



Our Good God

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By Jerry D. Ousley

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OUR GOOD GOD - INTRODUCTION

The study of God is properly called "Theology." It is the study of what the Bible teaches us about God Himself. Of course, we'll really never know fully the things about God until we get to Heaven in a glorified body and finally see Him face to face. I'm glad, however, that He chose to show us some things about Himself.

It is not my practice to try to prove God aside from the Bible, however, there are proofs that do not teach deep things about God's personality, but do show that there must be a "Higher Power." It is good to know why we believe in God, not just so we can be ready to defend that belief when challenged, but also to reassure ourselves in times of need and doubt. The Apostle Paul wrote: ***"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse . . . "*** (Romans 1:19-20). There is enough evidence in nature to prove the existence of God.

The universe testifies of a Creator. The more we learn about this vast universe in which we live, the more I am convinced of God's awesome power at work. The way the planets, moon, solar systems, and galaxies orbit with such precision must have a Master Planner.

The design of all things points to a Creator. Look at the way even the smallest one-celled creature functions. It is amazing that it is alive. Life must indeed come from God.

The nature of man and his conscience point to a Creator. As we touched on in the study of the Word, man must worship

something. Even those who profess to believe in no god do so in such a way that it becomes a religion to them.

History points to God. There are numerous accounts throughout history by noted individuals that testify of God's intervention during the ages. Even the story of the flood is substantiated by the accounts of vast floods in the history of many cultures.

And, finally, universal belief testifies of God. The idea of a God, though sometimes grotesque and perverted, permeates every culture. Man is aware of a need for a "Higher Power." The sad part of it is that man stops short in his search for God and becomes satisfied with a false theology.

The key to knowing God is to continually search. We should never graduate from the School of HIGHER LEARNING. This is the school of life and in it we should be continually searching for God. As we do, we will discover the truth. Jesus said, ***"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*** (Luke 11:9). As we continually ask, seek, and knock, it will be revealed to us. It's when we stop doing these things that we get into trouble. There may be many experts today on different subjects and there are those who know a lot about God but there is not a man alive today who knows everything there is to know about God. A wise man will be quick to acknowledge this. We are all students of God and graduation day is the day we go to Heaven (and even that may be the day we just graduate to the next school). It is good to know about erroneous views of God so we can resist the temptation of falling into the enticing snares of these beliefs.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF GOD

Let's look at some erroneous views of God:

AGNOSTICISM

This teaching denies the human ability to know God by stating that "the finite mind cannot grasp the infinite." This statement does hold a certain amount of truth to it. In our human condition we cannot fully comprehend, but through Christ Jesus, God has made the way for us to apprehend. The Agnostic says that there is a God but that because of our inability to understand Him that He just goes generally on His way and leaves us to go generally on our way. However, a quick overview of the Word teaches against this almost immediately. God was always concerned about man. A Being as powerful as God could have just destroyed mankind when Adam fell to sin in the beginning. He could have simply created a new being to take Adam's place. But God loves us so much that He continued to give man chance after chance throughout history. He is still giving us chances and gave the ultimate chance through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ the Messiah.

POLYTHEISM

Polytheism is the belief in many gods. Listen again to the words from Romans 1: ***"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."*** (Romans 1:25). Mankind, in his effort to search for God has stopped short so many times as we talked about above. He looks to nature, and has served animals and God's creations more than the Creator Himself. It becomes a shortcut. Listen to an interesting story from the Word of God: ***"He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he***

strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isaiah 44:14-20). Do you see the ridiculousness of man in this passage? He plants a tree and waits for it to grow. When it is grown he cuts it down and burns part of it to warm himself, then cooks his food on it. Up to this point it is but a tool. Now, however, instead of looking beyond the tree for the Creator, man stops short and takes the rest of the tree and carves an idol out of it, then bows down to it to serve it. This sounds ridiculous but is true in so many cases.

Today we have children starving to death in India and other similar nations because of their belief in reincarnation. Even though food is walking around the streets of their cities, they will not kill and eat because it is believed to be another person reincarnated in a lower life form to pay penance for their life before. The devil sure has mankind deceived because even in his quest for God he fails God.

In Polytheism, many false gods are believed in. The Apostle Paul took advantage of the Greeks one time (see Acts 17). In Athens he had noticed all the statues dedicated to the many false gods of their religious system. To cover all the bases they had erected a statue to the "UNKNOWN GOD" just in case they missed one. This belief system is very superstitious and has been the belief in many ancient cultures. Most religious systems of today center around one god.

PANTHEISM

Pantheism teaches that all of nature is God. Today's New World Order teaches a belief that is a combination of pantheism and materialism. Of course this once again is refuted by Romans 1:25. Those who believe in this system have stopped short of the Creator and choose rather to worship the creation.

MATERIALISM

This belief states that there is no distinction between mind and matter but that all life, mind, and forces are only properties of matter. It also states that man is an animal and is therefore not responsible for his actions. Further it states that there is no good and evil. Can you see in this the erroneous teachings of the New World Order of today? They teach the same principles and condemn all who stand on the Word of God. Common sense tells us that this belief system cannot be true. Simple observation proves that life cannot come from dead matter. Intelligence and design in the universe completely contradicts this belief.

DEISM

This belief states that God exists, that He is the Creator, but that after creation He left the world to be governed by natural law without His Divine interference. God is separated from this world, this is true. Isaiah 6:1 tells us: *"In the year that king Uzziah died*

I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." In this passage, Isaiah saw a vision of God in Heaven. But the Bible also teaches us that His presence is in the Earth and He is near to man: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." (Acts 17:1). Also: "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:6). These scriptures show us that, even though the physical presence of God is in Heaven Spiritually He is with us right here on Earth.

THE NAMES OF GOD

Let's now take a look at the names the Bible uses in reference to God. God has many names because one name in man's languages is inadequate to fully describe Him. We can receive a new revelation of our God by knowing the meanings of the different titles for Him. It helps us to realize just how loving, protecting, and merciful He is to us. He is a good God to His people, not just a mean tyrant Who needs to be appeased.

ELOHIYM (See Genesis 1:1, 26-27)

This is the most commonly used name for God in the Old Testament. It has three forms:

EI - Which means "Strength" or "Strong One."

Elah - Which means "The Strong One to be Worshipped."

Elohiym - Again, this is the most commonly used word for God in the Old Testament. It means "The Strong, Faithful One." I am so glad that He is both strong and faithful. It is also interesting to note that this word for God is a plural word with a singular meaning. In other words, it well describes the trinity. God is three in one. (More about this later).

JEHOVAH (LORD)

It means "The Existing One." There are seven compound names for Jehovah:

1. **Jehovah-Jireh** "The Existing One Sees." Genesis 22:13-14 says, *"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen."* This scripture recites the incident when God had

told Abraham to sacrifice his long-awaited son, Isaac. Abraham was obedient to the command of God and at the last minute God spoke and told Abraham not to kill his son. He had seen that Abraham wouldn't withhold even his very one and only son. Then, God provided a ram in the bushes to sacrifice instead of Isaac. God sees and will provide accordingly.

2. **Jehovah-Rapha** "The Existing One Who Heals." Exodus 15:26 says, *"And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."* "The LORD that healeth" is literally a compound word. God promised the Israelites that if they would be obedient to Him that He would protect them from the diseases that He had allowed to come upon the Egyptians.

3. **Jehovah-Nissi** "The Existing One is my Banner." Exodus 17:8-16 relates the story that initiated this Name for God: *"Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the*

name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." The banner was the flag. It represented the entire cause and patriotic spirit through which the battle was fought. Moses was saying that God was his entire cause.

4. **Jehovah-Shalom** "The Existing One is my Peace." This was said by Gideon when the angel from God appeared to him at the threshing floor where he was called to be the deliverer of Israel: *"Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."* (Judges 6:24). God had given him peace about leading Israel against their oppressors.

5. **Jehovah-Ra'ah** "The Existing One is my Shepherd." This is found in Psalm 23:1, *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."* In the original language the word "is" does not appear. So the literal translation is "The Lord my Shepherd I shall not want." The shepherd cared for the sheep by keeping them safe, taking them to where they could have food and water, and loving them. David acknowledged God as both Jehovah and His Shepherd.

6. **Jehovah-Tsidkenu** "The Existing One is Our Righteousness." Jeremiah 23:6 says: *"In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."* In Isaiah we are told that our righteousness is just like filthy, dirty rags (Isaiah 64:6). So how can we ever hope to be righteous before God? Because the LORD is our Righteousness!

7. **Jehovah-Shammah** "The Existing One is There." Ezekiel was writing in prophecy what God was showing him. It was a vision of the City of God and in conjunction with it a new compound name for God emerged: *"It was round about eighteen*

thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there. (Ezekiel 48:35).

ADONI (Lord, Master)

This name for God is showing that He is the "boss" or He is in charge. We must acknowledge Him as the One in Charge. When used in reference to God in the Old Testament it is spelled with a capital "L" and small "ord" as opposed to Jehovah (LORD).

EL SHADAI (Almighty God)

In this name God is depicted as the "Almighty, Most Powerful." It is interesting to note that the verse also indicates that God is the Provider. In His might and power He sustains us. Genesis 49:25: ***"Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb . . . "***

EL ELYOWN (Most High)

God is shown as the highest Power or Highest Authority above all other authorities. Genesis 14:18-23 we are told the account of Melchizedek who was called the priest of the Most High God (El Elyown). In the same account we are given another name for God: EL Quanah (The Possessor). Being the Most High Power He is also the Possessor of all things. ***"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the***

possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich . . . "

EL OLAM (God the Everlasting)

"And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God." (Genesis 21:33). This name speaks of God's eternity (which we shall cover later). Here Abraham came to the realization that God was everlasting!

JEHOVAH ELOHIYM (LORD God)

It speaks of "The Existing One Who is Strong and Faithful." What a picture of God! He is eternal, powerful, strong, and will remain faithful to us. *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."* (Genesis 2:7-15). As God created He is called the LORD God (Jehovah Elohiym), the Eternal, Strong and Faithful One.

ADONAI JEHOVAH (Lord God)

"The Master Who is Strong and Faithful." Genesis 15:2: ***"And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?"*** Abraham is referring to God as his personal Master Who is the Strong Faithful One."

JEHOVAH TSABA (LORD of Hosts)

"The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psalm 46:7, 11). This name used for God paints the picture of The Strong and Faithful God Who is over Warrior Hosts. Indeed God is a Warrior of warriors. He is unbeatable and unstoppable. He has a great and mighty army in Heaven and in His true blood-bought Church He has an army that is about to rise! He is the Lord of Hosts!

WHO IS GOD?

Chapter by chapter, verse by verse God has revealed to us more and more about Himself. As long as we are on this present Earth and in our mortal bodies God will always have an element of mystery about Him. That's because our mortality cannot fathom the depths of God. While in this body we will never experience the true glory of God because we just can't handle it. It would kill us.

However, God, Who is love (1 John 4:16 *"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."*), desires for us to experience as much of Him as we can handle. Therefore He gradually tells us more about Himself in His word.

Here are some of the qualities that only God could possess:

God is a Spirit

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). A look at the original language reveals so much about this verse. The word used for "God" is "Theos" which is a general term for the Divinity of God and also is used in reference to the Godhead. The word "Spirit" is a general word for "spirit" (pneuma) and refers to a personalized spirit, not an inanimate thing. In essence this verse is telling us that the Godhead is spiritual, in a realm not understood nor tangible to mortal man and if we will worship Him (the word "worship" paints the picture of one bowed before God kissing His hand in reverence), we must do it in the same realm in which God exists. Of course, the only way to do this is through Christ.

So the quality of God that it is giving is that He and the entire Godhead is in a living spiritual realm.

God is Infinite and Eternal

Psalms 90:2 says, *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."* Also, Revelation 4:8-11 says, *"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."* Both of these passages speak of God as being everlasting, and forever and ever. God is infinite which means by Mr. Webster's definition: "Lacking limits; endless; immeasurable." Again this is one of those things that is hard for the human mind to comprehend. We are used to a beginning and an ending. Our whole lives are based on this concept, from birth to death, A to Z, first and last. Anything beyond that is baffling to our minds. But that is God. Eternal means that there never was a time that God didn't exist, nor will there ever come a time when God doesn't exist. Infinite means that He goes on with no end.

He will reign without end (Exodus 15:18, *"The LORD shall reign for ever and ever."*). He is the KING of kings, and the LORD of lords. He is the MASTER of masters and the BEST of the best. All kingdoms have risen and fallen but of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:33 *"And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."*). I'm glad to be a subject of His kingdom. It is a good kingdom and it is not just a future kingdom but one that begins here and now.

The Bible tells us that God, Who is eternal, will be our refuge and that He will cradle us in His "everlasting arms!" (Deuteronomy 33:27 ***"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."***). Isn't it good to know that we can indeed flee to safety in the arms of our God Who will keep us safely there in His arms THAT WILL ALWAYS BE THERE!

He is the everlasting KING and His wrath makes the entire world shake and tremble. What a great and mighty FATHER we have in Him! (Jeremiah 10:10 ***"But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation."***).

God is Three in One

This is another one of those perplexing teachings of God that has drawn controversy for many years. We have two schools of thought regarding this teaching. The first says that there are three distinct forms of God in Heaven. The second argues that there is only one God and to believe in three is to believe in three gods. I submit that the truth lies in the middle and is clearly taught in the scripture. The reason for the confusion is again our finite minds. We continually try to analyze God by our human thought. It cannot be done. We must think spiritually.

The first school of thought labels the teaching "The Trinity." This term is not found anywhere in the Word of God, yet the idea is there. We must remember that the name of God in Elohiym is plural and indicates the compound unity of God.

The second school of thought again says God is one and they are correct also. There will be more about the Trinity later in this

study but for now let's realize that God is indeed ONE GOD, but that He eternally exists in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit and that these three forms can indeed be active all at the same time (see an example of this in this passage: ***"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."*** Luke 3:22. Jesus was in the water, newly baptized, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, and God the Father spoke from Heaven - All three forms of One God active at the same moment!).

God is ONE GOD: Deuteronomy 4:35 and 39 says: ***"Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him." "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."*** Literally these verses are saying, "The existing one (Jehovah)" is "Elohiym (plural)" and that there is no other god. He is the ONE TRUE GOD. Jeremiah echoes this truth by saying, ***"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."*** (Jeremiah 44:6-8).

We try to put God in a box by making Him what we can understand, but we must always remember that HE IS GOD not us. Whether we understand or don't understand, it doesn't change the truth. We must be willing to give up our own preconceived ideas and that which we have been taught if we really want to know the truth.

God is Omnipotent

In His names we learned that He is the Almighty. He is all-powerful. ***"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."*** (Revelation 19:6). Read these scriptures that speak of His omnipotence in creation: Genesis 1:1 ***"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*** Amos 4:13 ***"For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name."*** Amos 5:8 ***"Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name . . . "*** Creation is something that only God can do. The most literal meaning of creation is to make something out of nothing. We use the term to show what we have done; "I created this." In reality we made it because we had to have some kind of raw material to start with. But God actually created the heavens and the Earth out of nothing. He spoke and it happened. This is all inclusive from the Earth to each and every sun that makes up the galaxy. How we should heed the words of Amos 5:8 to seek the One who made it all. I want to seek the CREATOR The Omnipotent God! All things are possible to God (***"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."*** Matthew 19:26).

Nothing is too hard for the LORD God! ***"Is any thing too hard for the LORD? . . . "*** (Genesis 18:14a). Jeremiah answered this question by saying, ***"Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee"*** (Jeremiah 32:17). There have been those who have

foolishly posed questions to this quality of God by asking, "If God can do anything can He make a rock that is too big for Him to pick up?" To which I answer (just as foolishly), "If God wanted to, YES! But then that would be one really big rock!" These kinds of questions may seem to intelligently contradict the all powerful God but be careful; you can't confound the Confounder! Just when man thinks he understands God He'll throw a curve ball at you that you've never seen before and you'll be right back where you were.

God can do whatever He wants to, "***And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?***" (Daniel 4:35). I've heard teachers go as far as to say that God has a formula in His Word that BINDS Him to do this or that. Be careful! We can't box God in. God has given us great and precious promises in His word but always remember that it is always conditional. He paid the price for our sin and freely gave the gift of salvation by His grace but we must believe in Christ to receive it. God promised the throne forever to the house of David but then tore part of it from him under Solomon's son, Rehoboam. This was because of Rehoboam's sin. But the promise was fulfilled, just not the way they thought it would be. That promise is ultimately fulfilled in Christ Who will again reign in Eternity. Whenever we try to limit God we'll find out just how limitless He is. I always shuddered when I heard people preach and teach that we must remind God of His Word. EXCUSE ME! I need to be reminded once in a while but God said it and never forgets. HE'S GOD for Pete's sake! (Sorry about getting passionate here, but all too many people today try to make a servant out of God. Just who's serving Who?).

To conclude this quality of God let me quote Nahum 1:3 which shows that all is under His control and subject to His power: "***The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the***

whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."

God Is Omnipresent

Simply put, God is everywhere at the same time. He is unlimited by space or time. He equally exists in the past present and future. What an unfathomable statement this is, but none-the-less true. Psalm 139:7-13 tells us, *"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb."* Further, Proverbs 15:3 says, *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."* After Solomon had built the Temple in Jerusalem, in humble reverence to God in his dedicatory prayer he said, *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"* (1 Kings 8:27).

I heard a little story that goes like this: A teacher, who was an atheist, decided she wanted to prove to her class that God didn't exist. So she asked Tommy to get up, go outside and take a look around. When Tommy returned she began to question him. "Tommy, did you see the trees outside?" "Yes," Tommy responded. "Well, did you see the grass out there?" Again Tommy replied, "Yes." "Then did you look up in the sky and see the clouds?" One more time Tommy said, "Yes." "Tommy, when you looked up and saw the clouds, did you see God?" "No," was Tommy's answer. The teacher then triumphantly said, "See class,

you can see all these things around you but you cannot see God, so God does not exist." Sally, a little confused and angry at the teacher's assumption asked, "Tommy, when you came back in did you see the desks and chairs in the room?" Tommy sighed a reply, "Yes." "Well, did you see the rest of the class when you came back in?" Getting very tired of answering questions Tommy snapped back, "Yes!" "Did you see the teacher?" "YES!" "Just one more question, Tommy, did you see the teacher's brain?" "No." "Well then, that must mean that our teacher doesn't have a brain!" exclaimed Sally.

The point is, just because we may not see God doesn't mean that He isn't there. Have you ever walked into a room having your mind so preoccupied that you failed to notice the other people that may have been in there? Of course you have. But did that mean that they weren't there? Of course not. The same applies to God. Just because we have been preoccupied with other things and didn't notice the presence of Him there, only means that you were not aware of His presence.

As we begin to be aware of His presence then we know for a fact, God is here! Isaiah 6:3b tells us, ". . . ***the whole earth is full of his glory.***" Jacob experienced this very thing. Read the words of Genesis 28:15-16, "***And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.***"

Anytime we get together to seek God (even if just two) He is there. Jesus said, "***Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.***" (Matthew 18:19-20). God was there already

because of His omnipresence but when people get together and get their mind on God, then they become aware of His presence.

We cannot hide from God. We all have deep secrets, maybe things that even our immediate families don't know about us. We are good at hiding. But we can never hide from God. He knows our innermost thoughts and secrets. He knows more about us than we even know ourselves because God knows those subconscious things that we aren't consciously aware of. Speaking to the nation of Israel during their disobedience to Him, through the prophet Amos God said, ***"Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good."*** (Amos 9:2-4). Jeremiah wrote these words from God: ***"Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."*** (Jeremiah 23:23-24).

While this passage is a threat to those who might be in disobedience, He is just as near in love as well. Jesus said before He ascended to Heaven, ***"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*** (Matthew 28:20). What a promise from our KING of kings!

God is Omniscient

Wouldn't it be great if you already knew everything there was to know? However, this is a trait that only belongs to God. There is nothing that our God doesn't know.

For instance, He knows the future. God revealed future knowledge to individuals in the Bible. Take the example of Elisha in 2 Kings 8:10 and 13: ***"And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die." "And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."*** The words "It shall come to pass . . ." are found 120 times in the King James Version of the Bible. I, for one, am glad that God knows the future. That means that as long as I am listening to Him and being obedient to His voice in my heart and in the Word, that He will guide me to the best place for me.

God knows the very thoughts and intents of our heart. He told Solomon these words: ***"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."*** (1 Chronicles 28:9). God knows everything we are thinking all the time. We cannot hide even our thoughts from Him. Read the words of the Psalmist: ***"O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."*** (Psalm 139:1-6). God knows everything that comes into our minds, ***"And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them."*** (Ezekiel 11:5. See also Luke 16:15; Acts

15:8; Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 3:20). There is nothing hidden from the knowledge of God. While that may seem threatening, it is also very comforting. God knows more about me than I know myself. Thank God for it!

God Is Wise

We must remember that there is a big difference between wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom is correctly discerning what needs to be done whereas knowledge is how it is done. There is an old story of a business man who was driving through the city and suddenly got a flat tire. It happened right in front of the County Home for the mentally challenged (although it wasn't called that then). As the business man got out of the car to fix his flat tire he noticed a man leaning over the fence watching every move he made.

He loosened all the lug nuts, carefully placing them inside the hubcap, changed the tire, then reached for the hudcap full of lug nuts and at that instant he stumbled knocking all the nuts out of the hudcap. They all rolled into an open gutter drain. Now what to do! As he stood there scratching his head, the man who had been watching from the fence said, "Sir, why don't you just take one lug nut from each of the other three tires and use on this one until you can buy more lugnuts?" This sounded like a very good idea and the business man proceeded to follow the other man's advice. When he was done he went over to thank the man and very puzzled asked him, "Why are you in here anyway?" The man, realizing the real question on the business man's mind, responded, "Listen, I'm in here for being crazy, not stupid!"

That story clearly illustrates the difference between wisdom and knowledge. I know my own father only went to school through the fourth grade, so he may not have had a lot of knowledge but he is a very wise man when it comes to knowing what to do in a situation.

God has all knowledge but He also has infinite wisdom to go with that knowledge. Jeremiah 10:12 says, ***"He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."*** (see also Job 12:16; Psalm 104:24; Psalm 136:5, and Proverbs 3:19). God made all things in wisdom. He didn't just say, "Oh, I'll make a giraffe." No, His creation was done from a well thought out plan. Read the words of Daniel: ***"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him."*** (Daniel 2:20-22). Wisdom belongs to God and He can distribute it to whomever He pleases and chooses.

Because of our own finite wisdom, sometimes what God chooses to do, and how He chooses to answer a prayer may seem strange to us. We may even feel like He hasn't answered a prayer. Read the words of Paul in Romans 11:33 ***"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"*** You see, our own resources are limited. But God knows the past and present, and can see into the future. So His decisions may seem wrong to us, but in His own wisdom they are always right and the best. Paul also wrote, ***"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."*** (1 Corinthians 1:25). And also, ***"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory . . . "*** (1 Corinthians 2:6-7). Do you see how God's wisdom, though

mysterious to us, is always the best. When we can learn to trust His wisdom, how much better off we are!

To really possess wisdom we must belong to God, ***"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."***

(Colossians 2:2-3). People can have a limited wisdom without knowing the LORD but to really operate in wisdom we must know Him. Even then, we must learn to trust Him and walk in His wisdom or we'll still be "unwise."

God Is Sovereign

This means that God has to absolute right to govern and to do with His creatures as He wills. Read these passages: ***"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"*** (Daniel 4:35). ***"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"*** (Romans 9:19-20). In other words, in both the Old and New Testaments it is basically saying, "who are we to ask God, 'What do You think You're doing?'" God is the absolute power. Yes, He operates in love, and yes, He wants the best for each of us, but He can do what He well pleases to do. We become guilty of trying to tell God what to do and, I'm sorry if this treads on other's toes a little bit, but God needs no reminding of His promises. We may, but God certainly doesn't. If we aren't careful when we begin to "remind" God of things, we could be guilty of stepping out of line and trying to make Him the servant.

God Is Holy

"There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God." (1 Samuel 2:2). We have made holiness to be something that it isn't. To really understand holiness, we must realize that, aside from God, there is no way we, as mortals, could even hope to attain it. Yet, we attempt to accomplish holiness within ourselves by doing good works. No amount of good works will ever make one holy. In ancient days the Church made "saints" of those who did outstanding works. This was a way of saying that those individuals were more holy than others. This established a "works" system of trying to accomplish holiness. We must realize, however, that none of us stand the remotest chance of being holy without God's own Holy Spirit residing in us.

The Psalmist seemed to understand this, even though redemption had not as yet come. ***"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."*** (Psalm 111:9). We had to be redeemed! We had to be covered by the blood of Christ. We had to have our old selves die out and let a new creation be formed in us (see 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15).

Holiness is perfection. Holiness is never, ever doing any wrong. Holiness is unreachable by man. Jesus said, ***"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*** (Matthew 5:48). What a thing to demand! Man is incapable of perfection, yet we are told by the Master of Grace to be perfect just like God is. Even if we could be perfect from this day forward, if we had done anything wrong or imperfect in the past then we are still imperfect. There is only one way for us to be perfect and that is in the life of Jesus Christ Himself. Because He was perfect, and because He became the sacrifice for sin that was required for man to be forgiven, now we can be covered by His blood and so be made perfect.

God has required His people to be holy from the beginning. Even in the days of Israel it was said, *"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."* (Leviticus 20:26). We are also told this in the New Testament: *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."* (1 Peter 1:15-16). This requirement and the perfection that God Himself enjoys is enough to make man tremble and quake. Listen to the words of Jeremiah when He experienced the holiness of God: *"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness."* (Jeremiah 23:9). Holiness and perfection is an absolute must to ever hope to be close to God.

Thanks be to God that we can receive holiness in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior! If not for Him we'd have no hope of ever being reconciled to God at all or forever. But because of Him we now can enjoy God's holiness.

We must be ever guarding, however, that we not begin to think more of ourselves than we should. We have taken holiness to mean that we are better than others. We have taken God's standard of holiness and tried to make men live up to it aside what we have in Christ. Let's be very careful how we judge others. Yes, we do know them by their fruit, but it is never for us to judge as to whether one who claims Christ as Lord is ready or not. We don't have that right unless explicitly revealed to us by God. We should never impose our own convictions upon others. If God tells us to do something, or to give something up, it is never for us to assume God is making this a standard for everyone. What may be allowed for one may not be allowed for another simply because of our own, personality.

This is where man gets into trouble when it comes to God's holiness. Let us realize that unless it is clearly spoken against in the Word of God, we should never pass judgement on to another individual based on our convictions and conscience.

God Is Righteous

A good definition for "righteousness" is "holiness in action." It is applying holiness to our lives. I could go into a sermon on this right now but I'll try not to for the sake of the continuity of this study. However, it is important to say that what many consider as "holiness" in the Church today is merely good works. We've already established that we are to be holy just like God is holy. Again, that can only be accomplished by the blood of Jesus Christ.

God is righteous. That means His holiness is perfect in action. His righteousness is always at hand. We cannot escape God's righteousness. ***"I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."*** (Isaiah 46:13). Also, His righteousness endures for all time. ***"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."*** (Isaiah 51:6).

We call God a judge, and rightly so. He is the judge of all the Earth. That's good, because He judges with righteousness. His judgements are always perfect and right. He never makes a bad call or sentences an innocent man. ***"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."*** (Isaiah 11:4). ***"Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but***

establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." (Psalm 7:9).

God is Faithful

Have you ever just wished that people would keep their word? Years ago, a man's word was just as binding as a signature on a piece of paper. Today, on the other hand, in most cases we need lawyers to interpret just what we have agreed to and whether it is really legal or not. We spend fortunes on trying to make people live up to what they agreed to. People are not faithful. But God is completely and always faithful. He will do what He said He'd do. Deuteronomy 7:9 says, "***Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations . . .***" Paul said, "***God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.***" (1 Corinthians 1:9). What a fellowship to be in! It is one that we can completely and entirely trust. We are called into this wonderful fellowship by God Himself and we can trust Him. Paul further said about this, "***Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.***" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

We sometimes question whether we can truly live for God or not. But read what the Bible says about this in light of God's faithfulness: "***But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.***" (2 Thessalonians 3:3). Isn't that great?! We live so much in fear that we can't live up to God and we can't. But He will establish us and keep us from evil if we'll only yield to Him.

Paul also encouraged us to hold on to our faith, even when things seem hopeless because God is faithful (Hebrews 10:23): "***Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;).***" God will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we can really endure. Sometimes it may

seem that way, but think of the times we could have made it if we had only remembered this Scripture: ***"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*** (1 Corinthians 10:13). By the way, in looking closer at this passage we see the key to getting the victory in the temptation. He said that with the temptation He'd also provide the way to escape. We need to begin looking closer at the "way of escape" rather than enduring the temptation, don't you think?

Even when man doesn't believe, yet God remains faithful: ***"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."*** (2 Timothy 2:13). There are many other great passages about the faithfulness of God. Here is a list for you to look up and read for yourself:

Numbers 23:19

Deuteronomy 4:31

Joshua 21:43-45

Joshua 23:14

Jeremiah 4:28

Ezekiel 12:25

Daniel 9:4

Micah 7:20

Romans 15:8

2 Corinthians 1:20

Hebrews 6:18

1 Peter 4:19

God is Merciful

Mercy from God means that we get what we don't deserve. Mercy is different from grace in that with grace the penalty is paid for us (Jesus did this). Even though man has consistently rebelled against God, yet He shows us mercy. Just think of it, God could

have destroyed this planet and everything on it centuries ago and we would have deserved it. But in His mercy He allows each day to go by. Everyday He allows the sun to rise in the morning and the moon in the evening. It is only by His mercy that we live today. Read the word, *"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;"* (Daniel 9:9).

God's mercy is forever. He doesn't retract it. The Word says, *"But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."* (Psalm 103:17). Even though God's mercy is extended to the whole world, it is conditional. I'm not underplaying grace here. His grace is given unconditionally. However, His mercy is extended to those who are keepers of His commandments. Now we have to be careful here, because we don't want to promote legalism. Legalism is wrong. Legalism teaches that we must do things to earn our salvation experience. Again, salvation is a free gift. But when we get saved the first and foremost commandment we must keep is to love one another. Jesus said to hang all the other commandments on this one (Matthew 22:37-40). So, the commandments we must fulfill are to love each other and our neighbor. If we do this as Jesus commanded, all the other commandments fall into line. As we fulfill the love commandments, then we never need to worry if we are receiving mercy from God because we are keeping His commandments.

Here are some other verses to read about mercy:

Isaiah 49:13

Isaiah 54:7

Lamentations 3:22

Psalms 103:8

Jeremiah 3:12

Titus 3:5

God Is Love

This is a great and wonderful characteristic of God. He is love. Then by this reference, the true definition of love is God. 1 John 4:8 says, ***"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."*** We can have affection for others and we can sympathize with others but without God we can never really know what true love is. Many would argue with this statement because we "love" our family; we "love" our spouse, and we "love" our friends. The problem is that we are confusing true love with affection. Our natural idea of love is driven by emotion, not by true definition.

God's love is forever: ***"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."*** (Jeremiah 31:3). We can never escape the love of God. Even God's chastisements are an act of His love. He never writes us off. He never leaves us forever. His gentle but firm urging will always return. His love is forever.

His love extends to every human being in the whole world regardless of physical appearance, race, ethnic background, size, shape, financial status, or even how much we are esteemed by other human beings. The Bible says, ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*** (John 3:16). There is absolutely nothing that can separate us from His love: ***"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** (Romans 8:38-39). What a powerful and reassuring statement about God. When we have found His love,

we can never separate from it. We may withdraw ourselves from Him but nothing can make Him stop loving us.

Other scriptures that talk of God as being love are:

Ephesians 2:4
Isaiah 49:15-16
Deuteronomy 7:8
Romans 9:11-13
Deuteronomy 7:13
Isaiah 43:4
Isaiah 63:9
Deuteronomy 10:18
Romans 5:5
Ephesians 2:4-5
Titus 3:4-7
1 John 3:1
John 16:27
John 17:23
Isaiah 38:17

God Is Good

"The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." (Nahum 1:7). God is also good. It stands to reason if the definition of love is God then God must be good. And He is. Even though there are those who will never trust in Him, yet He is good even to them: ***"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works."*** (Psalm 145:9). His goodness will endure continually without end. ***"Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually."*** (Psalm 52:1).

Other passages about God's goodness are:

Acts 14:17

Psalm 31:19

Psalm 25:8

Romans 2:4

Psalm 86:5

There are other qualities of God that I'd like to list with scripture so you can study for yourself. They are as follows:

God is Just (Deuteronomy 32:4; Zephaniah 3:5).

He is a God of Truth (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 91:4; Psalm 57:10).

God is Pure (Job 4:17; Psalm 18:26).

God is Compassionate (Psalm 78:38; Psalm 86:15; Psalm 111:4).

God is Gracious (Exodus 22:27; Psalm 86:15; Jonah 4:2).

God is Longsuffering (Psalm 85:15; Jeremiah 15:15).

God is Mighty (Genesis 49:24; Deuteronomy 7:21; Psalm 47:2; Isaiah 1:24; Psalm 66:3-5; Job 9:19; Jeremiah 50:34; Psalm 29:4).

God is Able (Daniel 3:17).

God is Great (Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 47:2; Psalm 96:4).

God is Glorious (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 76:4; Psalm 8:1).

God is Perfect (Job 37:16; Matthew 5:48).

God is Life (Psalm 36:9).

God is Majestic (Psalm 104:1).

God is Honorable (Psalm 104:1; Psalm 145:5).

God is Beautiful (Psalm 27:4; Psalm 90:17).

God is Peace (Isaiah 9:6; Romans 14:17).

God is Kind (1 Samuel 20:14; 2 Samuel 9:3).

God is Light (Psalm 36:9; 1 John 1:5).

God is Jealous (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 29:20).

God can be Angry (Exodus 4:14; Numbers 22:22; Lamentations 2:1-3).

God is a Consuming Fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29).

God is Recompensing (Deuteronomy 32:35; Jeremiah 51:56).

God can be Vengeful (Psalm 94:1; Jeremiah 50:15, 28).

God can be Dreadful (Daniel 9:4).

This is a lot to absorb, I know. Take your time with this. But to know the qualities of God helps us to better understand Him and will ultimately give us a greater desire to worship Him.

THE TWO-FOLD FATHERHOOD OF GOD

"And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." (Matthew 23:9).

God is a Father in the fullest definition of the word. He protects (as we have already seen). He leads, guides and teaches us the ways we need to know. He loves us as no other can love, for He is love.

We call this a "two-fold" Fatherhood simply to make the distinction between mankind and Jesus Christ. First of all, God is the Father of Jesus Christ, but not like we think of when we speak the word "father." Jesus Christ, in His glory in Heaven, didn't grow up as a child does before His Father. Yet, He is the Father of Jesus Christ (see Luke 2:49). Although Jesus was with God in Eternity past, because of the Virgin Birth, the way God chose for His Son to enter this world, He is the only one who was actually begotten by God (See Luke 1:26-35). All others were created.

God also becomes the Father of all men and women who accept Jesus Christ as Lord. (John 1:12-13) *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."*

This is accomplished through what is termed "the new birth," or "being born again." Read the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: (John 3:3-7) *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of*

the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." This is further addressed in Galatians 3:26: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."* Then 1 Peter 1:23 says: *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."* We will talk in more detail about salvation and exactly what happens when we get to that study in this course. For the moment know that when we come to God through Jesus Christ, we become the children of God.

THE TRINITY OF GOD

As promised when we taught of God as being three in one, we wish to address this topic a little deeper under this heading. Once again, let me remind you that we must try to think in spiritual terms to really grasp the concept of the Trinity. Even though this word is not found in the Bible, the truth of it is woven into the Scriptures very intricately. God exists as only ONE GOD, yet in three distinct manifestations.

The Old Testament hinted of the three manifestations of God by implication. Remember, the plural name for God, "Elohim." It is possible, but not taught in the Bible, that God chose to gradually reveal the plurality of Himself so as to keep man from thinking that He was three gods, not one. This name for God was used all but 19 times in the Book of Genesis. A literal rendering of Deuteronomy 6:4 could help to understand this concept: *"Jehovah our Gods is one Jehovah . . . "*

Always remember that there is only one God existing in three manifestations of Himself:

God The Father Made from none, nor created, nor begotten, but eternal.

God The Son From the Father alone, neither made, nor created, but begotten.

God the Holy Spirit From the Father and the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

There are also some plural pronouns used in Genesis that hint of the plural manifestations of God: Genesis 3:22 *"Man is become as one of us . . . "* and Genesis 11:7 *"Let us go down . . . "*

We have already given earlier in this study, the example of the different manifestations of God appearing together. Here is another list of passages that will show times that two if not all three manifestations of God are referred to simultaneously:

Luke 3:22

Ephesians 2:18

Matthew 3:16-17

Matthew 28:19

John 14:16, 17, 26

John 15:26

2 Corinthians 13:14

Galatians 4:6

Hebrews 9:14

1 Peter 1:2

As we shall see later in these studies, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ have the same attributes and characteristics as God the Father. He must be One and three in One!

There have been many examples of the Trinity given over the years, such as:

Marriage: Husband, wife and child

Water: In its three forms of liquid, ice, and steam.

Electricity: In what it provides, motion, light, and heat.

The sun: Light, heat, and fire.

The Triangle: Has three angles, each separate but all three not possible apart from the others. Three sides from three separate lines, yet the triangle is impossible without all three.

However, these all have their weaknesses. The best example we can give of the Trinity is man himself. We were created in the image of God. We were given, by God, a spirit, soul, and body.

These three parts of man are a reflection of the Godhead. The main difference is that we cannot separate our three forms. In life, our soul (our life), exists in the body and the spirit is generally suppressed. In death, our soul (our life), continues on in the spirit. So you see, we are created in the image of God in more ways than one!

THE GLORY OF GOD

"And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people." (Leviticus 9:23).

When we think of glory, we normally think of honor being bestowed upon the individual. God, however, has a glory that is visible. In the above verse, the Nation of Israel had gathered for a public dedication. After they had offered the sacrifices, the Bible tells us that this visible glory of God appeared in the presence of the entire camp. Imagine the moment. After spending a solid week in worshipping, sacrificing, and dedicating to God, to see that climactic appearance of the glory of the Almighty God!

The full glory of God is something that no living man has ever seen in this "house of flesh." We cannot see God and live. Our physical bodies, in a fallen state, cannot survive God's full glory. Read this account of when Moses wanted to see God (Exodus 33:18-23): ***"And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."*** What a marvelous experience Moses had with God!

The visible glory of God that can be seen by man is also found in these passages:

Again to the Nation of Israel (Exodus 16:10).

To Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:15-18).

To Moses and Aaron in the Tabernacle (Numbers 20:6).

In a pillar of cloud over the Tabernacle (Deuteronomy 31:15).

At the dedication of the Temple of Solomon (2 Chronicles 5:13-14 see also 1 Kings 8:10-11).

Several times to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:28; 11:22; 43:4-5).

THE THEOPHANIES

A Theophany is an appearance of God in human form. Many times God sent angels to give messages to mankind. But there were times in Scripture where the one being seen is identified as God. This is a theophany; an appearance of God in human form. This is none other than Christ, the Son of God. He is the member of the Trinity Who is seen.

Here is a listing of the Theophanies of God found in the Bible:

To Abraham (Genesis 18:1-13).

To Jacob (Genesis 35:9; 48:3; 32:24-29).

To Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 Elders of Israel (Exodus 24:9-11).

Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:12).

Job (Job 42:5-6).

Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:26-27; 8:1-2).

Daniel (Daniel 7:9-10).

Amos (Amos 9:1).

John (Revelation 4:2-3).

GOD CAN REPENT AND CHANGE HIS INTENDED PURPOSE

Two instances of this readily comes to mind. The first is found in 1 Samuel 15:11, 35. God had set Saul up as king. When Saul first began to reign, he was humbled and listened to God. God used Saul in a mighty way. But, as Saul got used to God working, he set himself up for a fall. He became prideful in spirit, and began to make decisions without waiting upon God. For this reason, God repented, or was sorry, that He had made Saul king. Now, I believe that in God's infinite foreknowledge that He knew Saul was going to do this. However, God allowed it to happen in order to teach the people.

The second instance is that of Jonah (Jonah 3:9 4:2). The people of Ninivah did repent to God and so God repented, or was sorry, that He was about to destroy the city. Because of the repentance of the people, God changed His mind and did not destroy the city. Again, I believe that God knew this was going to happen before-hand.

It's just like this with each and every one of us. We are doomed to eternal destruction because of sin in our lives. When we repent to God, in essence, He repents and changes His mind about our punishment. Isn't it great to know, that even when we were sentenced and doomed, because of our decision to follow Christ, God repents (changes His mind) about each one of us?! We repent and God repents!

Here are some other References about God repenting:

Genesis 6:7

Exodus 32:14

Deuteronomy 32:36

Psalms 106:45

Psalm 135:14
Jeremiah 11:8
Hosea 11:8
Joel 2:13-14

IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW GOD

This may seem like a strange statement to make, but this is exactly why Jesus Christ entered the world. Man, in his natural, fallen state, thinks carnally and reacts with what he feels and craves. God, on the other hand, is perfect, holy, and just. Man cannot hope to find or know God without some help. We will go into greater detail about this in another study. In the meantime, here are some of the reasons it is difficult to know God:

Because He is invisible

John 1:18

Deuteronomy 4:15

Job 9:11

Job 23:8-9

Isaiah 45:15

Hebrews 11:27

1 John 4:12

Because He is unsearchable

Romans 11:33-34

Job 11:7-9

Job 26:14

Job 37:23

Psalms 77:19

Psalms 139:5-6

Psalms 145:3

Isaiah 40:28

Yet, He can be known

Matthew 11:27

Romans 1:19-20

1 Corinthians 2:10-16

Ephesians 1:17-23

Colossians 1:10

1 John 5:20

