦ God has no future.
- ✦ God is **unchanging** throughout all time.
- ▶ God sees all time **equally** vividly.
 - ✦ He sees the past with equal clarity as He sees the future.
 - ✦ From all of eternity God has determined what He is **now** doing.
- ▶ God sees events in the context of time.
- ▶ God **acts** in the context of time.
- We will always exist in time.
- If God is infinitely and eternally glorious, infinitely and eternally holy, infinitely and eternally just, and infinitely and eternally gracious, then...
 - ▶ Our **sin** is infinitely and eternally offensive to Him.
 - ▶ His wrath is infinitely and eternally **just** toward us.
 - ▶ Our salvation is infinitely and eternally **satisfying**.

“When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his eternity without any flux... Time is fluid, but eternity is stable; and after many ages, the joys will be as savory and satisfying as if they had been but that moment first tasted by our hungry appetites. When the glory of the Lord shall rise upon you, it shall be so far from ever setting, that after millions of years are expired, as numerous as the sands on the seashore, the sun, in the light of whose countenance you shall live, shall be as bright as at the first appearance; he will be so far from ceasing to flow, that he will flow as strong, as full, as at the first communication of himself in glory to the creature. God is always vigorous and flourishing; a pure act of life, sparkling new and fresh rays of life and light to the creature, flourishing with a perpetual spring, and contenting the most capacious desire; forming your interest, pleasure, and satisfaction; with an infinite variety, without any change or succession; he will have variety to increase delights, and eternity to perpetuate them; this will be the fruit of the enjoyment of an infinite and eternal God.”

—Stephen Charnock, *Discourse on the Eternity of God*

- The eternity of God reminds us—Our days are **numbered**...

“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”
(Psalm 90:12, NIV)

“We who live in this nervous age would be wise to meditate on our lives and our days long and often before the face of God and on the edge of eternity.”

—A.W. Tozer

The OMNIPOTENCE of GOD

- God has infinite power to do all things in His **holy** will.

“Then the Lord said, ‘I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.’ Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, ‘After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?’ Then the Lord said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.’”

(Genesis 18:10-14, NIV)

“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”

(Jeremiah 32:17, NIV)

“Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.””

(Matthew 19:26, NIV)

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,”

(Ephesians 3:20, NIV)

■ God’s power extends...

- ▶ Over all **creation**.

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.”

(Genesis 17:1, NIV)

- ▶ Through all **history**.

“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”

(Acts 17:26, NIV)

“Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.”

(Psalm 115:3, NIV)

■ God cannot...

- ▶ Undo the **past**.
- ▶ Deny His character.

“If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

(2 Timothy 2:13, NIV)

- ▶ **Deceive** His people.

“A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,”

(Titus 1:2, NIV)

“God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie,

we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.”
(Hebrews 6:18, NIV)

The OMNIPRESENCE of GOD

- All of God is always present.

“Am I only a God nearby, declares the Lord, ‘and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ declares the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?”
declares the Lord.”

(Jeremiah 23:23-24, NIV)

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”

(Psalm 139:7-10, NIV)

“However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?’ says the Lord. ‘Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?’”

(Acts 7:48-50, NIV)

- God cannot be contained or described by spatial dimensions.
- God is present everywhere, but **distinct** from everything.
- God’s presence is manifested differently in different circumstances.
 - ▶ Sometimes God is present to **sustain**.

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

(Colossians 1:17, NIV)

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

(Hebrews 1:3, NIV)

- ▶ Sometimes God is present to **punish**.

“I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said: “Strike the tops of the pillars so that the thresholds shake. Bring them down on the heads of all the people; those who are left I will kill with the sword. Not one will get away, none will escape. Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them. Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them. I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good.””

(Amos 9:1-4, NIV)

- ▶ Sometimes God is present to **bless**.

*“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”
(Psalm 16:11, NIV)*

- A life-changing doctrine...
 - ▶ God is always **accessible**.
 - ▶ You are never **alone**.

The OMNISCIENCE of GOD

- God has all knowledge and all wisdom at all times.

*“Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who is perfect in knowledge?”
(Job 37:16, NIV)*

*“For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”
(1 John 3:20, NIV)*

- God possesses **perfect** knowledge.
 - ▶ He knows Himself perfectly.
 - ▶ He knows all things perfectly.
 - + All things **actual**.

*“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare
before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”
(Hebrews 4:13, NIV)*

- + All things possible.

*“Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am
God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient
times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”
(Isaiah 46:9-10, NIV)*

- God knows everything at every **moment**.
 - ▶ God never **learns**.
 - ▶ God never discovers.
 - ▶ God never **forgets**.

*““I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions,
for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”
(Isaiah 43:25, NIV)*

- ▶ God never **ponders**.
- ▶ God is never **surprised** or amazed.
- ▶ God simply **knows**.
- The humbling, terrifying, glorious truth: God knows **us** completely.

“O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”

(Psalm 139:1-6, NIV)

“That God knows each person through and through can be a cause of shaking fear to the man that has something to hide – some unforsaken sin, some secret crime committed against man or God....[But] to us who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us in the Gospel, how unutterably sweet is the knowledge that our Heavenly Father knows us completely. No talebearer can inform on us, no enemy can make an accusation stick; no forgotten skeleton can come tumbling out of some hidden closet to abash us and expose our past; no unsuspected weakness in our characters can come to light to turn God away from us, since He knew us utterly before we knew Him and called us to Himself in the full knowledge of everything that was against us.”

—A.W. Tozer

- Because God is **wise**, He always accomplishes the best purposes through the best means.

“To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.”

(Job 12:13, NIV)

“How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.”

(Psalm 104:24, NIV)

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”

(Romans 11:33, NIV)

“To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

(Romans 16:27, NIV)

- Two foundations for trust...
 - ▶ God has perfect wisdom.
 - ▶ God has total **power**.
- The limited wisdom of man...
 - ▶ We lack **knowledge**.
 - ▶ We lack perspective.
 - ▶ We lack **experience**.
- The unlimited wisdom of God...
 - ▶ God has **perfect** knowledge.
 - ▶ God has **eternal** perspective.
 - ▶ God has **infinite** experience.
- The way of wisdom...

▶ Pray with **confidence**.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”

(James 1:5-7, NIV)

“To believe actively that our Heavenly Father constantly spreads around us providential circumstances that work for our present good and our everlasting well-being brings to the soul a veritable benediction. Most of us go through life praying a little, planning a little, jockeying for position, hoping but never being quite certain of anything, and always secretly afraid that we will miss the way. This is a tragic waste of truth and never gives rest to the heart. There is a better way. It is to repudiate our own wisdom and take instead the infinite wisdom of God. Our insistence upon seeing ahead is natural enough, but it is a real hindrance to our spiritual progress. God has charged himself with full responsibility for our eternal happiness and stands ready to take over the management of our lives the moment we turn in faith to him.”

—A.W. Tozer

▶ Cling to the **cross**.

“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.” Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.”

(1 Corinthians 1:17-25, NIV)

“It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”

(1 Corinthians 1:30, NIV)

▶ Trust in the **Father**.

““Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

(Luke 11:11-13, NIV)

“With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack?”

The IMMUTABILITY of GOD

■ Four truths...

▶ God's perfections are unchanging.

“He also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”

(Hebrews 1:10-12, NIV)

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

(Hebrews 13:8, NIV)

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

(James 1:17, NIV)

“I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.”

(Malachi 3:6, NIV)

▶ God's purposes are unchanging.

“The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”

(Psalm 33:10-11, NIV)

“Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.

What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.”

(Isaiah 46:9-11, NIV)

▶ God's promises are unchanging.

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

(Isaiah 40:8, NIV)

“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

(Numbers 23:19, NIV)

“I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.

Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—and I will not lie to David—that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky.”

(Psalm 89:34-37, NIV)

- ▶ God's plan is **unfolding**.
- Four conclusions...
 - ▶ God does not change in His **reign** over us.
 - ▶ God does change in His **relationship** to us.
 - ▶ God involves us in His plan.
 - ▶ God **uses** us to accomplish His purposes.

The GREATNESS of GOD

- God, deliver us from **feeble** faith.
- God, deliver us from **flabby** worship.

“In my opinion, the great single need of the moment is that light-hearted superficial religionists be struck down with a vision of God high and lifted up, with his train filling the temple. The holy art of worship seems to have passed away like the Shekinah glory from the tabernacle. As a result, we are left to our own devices and forced to make up the lack of spontaneous worship by bringing in countless cheap and tawdry activities to hold the attention of the church people.”

—A.W. Tozer

The Attributes of God ~ Goodness

“They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”

(Psalm 145:7-9, NIV)

The GOODNESS of GOD

- Holiness
- Integrity
- Love
- Mercy/Grace
- Justice
- Wrath
- Jealousy

The HOLINESS of GOD

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.”

(Isaiah 6:1-4, NIV)

- Holy, holy, holy...
 - ▶ God is perfectly **unique**.

““There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”

(1 Samuel 2:2, NIV)

- ▶ God is completely separate.

““Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”

(Exodus 15:11, NIV)

- ▶ God is absolutely **pure**.
 - ✦ He is untouched by sin.

“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”

(Habakkuk 1:13, NIV)

*“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.”
For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.”
(James 1:13, NIV)*

- ✦ He is intolerable of sin.

*“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy;
without holiness no one will see the Lord.”
(Hebrews 12:14, NIV)*

■ God reveals His holiness...

- ▶ Through people.

*“Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for
our good, that we may share in his holiness.”
(Hebrews 12:10, NIV)*

- ▶ Through places.

*““Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are
standing is holy ground.” Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid
to look at God.”
(Exodus 3:5-6, NIV)*

*“ Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of
him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or
for our enemies?” “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have
now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What
message does my Lord have for his servant?” The commander of the Lord’s army replied,
“Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.”
(Joshua 5:13-15, NIV)*

*“For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I
live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive
the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”
(Isaiah 57:15, NIV)*

- ▶ Through the law.

*“I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not
make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. I am the Lord
who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.”
(Leviticus 11:44-45, NIV)*

- ▶ Through the prophets.

“In that day you will say: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.’

(Isaiah 12:4-6, NIV)

▶ Through His judgment.

“The Lord said to Joshua, ‘Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. ‘Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: That which is devoted is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it.’”

(Joshua 7:10-13, NIV)

“At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”

(Acts 5:10-11, NIV)

▶ Through His Son.

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.”

(Hebrews 4:15, NIV)

▶ Through His church.

“‘Therefore come out from them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,’ says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

(2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1, NIV)

The INTEGRITY of GOD

■ God's genuineness...

▶ God is true.

“They are all senseless and foolish; they are taught by worthless wooden idols. Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz. What the craftsman and goldsmith have made is then dressed in blue and purple—all made by skilled workers. But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot

endure his wrath. “Tell them this: ‘These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.’” But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses. Everyone is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. His images are a fraud; they have no breath in them. They are worthless, the objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish. He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including Israel, the tribe of his inheritance—the Lord Almighty is his name.”
(Jeremiah 10:8-16, NIV)

- God’s veracity...
 - ▶ God always **tells** the truth.

“He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.”
(1 Samuel 15:29, NIV)

““Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”
(Proverbs 30:5, NIV)

- God’s faithfulness...
 - ▶ He always **proves** true.

“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”
(Numbers 23:19, NIV)

“The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:24, NIV)

- Implications of God’s Integrity...
 - ▶ God is the final standard of **truth**.
 - ▶ Because God is true, His Word is trustworthy.
 - ▶ We are **imitators** of God’s integrity...
 - ✦ Loving truth.
 - ✦ Hating falsehood.

“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
(Exodus 20:16, NIV)

“The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.”
(Proverbs 12:22, NIV)

The LOVE of GOD

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”

(1 John 4:16, NIV)

■ God eternally gives and shares **Himself**.

- ▶ God's love **exists** in Himself.

"The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands."

(John 3:35, NIV)

"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

(John 17:24, NIV)

- ▶ God's love initiates with Himself.

"The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

(Deuteronomy 7:7-8, NIV)

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

(Romans 5:6-10, NIV)

o God's love **centers** on Himself.

"But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

(Isaiah 43:1-7, NIV)

■ The demonstration of God's love...

- ▶ He **pursues** His people.

"The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent."

(Exodus 33:11, NIV)

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

(John 15:15-16, NIV)

- ▶ He provides for His people.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

(John 3:16, NIV)

- ▶ He protects His people.

“The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing. The sorrows for the appointed feasts I will remove from you; they are a burden and a reproach to you.”

(Zephaniah 3:17-18, NIV)

- ▶ He **persists** after His people.

“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.’”

(Exodus 34:6-7, NIV)

“But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”

(1 Timothy 1:16, NIV)

■ The effect of God’s love...

- ▶ We express love to God.

“Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’”

(Matthew 22:37, NIV)

- ▶ We **extend** love to others.

“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

(Matthew 22:39, NIV)

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one

than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.”
(John 15:12-17, NIV)

- ▶ God's love is always **evident** in His people.

“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.”
(1 John 2:9-11, NIV)

“We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”
(1 John 4:19-21, NIV)

The MERCY/GRACE of GOD

- God's love is demonstrated in His grace and mercy toward His people.
- The mercy of God is the love of God applied to our **suffering**.

“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”
(Micah 7:18-19, NIV)

- ▶ Tender compassion toward the needy.

“The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.”
(Exodus 3:7, NIV)

“As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”
(Matthew 9:27, NIV)

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
(Matthew 9:36, NIV)

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

(Hebrews 4:16, NIV)

- ▶ Strong comfort for the suffering.

“Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my cry for mercy.”

(Psalm 86:3-6, NIV)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”

(2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NIV)

- ▶ Deep **concern** for the hurting.

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other.’”

(Zechariah 7:9-10, NIV)

“Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”

(Jude 21-23, NIV)

■ The grace of God is God’s love applied to our **sin**.

- ▶ God’s goodness toward those who **deserve** only punishment.

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

(1 Peter 5:10-11, NIV)

- ▶ God’s riches at Christ’s expense (GRACE).
- ▶ Involves no **merit** in us.
- ▶ Involves no **compensation** from us.
- ▶ Grace is the source of our salvation.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

(Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV)

- ▶ Grace is the motive behind our salvation.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the

creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.”

(Ephesians 1:3-8, NIV)

- ▶ Grace is the **guarantee** of our salvation.

“Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.”

(Romans 4:16, NIV)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

(1 Peter 1:3-5, NIV)

- The grace and mercy of God...

- ▶ **Eternal.**

“We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers,”

(1 Timothy 1:9, NIV)

- ▶ Free.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

(Romans 3:23-24, NIV)

- ▶ **Sovereign.**

“And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

(Exodus 33:19, NIV)

The JUSTICE of GOD

- God administers His kingdom in accordance with His **law**.

“Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm.”

(Isaiah 51:4-5, NIV)

- ▶ He is always **fair**.

“For God does not show favoritism.”

(Romans 2:11, NIV)

- ▶ He is always **right**.

“He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just.

A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”

(Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV)

■ The judgment of God is...

- ▶ **Authoritative.**

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.”

(John 5:24-27, NIV)

- ▶ Eternal.

“When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.”

(Psalm 73:16-17, NIV)

- ▶ **Irreversible.**

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

(Revelation 20:11-15, NIV)

■ Justice and other attributes...

- ▶ Love without justice is mere **sentimentality**.
- ▶ Omnipotence without justice is plain brutality.
- ▶ Love, justice, and omnipotence together are glorious **reality**.

■ We are recipients of His justice...

“God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

(Romans 3:25-26, NIV)

- ▶ At the cross, God shows Himself to be **just**.
- ▶ At the cross, God shows Himself to be **justifier**.
- We are imitators of His justice...

*“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”*

(Micah 6:8, NIV)

“Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”

(Amos 5:22-24, NIV)

The WRATH of GOD

“All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.”

(2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, NIV)

- God intensely hates all **sin**.

“You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

(Psalm 45:7, NIV)

“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”

(Habakkuk 1:13, NIV)

- God intensely hates all **sinner**s.

“The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors.”

(Psalm 5:5-6, NIV)

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”

(Ephesians 2:1-3, NIV)

- Wrath and other attributes...
 - ▶ Love without wrath is indifferent.
 - ▶ Justice without wrath is ineffective.
 - ▶ Love, justice and wrath together are **indescribable**.

*“To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—
Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”*

(1 Thessalonians 1:10, NIV)

- ✦ We deserved the wrath of God.
- ✦ Jesus **satisfied** the wrath of God.
- ✦ We are saved from the wrath of God.

- God’s wrath is a motivation for...
 - ▶ Our purity.

“These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the Lord.

(Zechariah 8:16-17, NIV)

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

(Colossians 3:5-10, NIV)

- ▶ Our **evangelism**.

“I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.”

(Romans 9:1-5, NIV)

- ▶ Our worship.
- ✦ As unbelievers, we should fear God in His wrath.

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”
(John 3:36, NIV)

- ✦ As believers, we should **exalt** God in His wrath.

“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”
(Romans 5:9-11, NIV)

The JEALOUSY of GOD

- God is deeply committed to His **glory**.

“You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,”
(Exodus 20:5, NIV)

“For my own name’s sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off. See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.”
(Isaiah 48:9-11, NIV)

- ▶ He is supremely secure.
- ▶ He is supremely satisfying.
- God is deeply committed to our **good**.
- ▶ His jealousy brings great comfort: He will **protect** us.

“Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people. The Lord will reply to them: “I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.”
(Joel 2:18-19, NIV)

“The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies.”
(Nahum 1:2, NIV)

- ▶ His jealousy brings great hope: He will **keep** us.

“Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.”
(Ezekiel 39:25-29, NIV)

- ▶ His jealousy breeds great worship: He will **allure** us.

“Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”
(Exodus 34:14, NIV)

“So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands. I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts. I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them. I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot,” declares the Lord. “Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. “In that day,” declares the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’”
(Hosea 2:10-16, NIV)

■ Because God is jealous...

- ▶ We must be **zealous** for His glory.
- ▶ We must be zealous for our good.

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”
(Revelation 3:14-21, NIV)

The Mysteries of God

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”
(Deuteronomy 29:29, NIV)

“Left to ourselves we tend immediately to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him. We want a God we can in some measure control. We need the feeling of security that comes from knowing what God is like, and what He is like is of course a compose of all the religious pictures we have seen, all the best people we have known or heard about, and all the sublime ideas we have entertained. If all this sounds strange to modern ears, it is only because we have for a full half century taken God for granted. The glory of God has not been revealed to this generation of men.”
—A.W. Tozer

“Because all Christian doctrines relate to God who is ultimately beyond our comprehension, there will inevitably be some element of mystery, or transcendence, that cannot be reduced to human understanding. Nonetheless, within these limits the theological effort must be carried on.”
—J. Rodman Williams

“Man with all his shrewdness is as stupid about understanding by himself the mysteries of God, as [a donkey] is incapable of understanding musical harmony.”
—John Calvin

“So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”
(1 Corinthians 4:1-2, NIV)

VOCABULARY...

- **Contradiction:**
 - ▶ A condition in which at least two things are truly contrary to each other.
- **Paradox:**
 - ▶ A correlation that appears to be a contradiction or even absurd, but when closely examined, it proves to be true.
- **Antinomy:**
 - ▶ A combination of two thoughts or principles, each of which is true in its own right but which we cannot harmonize.
- **Mystery:**
 - ▶ An assumed truth which the human mind cannot comprehend, but which we accept by faith.

MYSTERIES OF GOD...

- The Trinity

- The Sovereign Will of God
- God and Evil

The Trinity

“To meditate on the three Persons of the Godhead is to walk in thought through the garden eastward in Eden and to tread on holy ground. Our sincerest effort to grasp the incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity must remain forever futile, and only by deepest reverence can it be saved from actual presumption.”

—A.W. Tozer

Three Foundational Truths...

- God is three persons.

- ▶ Scripture refers to God with plural pronouns.

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

(Genesis 1:26-27, NIV)

“Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”
(Genesis 11:7, NIV)

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*
(Isaiah 6:8, NIV)

- ▶ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are persons.
 - ✦ Is the Holy Spirit a person or a power?

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”
(John 16:13-14, NIV)

- ✦ The Spirit teaches.

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”
(John 14:26, NIV)

- ✦ The Spirit testifies.

“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

(Romans 8:16, NIV)

- The Spirit intercedes.

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

(Romans 8:26-27, NIV)

- The Spirit **searches**.

“The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.”

(1 Corinthians 2:10, NIV)

- The Spirit knows.

“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

(1 Corinthians 2:11, NIV)

- The Spirit gives gifts.

“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”

(1 Corinthians 12:11, NIV)

- The Spirit **speaks**.

“The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

(Acts 8:29, NIV)

- The Spirit is grieved.

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

(Ephesians 4:30, NIV)

- ▶ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are **distinct**.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

(Matthew 3:16-18, NIV)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
(Matthew 28:19, NIV)

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”
(Ephesians 4:4-7, NIV)

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”
(1 Peter 1:1-2, NIV)

- ♦ The Son is distinguished from the Father.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.”
(John 1:1-2, NIV)

- ♦ The Spirit is distinguished from the Son.

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”
(John 14:26, NIV)

- ♦ The Father is distinguished from the Spirit.

“And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”
(Romans 8:27, NIV)

- Each person is **fully** God.
 - ▶ God the Father is fully God.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
(Genesis 1:1, NIV)

“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”
(Matthew 6:26, NIV)

“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”
(Matthew 6:30, NIV)

- ▶ God the **Son** is fully God.

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(Philippians 2:5-11, NIV)

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

(Hebrews 1:3, NIV)

*“While we wait for the blessed hope—
the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,”*

(Titus 2:13, NIV)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”

(John 1:1-4, NIV)

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

(John 8:58, NIV)

“Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

(John 20:28, NIV)

▶ God the **Spirit** is fully God.

“Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.”

(Acts 5:3-4, NIV)

✦ The Spirit is omnipresent.

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”

(Psalm 139:7-8, NIV)

- ♦ The Spirit is omniscient.

“The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”
(1 Corinthians 2:10-11, NIV)

- There is **one** God.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”
(Deuteronomy 6:4-5, NIV)

“I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is no other.”
(Isaiah 45:5-6, NIV)

Three Additional Notes...

- The Trinity is not a **contradiction**.
 - ▶ God’s threeness and oneness are **different**.
 - ▶ A contradiction: “God is one and not one.”
 - ▶ A mystery: “God is one in three.”
- The Trinity is **eternal**.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”
(Genesis 1:1-2, NIV)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.
(Colossians 1:15-16, NIV)

- ▶ The Father has always been and always will be God.
- ▶ The Son has always been and always will be God.
- ▶ The Spirit has always been and always will be God.
- The persons of the Trinity have different **functions**.
 - ▶ At times, the Son is functionally (not essentially!) subordinate to the Father.

“Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the

Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.”
(John 5:19-23, NIV)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore “God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
(Philippians 2:5-11, NIV)

- ▶ At times the Son is functionally (not essentially!) **dependent** on the Spirit.

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert...”
(Luke 4:1, NIV)

- ▶ Consider creation...
 - ✦ God the Father is speaking.
 - ✦ God the Son is implementing.
 - ✦ God the Spirit is hovering.
- ▶ Consider salvation...
 - ✦ God the Father plans.
 - ✦ God the Son **obeys**.
 - ✦ God the Spirit applies.
- ▶ Consider the difference...
 - ✦ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in their attributes.
 - ✦ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different in their **relationships**.

Three Dangerous Heresies...

- **Modalism**—Denial of the first foundational truth.
 - ▶ Instead of three distinct persons, God has three distinct modes.
 - ▶ God wears three different **masks**.
 - ▶ Problems...
 - ✦ Denies the relationships within the Trinity.
 - ✦ Ignores the separation of persons in Scripture.
 - ✦ Undercuts the doctrine of the **atonement**.
- **Arianism**—Denial of the second foundational truth.
 - ▶ Denies the full deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - ▶ Claims the Son is **inferior** in essence to the Father.
 - ▶ Contemporary Arianism...
 - ✦ A core distinction between Christianity and Islam.
 - ✦ A core distinction between Christianity and cults.
- **Polytheism**—Denial of the third foundational truth.

- ▶ The worship of more than one god.

“Gather together and come; assemble, you fugitives from the nations. Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save. Declare what is to be, present it— let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. ‘Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.’”

(Isaiah 45:20-22, NIV)

“From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, ‘Save me; you are my god.’ They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand.”

(Isaiah 44:17-18, NIV)

“Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’ Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’ Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it. But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.”

(Habakkuk 2:18-20, NIV)

Three Practical Conclusions...

- Our God is **worthy**.
 - ▶ It is appropriate to worship the Father.
 - ▶ It is appropriate to worship the Son.
 - ▶ It is appropriate to worship the Spirit.
- Our mind is **finite**.
 - ▶ The Trinity is divinely revealed, not humanly constructed.
 - ▶ The Trinity is incomprehensible.
 - ▶ Any analogy is **insufficient**.
 - ▶ Can we know the doctrine of the Trinity exhaustively? **No**.
 - ▶ Can we know the doctrine of the Trinity truly? **Absolutely**.

*“Love and faith are at home in the mystery of the Godhead.
Let reason kneel in reverence outside.”*

—A.W. Tozer

- Our salvation is **secure**.
 - ▶ We are not saved by a **creature**; we are saved by the Creator.
 - ▶ The One who saves us completely is completely God.

The Trinity...

“Try to explain it, and you’ll lose your mind;

but try to deny it, and you'll lose your soul."

The Sovereign Will of God

“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will...”
(Ephesians 1:11, NIV)

The Providence of God...

- God is continually acting to sustain all things and guide all things according to His plan.
- Two facets involved in God’s providence...
 - ▶ **Preservation:** God is sustaining...
 - ▶ **Sovereignty:** God is guiding...
- Three contexts affected by God’s providence...
 - ▶ Cosmically.
 - ▶ Corporately.
 - ▶ **Personally.**
- Four dead ends regarding God’s providence...
 - ▶ **Deism.**
 - ▶ Pantheism.
 - ▶ Fatalism.
 - ▶ Process and **Open** Theism.

Preservation: God is sustaining all things...

- God sustains any properties in anything.
- God sustains any **predictability** in anything.
- Preservation in the Old Testament...

“Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O Lord, you preserve both man and beast.”
(Psalm 36:6, NIV)

“How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number— living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there. These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.”
(Psalm 104:24-30, NIV)

“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.”
(Nehemiah 9:6, NIV)

- Preservation in the New Testament...

*'For in him we live and move and have our being,'
As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'
(Acts 17:28, NIV)*

*"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."
(Colossians 1:17-20, NIV)*

*"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."
(Hebrews 1:3, NIV)*

Sovereignty: God is guiding all things according to His plan.

■ God has a plan.

*"Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone."
(Isaiah 37:26, NIV)*

*"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."
(Proverbs 16:9, NIV)*

- ▶ Nothing happens apart from God's **activity**.
- ▶ Nothing happens accidentally.

■ The plan of God is **eternal**.

*"Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."
(Psalm 139:16, NIV)*

*"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."
(Ephesians 1:4, NIV)*

- ▶ His plan is not chronological.
- ▶ His plan is not changeable.

■ The plan of God is **purposeful**.

- ▶ God's motivation is His glory.

"Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you

from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth— everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.
(Isaiah 43:5-7, NIV)

"For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."
(Colossians 1:16, NIV)

- ▶ Our salvation is for His glory.

"For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off. See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another."
(Isaiah 48:9-11, NIV)

"He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."
(Ephesians 1:5-6, NIV)

- The plan of God is **universal**.
 - ▶ He is sovereign over all nature.

"After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.'"
(1 Kings 18:1, NIV)

"That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"
(Mark 4:35-41, NIV)

- ♦ Plants and **animals**.

*He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:*
(Psalm 104:14, NIV)

"Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?"

(Job 38:39-41, NIV)

- ♦ Animate objects and inanimate objects.

“He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth,’ and to the rain shower, ‘Be a mighty downpour.’ So that all men he has made may know his work, he stops every man from his labor. The animals take cover; they remain in their dens. The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them. He brings the clouds to punish men, or to water his earth and show his love.”

(Job 37:6-13, NIV)

- ▶ He is sovereign over all nations.

“He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them.”

(Job 12:23, NIV)

“All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.”

(Psalm 22:27-28, NIV)

- ▶ He is sovereign over all our days.

“Man’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.”

(Job 14:5, NIV)

“But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.”

(Psalm 31:14-15, NIV)

- ▶ He is sovereign over all our actions.

“I know, O Lord, that a man’s life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.”

(Jeremiah 10:23, NIV)

“Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

(James 4:13-15, NIV)

- ▶ He is sovereign over all our successes and failures.

“No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.”

(Psalm 75:6-7, NIV)

“He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.”
(Luke 1:52, NIV)

- ▶ He is sovereign over all our gifts and talents.

“He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.”
(Psalm 18:34, NIV)

“For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”
(1 Corinthians 4:7, NIV)

- ▶ He is sovereign over all our suffering.

“So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”
(1 Peter 4:19, NIV)

■ The plan of God is effectual.

“The LORD Almighty has sworn, “Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.”
(Isaiah 14:24, NIV)

“For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?”
(Isaiah 14:27, NIV)

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.”
(Isaiah 46:10-11, NIV)

“And said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—”
(Acts 1:16, NIV)

■ The plan of God is willful.

- ▶ God does what He wills.

“Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?”
(Isaiah 40:13-14, NIV)

- ▶ But God wills different things in different ways.
- ▶ The question: Are there two wills in God?

“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.”
(Isaiah 53:10, NIV)

“This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.”
(Acts 2:23, NIV)

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”
(2 Peter 3:9, NIV)

- ▶ God’s **necessary** will and free will...
- ▶ God’s necessary will—His nature.

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”
(Exodus 3:14, NIV)

- ▶ God’s free will—His actions.

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”
(Revelation 4:11, NIV)

- ▶ God’s **revealed** will and secret will...

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”
(Deuteronomy 29:29, NIV)

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”
(Genesis 50:20, NIV)

“This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”
(1 Timothy 2:3-4, NIV)

- ▶ God’s revealed will: What He **declares**.
- ▶ God’s secret will: What He **decrees**.

“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

(Psalm 139:16, NIV)

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

(Ephesians 1:4, NIV)

“Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.”

(Acts 4:27-28, NIV)

■ The plan of God is **compatible**.

- ▶ God is sovereign and man is responsible.

“But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.’”

(Genesis 50:19-20, NIV)

- ▶ God is **in charge**.

“Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”

(Romans 9:11-18, NIV)

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

(John 15:16, NIV)

- ▶ We are making **choices**.

- ✦ Our choices are certain, not necessary.
 - Necessary choices **must** happen.
 - We cannot act in a way contrary to God’s plan.
 - Certain choices **will** happen.
 - We will not act in a way contrary to God’s plan.
- ✦ Our choices are completely **real**, but not completely free.

“This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.”

(Acts 2:23, NIV)

- ✦ Our choices have real **consequences** with real responsibility.
 - We are naturally responsible to God.
 - We are **morally** responsible to God.
 - We are intellectually responsible to God.
 - We are **ultimately** responsible to God.
- ▶ The compatible plan of God in Scripture...

*“Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy.
(Leviticus 20:7-8, NIV)*

*“Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations. ‘Are not my commanders all kings?’ he says. ‘Has not Calno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus? As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria—shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?’” When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, “I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. For he says: ‘By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings.”
(Isaiah 10:5-13, NIV)*

*“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”
(John 6:37-40, NIV)*

*“When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.”
(Acts 13:48, NIV)*

*“One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.”
(Acts 18:9-11, NIV)*

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

(Philippians 2:12-13, NIV)

“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.’ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”

(Acts 4:23-31, NIV)

- The plan of God is **beneficial**.

“He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”

(Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV)

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

(Romans 8:28, NIV)

Practical Implications of God’s Sovereign Will...

- How shall we live in light of the revealed will of God?
 - ▶ **Pray** for the accomplishment of His revealed will.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

(James 5:16, NIV)

“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

(Matthew 6:9-13, NIV)

- ▶ **Proclaim** the Gospel according to His revealed will.

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

(Romans 10:12-15, NIV)

■ How shall we live in light of the secret will of God?

- ▶ Face the past **redemptively**.

“This is what the Lord says—he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.”

(Isaiah 43:16-21, NIV)

- ▶ Face the present **confidently redemptively**.
 - ✦ The sovereignty of God gives peace.

“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

(Psalm 4:8, NIV)

- ✦ The sovereignty of God gives **joy**.

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV)

- ✦ The sovereignty of God gives hope.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

(1 Peter 1:6-8, NIV)

- ▶ Face the future **hopefully**.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

(Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV)

God and Evil

The Problem of Evil...

“Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, and does not want to, he is wicked. But, if God both can and wants to abolish evil, then how comes evil in the world?”

—Epicurus, 4th Century philosopher

- A problem involving three concepts...
 - ▶ The **greatness** of God.
 - ▶ The **goodness** of God.
 - ▶ The presence of evil.
- The Greatness of God:
 - ▶ If God is great, then He is able to **prevent** evil.
- The Goodness of God:
 - ▶ If God is good, then He will not **permit** evil to occur.
- The Presence of Evil:
 - ▶ **Natural** evil exists.
 - ▶ **Moral** evil exists.
 - ✦ Caused by us.
 - ✦ Caused by others.

Insufficient Answers...

- Atheism:
 - ▶ Evil does not **exist**.
 - ✦ The existence of evil points to the existence of God.
 - ✦ If God does not exist, then good and evil do not exist.

“In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no other good. Nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.”

—Richard Dawkins of Oxford, Avowed Atheist

- Christian Science:
 - ▶ Evil is illusory.
- New Age:
 - ▶ Evil is the result of ignorance.
- Dualism:
 - ▶ God/Good and Evil are two forces, equal in **power** and opposite in purpose.
- Fatalism:
 - ▶ A blind fate determines the depth of evil in our lives.
- Process and Open Theism:
 - ▶ God hates evil but has **no** power to do anything about it.

The Biblical Answer...

- The Greatness of God: GOD **OVER** EVIL.
- The Goodness of God: GOD **BEHIND** EVIL.
- The Presence of Evil: GOD **AMIDST** EVIL.

GOD OVER EVIL...

- God is sovereign over evil nations and rulers.

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

(Daniel 2:20-21, NIV)

- God is sovereign over **demons** and evil spirits.

“When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won’t torture me!” For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you evil spirit!” Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.”

(Mark 5:6-10, NIV)

*“And though this world with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.*

*The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;*

*His rage we can endure,
For lo! His doom is sure;*

One little word will fell him.”

—Martin Luther

- God is sovereign over **temptations** we face.

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

(Luke 22:31-32, NIV)

- God is sovereign over suffering and **persecution**.

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

(1 Peter 5:8-9, NIV)

- God is sovereign over natural **disasters**.

“The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them. He brings the clouds to punish men, or to water his earth and show his love. ‘Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God’s wonders.’”
(Job 37:10-14, NIV)

- God is sovereign over sickness and **disease**.

“...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”
(Acts 10:38, NIV)

- God is sovereign over **death**.

“See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.”
(Deuteronomy 32:39, NIV)

GOD BEHIND EVIL...

- God relates to sin variably.
 - ▶ He **prevents** sin.

“Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her.’”
(Genesis 20:6, NIV)

“Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.”
(Psalm 19:13, NIV)

- ▶ He permits sin.

“But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.”
(Psalm 81:11-12, NIV)

“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of

God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.”
(Romans 1:24-28, NIV)

▶ He **directs** sin.

“But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.’”
(Genesis 50:19-20, NIV)

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
(Acts 2:36, NIV)

▶ He limits sin.

“The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.”
(Job 1:12, NIV)

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”
(1 Corinthians 10:13, NIV)

▶ He never **directly** causes sin.

“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”
(James 1:13-15, NIV)

- ✦ God never sins in Scripture.
- ✦ God is never **blamed** for sin in Scripture.

■ God relates to good and evil asymmetrically (in **different** ways).

- ▶ God behind good...
 - ✦ All that is good is under His sovereignty.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”
(Psalm 107:1, NIV)

“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”
(1 John 1:5, NIV)

“Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?’”
(Ezekiel 33:11, NIV)

“For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.”
(Lamentations 3:31-33, NIV)

- All that is good is morally chargeable to **Him**.

*“He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”*
(Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV)

*“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the
Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”*
(James 1:17, NIV)

*“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands,
no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is
no one who does good, not even one.’”*
(Romans 3:10-12, NIV)

- ▶ God behind evil...

- All that is evil is under His sovereignty.

*“To crush underfoot all prisoners in the land, to deny a man his rights before the Most
High, to deprive a man of justice— would not the Lord see such things? Who can speak
and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most
High that both calamities and good things come?”*
(Lamentations 3:34-38, NIV)

*“The Lord said to Moses, ‘When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh
all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he*

will not let the people go. Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, 'Let my son go, so he may worship me.' But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'"
(Exodus 4:21-23, NIV)

"For it was the Lord himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the Lord had commanded Moses."
(Joshua 11:20, NIV)

"If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death."
(1 Samuel 2:25, NIV)

"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.' In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."
(Job 1:20-22, NIV)

"I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things."
(Isaiah 45:7, NIV)

- ♦ All that is evil is **not** morally chargeable to Him.

"But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig's blood, and whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol. They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; so I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me."
(Isaiah 66:3-4, NIV)

"One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?
(Romans 9:19-21, NIV)

- ▶ Remember the **compatible** plan of God...
 - ♦ God is **in control**.
 - ♦ We make **choices**.

"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man

was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."
(Acts 2:22-24, NIV)

GOD AMIDST EVIL...

- The picture of Job:
 - ▶ See my goodness: I am **with you**.
 - ✦ What we need is not an answer; we need an Answerer.
 - ✦ What we need is not a philosophical argument; we need a **Person**.
 - ▶ See my greatness: I am **in control**.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
(Romans 8:28, NIV)

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."
—C.S. Lewis

"For it is often the case, as all the saints know, that fellowship with the Father and the Son is most vivid and sweet, and Christian joy is greatest, when the cross is heaviest."
—J.I. Packer

"Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful, with particular satisfaction. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my seventy five years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has been through affliction and not through happiness, whether pursued or attained... This, of course, is what the Cross signifies. And it is the Cross, more than anything else, that has called me inexorably to Christ."
—Malcolm Muggeridge

- The picture of the cross:
 - ▶ See my goodness: I am with you.
 - ▶ See my greatness: I am in control.
 - ✦ Evil is **temporary**.
 - ✦ God is **ultimate**.

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who

loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “

(Romans 8:31-39, NIV)

“No matter how deep our darkness, he is deeper still.”

—Corrie Ten Boom

“He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase
To added affliction, he addeth his mercy
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace
When we have exhausted our store of endurance
When our strength has failed and the day’s half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father’s own giving has only begun
His love has no limit
His grace has no measure
His power has no boundaries known unto men
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.”

—Annie Johnston Flynt, Hymn Writer

■ The picture of eternity:

- ▶ We will forever **worship** God in His greatness.
- ▶ We will forever **enjoy** God in His goodness.
- ▶ We will **never** experience evil again.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

(Revelation 21:1-7, NIV)

Recommended Reading

If you are interested in exploring the doctrine of God or specific topics from this evening's Secret Church further, the following resources are recommended. Many of these resources were foundational for the truths we explored in our study. Please note, however, that though these books are recommended, Dr. Platt does not necessarily agree with everything written in every one of them. We urge you to read and learn from these books, but at the same time, be wise in your reading to discern good teaching from men's opinions.

- Knowing God...
 - ▶ J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Highly Recommended!)
 - ▶ A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Highly Recommended!)
- Thick Theology Books...
 - ▶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Highly Recommended!)
 - ▶ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*
 - ▶ John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him*
 - ▶ John Frame, *The Doctrine of God*
 - ▶ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*
- The Names of God...
 - ▶ Ken Hemphill, *The Names of God*
 - ▶ David Wilkerson, *Knowing God By Name*
 - ▶ Kay Arthur, *Lord, I Want To Know You*
- Attributes of God...
 - ▶ A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy* (Highly Recommended!)
 - ▶ Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*
 - ▶ Chip Ingram, *God As He Longs For You To See Him*
 - ▶ D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*
 - ▶ Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*
- The Trinity...
 - ▶ Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*
 - ▶ Millard Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity*
 - ▶ James R. White, *The Forgotten Trinity*
- The Sovereign Will of God...
 - ▶ Thomas Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, *Still Sovereign*
 - ▶ James Boice, *Our Sovereign God*
 - ▶ Bruce A. Ware, *God's Greater Glory*
 - ▶ Bruce A. Ware, *Their God is Too Small*
- God and Evil...
 - ▶ D.A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil* (Highly Recommended!)
 - ▶ John Piper and Justin Taylor, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*
 - ▶ John Stackhouse, *Can God Be Trusted?*

About the Teacher

Dr. David Platt, 29, is deeply devoted to Christ and His Word. David's first love in ministry is disciple-making—the simple Biblical model of teaching God's Word, mentoring others and sharing faith. He has traveled extensively to teach the Bible and church leaders throughout the United States and around the world. Atlanta natives, he and his wife, Heather, made their home in New Orleans until they were displaced by flooding following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

A life-long learner, David has earned two undergraduate and three advanced degrees. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (A.B.J.) from the University of Georgia, and a Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Master of Theology (Th.M.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has previously served at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary as Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Expository Preaching and Apologetics, and as Staff Evangelist at Edgewater Baptist Church in New Orleans.

David holds a deep and abiding passion for global disciple-making. "I believe that God has uniquely created every one of His people to impact the world. Some may count it as idealistic, but I believe it is thoroughly biblical, rooted in Psalm 67:1-2, yet covering Scripture from beginning to end. God is in the business of blessing His people so that His ways and His salvation might be made known among all people." David practices what he preaches through his travel nationally and internationally, teaching from God's Word in churches, seminaries, the underground church or even under a shade tree in Africa or Latin America.

David and Heather have been married for nearly nine years. They are the parents of two sons, Caleb (2) and Joshua (born December 2007).

