

The **Bible** Unpacked

Comprehensive Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching
for believers established in the faith

paul mallison

1. God's Being

This series of studies is based on the
Comprehensive Edition of The Bible Unpacked.

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*.
These aim to address the needs of
NON-CHRISTIANS through to MATURE CHRISTIANS,
from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

For more information and free downloads go to:
www.thebibleunpacked.net

An Appeal on Behalf of Persecuted Christians

Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org

It provides material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Christian Faith and Freedom – www.cffreedom.org

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity International – www.csi-int.org

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Compass Direct – www.compassdirect.org

This is a Christian news service providing news, reports, interviews and analyses of situations facing persecuted Christians.

Open Doors – sb.od.org; www.opendoors.org.au

It provides Bibles and other Christian materials, to prepare believers for persecution and equip them to maintain a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/; www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to join-rpb@hub.xc.org.

The Bible League – www.bibleleague.org/persecuted; www.bibleleague.com

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com; www.persecution.com.au

VOM provides Bibles, literature, radio broadcasts and other assistance to help persecuted Christians spread the gospel. They also send material aid.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

The Bible Unpacked™

Comprehensive Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers established in the faith

1. God's Being

Composed by Paul Mallison

Scripture quotations are from the *NET Bible*®, unless otherwise indicated.

The Bible Unpacked™ Copyright © 1994–2011 by Paul Mallison. All rights reserved.

This book may be freely reproduced for use for non-profit Christian purposes. Free electronic copies may be downloaded at: www.thebibleunpacked.net. In return, users are asked to increase their support of persecuted Christians (cf. www.thebibleunpacked.net/persecuted_Christians.htm).

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the **NET Bible**® copyright ©1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://www.bible.org/> All rights reserved. Scripture quoted by permission.

- Scripture quotations marked “CEV” are from the **Contemporary English Version** Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.
- Scripture quotations marked “ESV” are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “GNT” are from the **Good News Translation in Today's English Version**- Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.
- Scripture quotations marked “GW” are taken from **God's Word**® Copyright 1995 God's Word to the Nations. Used by permission of Baker Publishing Group. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “ISV” are taken from the *Holy Bible: International Standard Version*®, Release 1.44. Copyright © 1996–2007 by The ISV Foundation of Fullerton, California USA. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. All rights reserved internationally.
- Scripture quotations marked “NCV™” are taken from the **New Century Version**®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations of short phrases from other Bible translations are on occasions included in comments on the verses. The copyright notices for these translations are given below.


- Scripture quotations marked “AMP” are taken from the *Amplified*® Bible, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org).
- Scripture quotations marked “NASB” are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.
- Scripture quotations marked “NLT” are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “NKJV” are taken from *The New King James Version* / Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers., Copyright © 1982. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “NRSV” are from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright © 1989 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This copy uploaded/printed: 26-Feb-11

Overview of *The Bible Unpacked*


There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next longest edition. As such they have similar structures. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text along with questions. For more details and free downloads of all the material, go to www.thebibleunpacked.net.

 **Two-Minute Edition:** Key Bible teachings for people “on the run”
For giving to non-Christians.


 **Pocket Edition:** Key Bible teachings for seekers of truth
Largely for giving to inquiring non-Christians or young new Christians.

 **Concise Edition:** A look at the Bible's teaching for new and young believers. For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.




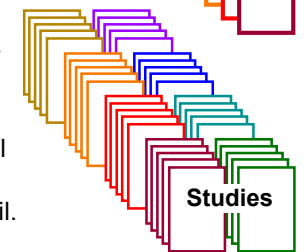
 **Foundations Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers consolidating their faith. For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.




 **Intermediate Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers growing in the faith. For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.



 **Comprehensive Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers established in the faith. For a comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Useful as a study or a devotional tool - and preparing talks. Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.



 **In-Depth Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for teachers and students of the Bible. For Christians keen to gain a deep understanding of their faith. Useful for speakers preparing talks, study groups leaders, Bible students and Bible colleges. It is also in an electronic version, which is a PDF file.



Section II. What to Do

Part E. Relating to God

21. Being Right with God

- I. Getting Right with God
- II. Staying Right with God

22. Having Faith in God

- I. Faith and Hope
- II. What Not to Do

23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God

- I. Loving and Fearing God
- II. Obeying God

24. Connecting with God

- I. Being Close to God
- II. Praying to God

25. Exalting God

- I. Instructions
- II. Reasons to Exalt God

Part F. Church Life

26. Being One Body

- I. General
- II. Caring for the Body

27. Worshiping God

- I. General
- II. Offerings

28. Serving God

- I. Preliminary Instructions and Insights
- II. Doing God's Work

29. Significant Practices

- I. Symbolic Rites
- II. Other Significant Practices

30. Church Leadership

- I. General
- II. Teaching in the Church

Part G. Relating to People

31. Love

- I. Loving Qualities
- II. Antitheses of Love

32. Justice

- I. Justice in Action
- II. Being True

33. Wisdom

- I. Being Wise
- II. Antitheses of Wisdom and Knowledge

34. Common Relationships

- I. Family Relationships
- II. Civil Relationships

35. Spreading the Gospel

- I. Instructions
- II. Insights

Part H. Persevering

36. Standing Firm

- I. General
- II. Spiritual Warfare

37. Rejecting Sin

- I. Encountering Sin
- II. Avoiding Sin and Being Holy

38. Major Pitfalls

- I. Pride
- II. Riches and Sex

39. Hard Times

- I. General
- II. Praying in Hard Times

40. Persecution

- I. The Persecution of God's People
- II. What to Do in Persecution

Contents

A Quick Word	iv
Suggestions for Study Groups	v
I. Basics	
a) God's Form	2
b) God's Glory	5
c) God's Personhood	9
d) God's Eternity	12
II. God's Pre-Eminence	
a) God's Greatness	16
b) God's Power (I): Ultimate Power	18
c) God's Power (II): His Deeds	21
d) God's Knowledge and Wisdom	23
e) Addendum: God's 'Name'	26
Topics in This Series	31
Overview of <i>The Bible Unpacked</i>	33

A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics. Note that studying booklets alternatively from the two major sections (*What to Know* and *What to Do*) would add variety.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who led the Israelites out of Egypt and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: www.thebibleunpacked.net

Paul Mallison

Topics in This Series

Section I: What to Know

Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

1. God's Being

- I. Basics
- II. God's Pre-Eminence

2. God's Character

- I. Holy Characteristics
- II. Loving Characteristics

3. Jesus Christ

- I. General
- II. Jesus Christ and God

4. The Holy Spirit

- I. General
- II. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit as One

5. Angels, Satan and Demons

- I. Angels
- II. Satan and Demons

Part B. God and the World: Basics

6. God's Creation

- I. General
- II. God's Creation of People

7. God's Sovereignty

- I. God's Supreme Authority
- II. God's Control over the World

8. God's Word

- I. General
- II. Key Old Testament Covenants

9. The Problem of Sin

- I. General
- II. The Law's Provision for Israel's Sin

10. God's Judgment

- I. Basics
- II. The Manifestation of God's Judgment

Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

11. God's Promised Messiah

- I. The Messiah's Identity
- II. The Messiah's Purpose and Person

12. Jesus Christ's Mission

- I. God's Enablement of Jesus Christ
- II. Jesus Christ's Ministry, Death and Resurrection

13. Salvation through Jesus Christ

- I. Salvation from Sin
- II. Salvation for the World

14. The New Order

- I. Jesus Christ and the Law's Diminished Role
- II. Key Elements of the New Order

15. 'The Last Things'

- I. Jesus Christ's Return and the Final Judgment
- II. The Afterlife

Part D. God and His Own People

16. The Standing of God's People

- I. Belonging to God
- II. Being 'in' Jesus Christ

17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People

- I. Basics
- II. God's Holy Spirit in His People

18. God's Transformation of His People

- I. General
- II. Spiritual Attributes

19. God's Care of His People

- I. God's Saving of His People
- II. God's Preservation of His People

20. God's Plans for His People

- I. General
- II. God's Plans for Israel

the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' ”¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘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, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. ESV

“LORD” (v. 15) can be derived from “I AM” (v. 14). For the actual Hebrew that is rendered as “LORD” is “YHWH” (most likely pronounced “Yahweh”) and it “is derived from the verb *HAYAH*, to be” (NASB text note) to which “I AM” is also related. Note that “I AM WHO I AM” (v. 14) may well have the sense: “I will be who I will be” (cf. NIV text note). This title and its shortened form “I AM” (v. 14) appear to express God’s unchanging nature, self-existence, self-determination and omnipresence.

I. Basics

What is the significance of one’s “name” in the Bible?

What is meant by the expression “call on the name of the LORD” (cf. Ps 116:13)?

As best as you can, explain God’s reply to Moses’ question regarding his name (cf. Ex 3:14).

The concepts in the first half of this chapter are fundamental to understanding what God is like, as they concern basic attributes of his being. These include attributes which show God to be very different to us, but also attributes which indicate that he is like us in that he is a personal being.

a) God's Form

God is one

MARK 12:29B, 32 [JESUS, QUOTING MOSES:] Listen, Israel, *the Lord our God, the Lord is one.* ... ³²The expert in the law said to him, “*That is true, Teacher; you are right to say that he is one,* and there is no one else besides him.

In teaching that God is one, the Bible indicates that God is a single entity or being.

God is spirit . . .

JOHN 4:24 *God is spirit,* and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

God's nature is spirit; he is a spiritual being. So God is not a physical being, in contrast to people and particularly to idols.

. . . As such, God cannot be seen by people

1TIM 6:16 [PAUL, SPEAKING OF GOD:] He alone has endless life and lives in inaccessible light. *No one has ever seen him, nor can anyone see him.* Honor and eternal power belong to him! Amen. ISV

God is everywhere, not just in temples . . .

JER 23:23–24 “*I am a God who is near,*” says the LORD. “*I am also a God who is far away.*” ²⁴“*No one can hide where I cannot see him,*” says the LORD. “*I fill all of heaven and earth,*” says the LORD. NCV™

1KI 8:27 [SOLOMON, PRAYING AT THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE:] But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! NKJV

. . . Thus, God is always near

Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, *an ever-present help* in times of trouble. GW

. . . and it is also synonymous with God in people relating to him

Ps 116:13 [A PSALMIST:] I will celebrate my deliverance, and *call on the name of the LORD.*

God's “name” is correlated with his authority and power

DAN 9:6 [DANIEL, TO GOD:] We have not listened to *your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name* to our kings, our rulers, our ancestors, and our whole nation. GNT

JOHN 10:25B [JESUS:] *The deeds I do in my Father's name* testify about me.

Jesus performed his miracles in the “name” of his Father – i.e. by the “authority” (CEV, GNT) or “power” (AMP) of God.

God's “name” is holy

LUKE 1:49 [MARY:] God All-Powerful has done great things for me, and *his name is holy.* CEV

God's “name” is great . . .

Ps 99:3A [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] Let them praise *your great and awesome name!*

. . . God's “name” is glorious and exalted

NEH 9:5B May you be blessed, O LORD our God, from age to age. *May your glorious name be blessed; may it be lifted up above all blessing and praise.*

Note: God declared his actual name to be the “Lord”

Ex 34:5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with Moses, and *the LORD called out his name: the LORD.* NCV™

Ex 3:13–15 Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and *they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?’*” ¹⁴*God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to*

e) Addendum: God's 'Name'

In biblical times, a person's name represented or embodied their whole person – including their nature, authority and even their purpose or significance. This is highlighted by references to the “name” of the person.

Thus when used in regard to such things as God's interaction with his people, references to God's “name” are understood as being synonymous with God himself. For example, God's “name” is used in expressing God's presence amongst his people and also his care of them. Furthermore, God's people are said to do such things as trust in, fear, love and praise his “name”.

God's “name” is synonymous with God himself . . .

ISA 48:9A, 11A [GOD:] *For My name's sake* I will defer My anger, ...
¹¹*For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it ...* NKJV

Here and in the following verse, God's “name” is shown to be synonymous with God himself by the same or similar things being done in regard to God and also to his “name”.

PS 18:49 [DAVID:] For this I will *praise you, O LORD*, among the nations, and *sing to your name.* ESV

. . . Likewise, God's “name” is synonymous with his presence

1KI 9:3 And the LORD said to him [Solomon], “I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by *putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.* ESV

Note that the “house” refers to the temple that Solomon had built for God.

God's “name” is synonymous with God in him helping his people . . .

PS 20:1 May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! *May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!* ESV

PS 139:7–10 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *Where can I go to escape your spirit? Where can I flee to escape your presence?* ⁸*If I were to ascend to heaven, you would be there. If I were to sprawl out in Sheol, there you would be.* ⁹*If I were to fly away on the wings of the dawn, and settle down on the other side of the sea,* ¹⁰*even there your hand would guide me, your right hand would grab hold of me.*

However, God primarily dwells in heaven

DEUT 26:15A [MOSES, TO GOD:] Look down from *your holy dwelling place in heaven* and bless your people ...

Verses which speak of God being in heaven are not understood to indicate that he is in any way confined to one location. But they do suggest that his form is such that his primary presence is in heaven. Note that some verses imply that God is present throughout the earth through his Holy Spirit (cf. Ps 139:7–10 ↑).

What does God being spirit mean for us in relating to him?

How should the fact of God being everywhere – always present with us – stimulate and/or encourage us?

What steps could you take to make yourself more consistently mindful of God’s presence with you?

How do you feel about God knowing everything? How does it encourage or challenge you?

List some factors that set God’s wisdom apart from human wisdom.

How can we utilize God’s incredible wisdom in our own lives?

God has incredible wisdom

Ps 147:5 Our Lord is great and has awesome power; *there is no limit to his wisdom.*

God's knowledge and wisdom is far superior to that of people – beyond our comprehension

ISA 40:13–14, 28B *Who has known the mind of the LORD or been able to give him advice? ¹⁴Whom did he ask for help? Who taught him the right way? Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way to understanding? ... ²⁸... No one can understand how great his wisdom is.* NCV™

As such, God knows much that people do not know . . .

DEUT 29:29A [MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *There are some things the LORD our God has kept secret, but there are some things he has let us know.* NCV™

1KI 8:39B [SOLOMON, TO GOD:] *Only you know what is in everyone's heart.* NCV™

. . . Furthermore, God can take away worldly wisdom

1COR 1:19B–20 [GOD:] *“I will cause the wise men to lose their wisdom; I will make the wise men unable to understand.”* NCV™

b) God's Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory in reference to his wondrous being. In doing so, it has in view God's essence and/or his attributes. Regarding his essence, God's glory pertains to his essential being itself, such that his presence is on occasions perceived as his glory and spoken of in terms of it. Regarding his attributes, God's glory emanates in part from his attributes – such as his power – which in a sense reflect the glory of God's essence and presence.

Glory is a prominent and key attribute of God

Ps 138:5 They [kings] will sing about the ways of the LORD, for *great is the glory of the LORD!* ISV

ROM 3:23 *All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.* CEV

In their sinful state, people are not compatible with God's wondrous glory. The fact that it is God's glory that people are measured by or compared to, underlines that glory is a key attribute of God.

God's glory is an integral aspect of God's presence . . .

Ps 26:8 [DAVID, TO GOD:] I love *the house where you live, O LORD, the place where your glory dwells.* GNT

Here David speaks of God's temple as being a prime location of God's presence and thus his glory. As such, David associates God's glory with his presence.

. . . Moreover, God's glory manifests his presence

LEV 9:23–24 Moses and Aaron then entered into the Meeting Tent. When they came out, they blessed the people, and *the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.* ²⁴*Then fire went out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar, and all the people saw it, so they shouted loudly and fell down with their faces to the ground.*

ACTS 7:55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently toward heaven and *saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*

Leviticus 9:23–24 (above) correlates “the glory of the LORD” (v. 23) with “the presence of the LORD” (v. 24). Acts 7:55 (immediately above) correlates “the glory of God” with “God” himself – and so likewise with God’s presence.

In association with his glory, God is surrounded by brilliant light . . .

EZEK 1:26–28A [EZEKIEL, DESCRIBING A VISION OF GOD:] I then saw what looked like a throne made of sapphire, and sitting on the throne was a figure in the shape of a human. ²⁷From the waist up, it was glowing like metal in a hot furnace, and from the waist down it looked like the flames of a fire. *The figure was surrounded by a bright light, ²⁸as colorful as a rainbow that appears after a storm. I realized I was seeing the brightness of the Lord’s glory!* CEV

Here Ezekiel sees a vision involving what appears to be a manifestation of God’s glory.

. . . and God has great majesty

Ps 145:5A [DAVID, TO GOD:] I will meditate on *the glorious splendor of Your majesty* . . . NKJV

God’s glory is reflected in his powerful deeds

JOHN 11:40–44 Jesus responded [to Martha], “Didn’t I tell you that if you believe, *you would see the glory of God?*” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. *Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you that you have listened to me. ⁴²I knew that you always listen to me, but I said this for the sake of the crowd standing around here, that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, he shouted in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The one who had died came out, his feet and hands tied up with strips of cloth, and a cloth wrapped around his face. Jesus said to them, “Unwrap him and let him go.”*

God’s glory was seen (v. 40) or reflected in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, with Jesus effectively calling on God and his power (v. 41) in raising Lazarus.

d) God’s Knowledge and Wisdom

God knows everything

1JN 3:20B God is greater than our conscience and *knows all things*.

JOB 37:16 [ELIHU, TO JOB:] Do you know about the balancing of the clouds, that wondrous activity of *him who is perfect in knowledge?*

God sees all people, seeing and knowing all that they do . . .

Ps 33:13–15 The LORD watches from heaven; *he sees all people.* ¹⁴From the place where he lives *he looks carefully at all the earth’s inhabitants.* ¹⁵He is the one who forms every human heart, *and takes note of all their actions.*

Ps 139:2–3 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *You know when I sit down and when I get up; even from far away you understand my motives. ³You carefully observe me when I travel or when I lie down to rest; you are aware of everything I do.*

. . . No one can hide themselves or what they do from God

JOB 34:21–22 *God’s eyes are on a person’s ways. He sees all his steps. ²²There’s no darkness or deep shadow where troublemakers can hide.* GW

God knows all people’s “hearts” and minds

Ps 44:21 God would have known, because *he knows what is in our hearts.* NCV™

EZEK 11:5B This is what the LORD says: *‘This is what you are thinking, O house of Israel; I know what goes through your minds.*

God knows the future

ISA 46:10 [GOD, TO ISRAEL:] *From the beginning I revealed the end. From long ago I told you things that had not yet happened, saying, “My plan will stand, and I’ll do everything I intended to do.”* GW

God is glorified in his powerful deeds

Ps 86:9–10 *All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. ¹⁰For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.* ESV

God is glorified through his powerful deeds partly in that people glorify him (v. 9), in response to his deeds.

Apparently scientists still do not understand what makes lightning flash (cf. Job 37:15). What is one thing in nature that you find particularly incomprehensible or stunning?

What is something that God has done in your own life or in the life of someone close to you, that you do or should exalt him for?

Is there anything that God does not do – or has not done yet – that you wish he would do? Why do you think he does not or has not done this?

God's glory is evidenced throughout the earth and the heavens . . .

Ps 8:1 *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.* ESV

Ps 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky displays his handiwork.*

The above verses speak of how God's glory is evidenced throughout the earth and the heavens. For God so wonderfully created them, reflecting his glory.

. . . God's glory will be explicitly revealed throughout the earth, to all nations

HAB 2:14 *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.* ESV

The revelation of God's glory in the destruction of Babylon (cf. vv. 12–13) may initially be in view, but the verse probably also has a final fulfillment at the end of the age.

What is the relationship between God's glory and his presence?

How is God's glory evidenced in the world today?

How should being mindful of God's glory affect the way we view and relate to God?

c) God's Power (II): His Deeds

God's great power is shown in his deeds

Ps 77:14 [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *You alone work miracles, and you have let nations see your mighty power.* CEV

God performs great and awesome deeds

JOEL 2:21 Do not fear, my land! Rejoice and be glad, because *the LORD has accomplished great things!*

ISA 64:3 [ISAIAH, TO GOD:] *When you performed awesome deeds that took us by surprise, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.*

God's deeds are largely incomprehensible

JOB 37:5, 15 God thunders with his voice in marvelous ways; *he does great things beyond our understanding. ... ¹⁵Do you know how God commands them [clouds], how he makes lightning flash in his storm cloud?*

ECCL 8:17 [A WISE TEACHER:] *... then I discerned all that God has done: No one really comprehends what happens on earth. Despite all human efforts to discover it, no one can ever grasp it. Even if a wise person claimed that he understood, he would not really comprehend it.*

The phrase "what happens on earth" alludes to the earlier phrase "all that God has done". No one really comprehends all this, that God does.

God's deeds are uncountable

JOB 5:9 [ELIPHAZ, SPEAKING OF GOD:] *He does great and unsearchable things, marvelous things without number; ...*

Nominate one verse (not necessarily from the ones above) that for you epitomizes or sums up God's power. Say why you chose it.

What are the implications of God's supreme power for the world?

What is one aspect of your life that should be affected by the Bible's claim that by his power God "can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine" (Eph 3:20)? How might or how should it be affected?

c) God's Personhood

God is not a "thing" but a personal being that one can interrelate with. God thinks, has a will, has feelings and has character. Furthermore, God is active, communicates and interacts with people.

God has a mind – knowing and comprehending things . . .

1SAM 2:3B *For the LORD is a God who knows; he evaluates what people do.*

1CHR 28:9A [DAVID:] And you, Solomon my son, obey the God of your father and serve him with a submissive attitude and a willing spirit, for *the LORD examines all minds and understands every motive of one's thoughts.*

. . . and God has a will

EPH 1:11 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] In the Messiah we were also chosen when we were predestined according to *the purpose of the one* [God] *who does everything according to the intention of his will, . . .* ISV

God has feelings and character . . .

2CHR 36:15 *But the LORD God felt sorry for his people, and instead of destroying the temple, he sent prophets who warned the people over and over about their sins.* CEV

JAMES 5:11B You have heard of Job's endurance and you have seen the Lord's purpose, that *the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

. . . and God feels emotional pain

ISA 63:9A *Through all that they suffered, he suffered too.*

God suffered in response to the suffering of his people.

God is active

JOHN 5:17 But Jesus said to them, "*My Father never stops working, and so I keep working, too.*" NCV™

God communicates . . .

PHIL 3:15 [PAUL, TO THE PHILIPPIAN BELIEVERS:] All of us who are mature should think in this same way. And if any of you think differently, *God will make it clear to you.* CEV

HEB 1:1–2 After *God spoke long ago in various portions and in various ways to our ancestors through the prophets,* ²*in these last days he has spoken to us in a son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he created the world.*

. . . and people can communicate with God

DAN 6:10B–11 Three times each day *Daniel would kneel down to pray and thank God,* just as he always had done. ¹¹Then those men went as a group and *found Daniel praying and asking God for help.* NCV™

God interacts with people, responding to their requests and needs

JAMES 4:8, 10 *Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.* Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and make your hearts pure, you double-minded. . . . ¹⁰*Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.*

Ps 91:15 [GOD, SPEAKING OF A PERSON DEVOTED TO HIM:] *When he calls out to me, I will answer him. I will be with him when he is in trouble; I will rescue him and bring him honor.*

EPH 1:18B–19 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] . . . that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹*the incomparable greatness of his power* toward us who believe, as displayed in the exercise of his immense strength.

. . . No being can do what God can do

Ps 86:8 [DAVID:] No god is like you, O Lord. *No one can do what you do.* GW

Power in fact belongs to God

REV 19:1 [JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION:] After these things I heard what sounded like the loud voice of a large crowd in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and *power belong to our God.* ISV

Verses which speak of power as belonging to God, point to him as having ultimate power and being all-powerful – and even as being the ultimate source of all power.

b) God's Power (I): Ultimate Power

God is mighty in power . . .

Ps 106:8 Yet he [God] saved them for his name's sake, *that he might make known his mighty power.* ESV

EPH 3:20 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Glory belongs to God, whose power is at work in us. *By this power he can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.* GW

. . . He is Almighty

REV 15:3B “Great and amazing are your deeds, *O Lord God the Almighty!* Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! ESV

The words translated as “Almighty” are understood by many to convey God's all-surpassing, infinite power (or omnipotence) and his sovereignty.

God can do all things – nothing is too hard

JOB 42:2 [JOB, TO GOD:] I know that *you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.* ESV

LUKE 1:36–37 [THE ANGEL GABRIEL, TO MARY:] Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. ³⁷*Nothing is impossible for God!* CEV

God does whatever pleases him

Ps 135:6 *He does whatever he pleases in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the ocean depths.*

God's power is far superior to that of anyone else . . .

2CHR 20:6 He [Jehoshaphat] prayed: “O LORD God of our ancestors, you are the God who lives in heaven and *rules over all the kingdoms of the nations. You possess strength and power; no one can stand against you.*

How does God communicate and interact with us?

How might the concept of God having feelings and even feeling emotional pain affect the way we view and/or relate to him?

Do you see God as a personal being that you can relate to? Explain.

d) God's Eternity

God is alive

2SAM 22:47 *The LORD is alive! My protector is praiseworthy! The God who delivers me is exalted as king!*

God has always been alive, the first of all things . . .

Ps 93:2 *Your throne, O LORD, has been firm from the beginning, and you existed before time began.* GNT

ISA 44:6 This is what the LORD, Israel's king, says, their protector, the LORD who commands armies: *"I am the first and I am the last, there is no God but me.*

. . . God existed even before the world began

Ps 90:2 [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *Even before the mountains came into existence, or you brought the world into being, you were the eternal God.*

God will live forever . . .

DAN 4:34B [KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR:] *I extolled the Most High, and I praised and glorified the one who lives forever. For his authority is an everlasting authority, and his kingdom extends from one generation to the next.*

1TIM 1:17 [PAUL, SPEAKING OF GOD:] *Now to the eternal king, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever! Amen.*

. . . In fact, God transcends time

2PET 3:8 [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] *Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day.*

God dwells outside of the limitations of time, not bound by its finite perspective. From his eternal perspective, diverse periods such as

God is in fact beyond our comprehension

JOB 36:26 *Yes, God is great – beyond our knowledge! The number of his years is unsearchable.*

JOB 11:7–9 *Can you discover the essence of God? Can you find out the perfection of the Almighty? ⁸It is higher than the heavens – what can you do? It is deeper than Sheol – what can you know? ⁹Its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*

The extent of God's being and attributes are far beyond our understanding.

In what ways is God greater than everyone and everything else? (Do not limit your answer to just what is mentioned in the verses.)

What is one thing about God that you find particularly awe-inspiring and/or hard to comprehend?

How should we respond to the greatness and awesomeness of God?

a) God's Greatness

God is great and awesome

DEUT 10:17 [MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] For *the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God who is unbiased and takes no bribe . . .*

God is greater than all others . . .

JOHN 10:29 [JESUS:] *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them from my Father's hand.*

Ps 150:2 [A PSALMIST, SPEAKING OF GOD:] Praise him for his mighty acts! *Praise him for his surpassing greatness!*

. . . and God is exalted above all others

Ps 113:4 *The LORD is exalted over all the nations; his splendor reaches beyond the sky.*

There is no one like God . . .

JER 10:6–7 [JEREMIAH:] I said, “*There is no one like you, LORD. You are great. And you are renowned for your power.*”⁷ Everyone should revere you, O King of all nations, because you deserve to be revered. *For there is no one like you among any of the wise people of the nations nor among any of their kings.*

. . . God does things which show that there is no one like him

ISA 40:22–26 *God is the one who rules the whole earth, and we that live here are merely insects. He spread out the heavens like a curtain or an open tent.*²³ *God brings down rulers and turns them into nothing.*²⁴ *They are like flowers freshly sprung up and starting to grow. But when God blows on them, they wilt and are carried off like straw in a storm.*²⁵ *The holy God asks, “Who compares with me? Is anyone my equal?”*²⁶ *Look at the evening sky! Who created the stars? Who gave them each a name? Who leads them like an army? The LORD is so powerful that none of the stars are ever missing.* CEV

a day and a thousand years are both small, even insignificant. To God the distinction between them is merely relative.

God is self-existing

JOHN 5:26 For as *the Father has life in himself*, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ESV

God does not change

JAMES 1:17 All generous giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from *the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or the slightest hint of change.*

Note that “the Father of lights” refers to God as the creator of the lights in the sky, i.e. the sun, moon, and stars (cf. CEV, GNT, NCV, NLT).

What evidence or reasons could you give to a non-believer that God is indeed alive, that he does exist?

Why would God's eternity have evoked praise from Paul (cf. 1Tim 1:17)?

How does God's eternal perspective on time result in him viewing things differently to us?

II. God's Pre-Eminence

(⇒ [God's:] *Holiness*, in 2. *God's Character*)

A failure of many of us in the church today is that we have an inadequate view of God, failing to fully appreciate his pre-eminence. All Christians need to understand and be mindful of God's surpassing greatness and incomparable capabilities – notably his power, knowledge and wisdom.