

The **Bible** Unpacked

Comprehensive Study Series

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

paul mallison

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

17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People

Composed by Paul Mallison

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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.




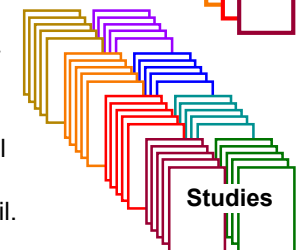
 **Foundations Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers consolidating their faith. For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.




 **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.



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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 lead 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

What should one do in order to rely on the Holy Spirit's help?

How does the Holy Spirit direct us in doing God's work?

Explain in your own words how we worship and pray by the Holy Spirit.

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.

Through the Holy Spirit the disciples would receive “power (ability, efficiency, and might)” (AMP), enabling them to witness for Christ far and wide.

The Holy Spirit has a significant role in what God's people speak

MATT 10:18–20 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] You will be brought before governors and kings because of me, to testify to them and to the gentiles. ¹⁹When they hand you over, don't worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say, because *in that hour what you are to say will be given to you.* ²⁰*It won't be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.* ISV

ACTS 4:31 When they [the believers] had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken, and *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God courageously.*

God's people worship and pray by the Holy Spirit

PHIL 3:3 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] It is we, not they, who have received the true circumcision, for *we worship God by means of his Spirit* and rejoice in our life in union with Christ Jesus. GNT

EPH 6:18 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] With every prayer and petition, *pray at all times in the Spirit*, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.

A further aspect of the Holy Spirit's help of God's people is that they are to worship and pray by or in the Holy Spirit. As such, God's people worship and pray in reliance on the Holy Spirit, under his power and guidance.

I. Basics

This section looks at some basic factors underlying God's interaction with his people. They show that God's relationship with his people is not an aloof, impersonal one – far from it. God is always with his people and they can actually know him. Complementary to this is God's great love and steadfast faithfulness towards his people – two characteristics which are often coupled together in the Bible. Undergirding all God's interaction with his people is his truly amazing grace.

a) God Is Always with His People

“The best of all is: God is with us.” – John Wesley

God and Jesus Christ are with their people

2COR 6:16B [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] We are the temple of the living God, as *God himself says*, “*I will live with these people and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*” CEV

2THES 3:16B [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *The Lord be with you all.*

This is a blessing or prayer, speaking of Jesus Christ's presence with his people.

God and Jesus Christ are always with their people . . .

JOSH 1:5B [GOD:] *Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.* ESV

MATT 28:20B [JESUS:] *And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

. . . and so God's people are always with God – living in his presence

Ps 73:23 [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *But I am continually with you; you hold my right hand.*

Ps 41:12 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *You defend my integrity, and you set me in your presence forever.* GW

God is with his people wherever they go . . .

Jos 1:9B *Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.* ESV

. . . and God also goes before them

DEUT 31:8 *The LORD himself will go before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forget you. Don't be afraid and don't worry.*

NCV™

d) The Holy Spirit Helps God's People

The Holy Spirit helps each believer

ROM 8:26 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.*

JOHN 14:16–17A [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever—¹⁷the Spirit of truth.* NCV™

The Holy Spirit leads God's people . . .

ROM 8:14 *Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children.* GNT

GAL 5:18 *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

The Holy Spirit may lead a person by an inner conviction or sense of assurance, by circumstances, or even by a discernible revelation. (Giving such a revelation to a person with a prophetic spiritual gift is one way the Holy Spirit leads and directs Christian groups.)

. . . and the Holy Spirit directs them in doing God's work

ACTS 10:19–20 While Peter was still thinking seriously about the vision, *the Spirit said to him*, “*Look! Three men are looking for you.²⁰ But get up, go down, and accompany them without hesitation, because I have sent them.*”

ACTS 20:22 [PAUL:] *And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem without knowing what will happen to me there, . . .*

The Holy Spirit empowers God's people to do God's work

MIC 3:8 [THE PROPHET MICAH:] *As for me, I am truly filled with power by the Spirit of the LORD, filled with judgment and might to announce to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.* ISV

ACTS 1:8 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in*

How does the Holy Spirit make God's people holy?

Choose one of the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 (above in *The Holy Spirit gives God's people joy and peace*) that you need to focus on nurturing more. What steps could you take to do this?

The verses make reference to people being “full of the Spirit” (cf. Acts 11:24; Acts 6:3). How can we likewise be filled with the Holy Spirit?

God is with his people in trouble . . .

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

. . . and being with his people in trouble, God sees them through it

Ps 91:15 [GOD, SPEAKING OF ONE WHO LOVES 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.*

Isa 43:2 [GOD:] *When you pass through the waters, I am with you; when you pass through the streams, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not harm you.*

God in fact lives in his people, and they in him

1JN 4:13, 15–16 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *We know that we live in God and he lives in us, because he gave us his Spirit. . . .* ¹⁵*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God has God living inside, and that person lives in God.* ¹⁶And so we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. God is love. *Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.* NCV™

Verses that speak of God and/or Jesus Christ living in their people (or vice versa) largely have in view the spiritual union of God and Jesus Christ with their people. This union is in part at least based on God's people having his Holy Spirit (v. 13).

God's people are with Jesus Christ even in death

PHIL 1:23–24 [PAUL, SPEAKING OF LIFE AND DEATH:] I feel torn between the two, because I have a desire *to depart and be with Christ*, which is better by far, ²⁴but it is more vital for your sake that I remain in the body.

Why do you think John Wesley said, "The best of all is: God is with us"?

How can we enable ourselves to be more aware of living in God's presence?

How or in what sense do God and Jesus Christ live in their people?

GAL 5:22–23 But *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control.* Against such things there is no law.

Note the other "fruits" of the Spirit listed here, along with joy and peace.

The Holy Spirit teaches God's people . . .

1COR 2:13 [PAUL:] And *we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people.*

The Holy Spirit enables God's people to know and express spiritual truths.

. . . In fact, the Holy Spirit teaches them about all things

1JN 2:27 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] Now as for you, the anointing that you received from him resides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as *his anointing teaches you about all things*, it is true and is not a lie. Just as it has taught you, you reside in him.

The "anointing" from God is more than likely the Holy Spirit.

Accordingly, having the Holy Spirit is linked with having wisdom and knowledge

ACTS 6:3 [THE APOSTLES, TO THE OTHER BELIEVERS:] Therefore, brothers, appoint seven men among you who have a good reputation, *who are full of the Spirit and wisdom*, and we will put them in charge of this work. ISV

1COR 2:11–12 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also *no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.* ¹²*Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.* ESV

Being the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit "comprehends the thoughts of God" (v. 11). Having received the Holy Spirit, believers thus gain insight into God's thinking and ways (v. 12).

c) The Holy Spirit Renews God's People

The Holy Spirit brings spiritual life

(⇒ . . . They are born again of the Holy Spirit and through God's word, in 18. God's Transformation of His People)

JOHN 6:63 [JESUS:] *The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help! The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*

Particularly in light of the verse's first clause, the final statement may indicate that the words Jesus spoke were from (cf. NIRV, CEV) or spoken through the Holy Spirit. As such they are words that the Holy Spirit uses to produce life – when people believe them and live according to them.

The Holy Spirit makes God's people holy

1PET 1:2A [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] God the Father decided to choose you as his people, and *his Spirit has made you holy.* CEV

The Holy Spirit gives God's people love and faith

ROM 15:30 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] My friends, by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and *by the love that comes from the Holy Spirit*, I beg you to pray sincerely with me and for me. CEV

ACTS 11:24 *Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith*, and many people were brought to the Lord. GNT

The description of Barnabas as being full of both the Holy Spirit and faith (cf. Acts 6:5, re Stephen) arguably implies that faith comes with the Holy Spirit. It at least associates faith with having the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives God's people joy and peace

1THES 1:6 [PAUL, TO THE THESSALONIANS:] And you became like us and like the Lord. You suffered much, but still you accepted the teaching with *the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit.* NCV™

b) God Knows His People and They Know Him

(⇒ Know God, in 24. Connecting with God)

God and Jesus Christ know their people

EX 33:17 The LORD said to Moses, “I will do this thing also that you have requested, for you have found favor in my sight, and *I know you by name.*”

The expression “I know you by name” (cf. John 10:3b ↓) indicates: intimate knowledge – “I know you very well” (GNT, NCV); and a personal relationship – “I know you personally” (AMP); “you are my friend” (NLT, cf. CEV).

JOHN 10:3B, 14 [JESUS, SPEAKING OF HIMSELF AS “THE GOOD SHEPHERD”:] *He calls his own sheep by name* and leads them out. . . .
^{14c}I am the good shepherd. *I know my own* and my own know me – . . .

God and Jesus Christ also know all their people's needs and troubles

MATT 6:8 Do not be like them, for *your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

REV 2:9 [JESUS CHRIST, TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS:] *I know the distress you are suffering and your poverty* (but you are rich). *I also know the slander against you* by those who call themselves Jews and really are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

God enables his people to know him

EPH 1:16B–17 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] I always remember you in my prayers, ¹⁷asking the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, *to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you will know him better.* NCV™

Consequently, God's people know him . . .

1JN 2:14A [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] I am writing to you, my children, because *you know the Father.* GNT

1JN 4:7 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and *whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.* ESV

. . . and God’s people know Jesus Christ

1JN 2:13A [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] I am writing to you, fathers, that *you have known him who has been from the beginning.*

The expression “him who has been from the beginning” refers to Jesus Christ.

In fact, God’s people are friends of God and Jesus Christ . . .

JAMES 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Now Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness,” and *he was called God’s friend.*

JOHN 15:14–15 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *You are my friends if you do what I command you.* ¹⁵I no longer call you slaves, because the slave does not understand what his master is doing. *But I have called you friends, because I have revealed to you everything I heard from my Father.*

. . . and God’s people have fellowship with God and Jesus Christ

1JN 1:3 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] What we have seen and heard we announce to you too, so that you may have fellowship with us (and *indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*).

What do we know about how God works through us by the Holy Spirit? Do we ourselves need to do anything?

What work of Jesus Christ does the Holy Spirit continue – and how does he do so?

Choose one aspect of God’s work in his people through the Holy Spirit that you find particularly notable. Make one observation about it (perhaps in relation to your own life).

the Holy Spirit is one way in which God works through his people by the Holy Spirit (as per the previous subsection).

Likewise, Jesus Christ works amongst God’s people through the Holy Spirit

2COR 3:3 [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] *And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.* ESV

The Corinthians’ new spiritual lives were composed by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, in Paul’s ministry.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit continues Jesus Christ’s work in God’s people . . .

JOHN 14:26 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.*

Jesus said God would send the Holy Spirit in his name – “in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf” (AMP; cf. CEV, NLT). As such the Holy Spirit represents Jesus Christ’s interests and continues his work, doing such things as calling believers’ attention to Jesus Christ’s teachings.

. . . and the Holy Spirit continues Jesus Christ’s work through God’s people

ACTS 1:8 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.*

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to witness for Jesus Christ, throughout the world.

When undergoing a time of distress, why should we be encouraged by the fact that God knows about it if he is allowing it to continue anyway?

How or in what way/s do Christians know God better than other people do?

In what way do Christians have fellowship with God and Jesus Christ? What does it involve?

c) God Loves His People

(⇒ *God is love – as epitomized in him giving his only Son, to save us, in 2. God's Character*)

God loves the whole world but his love for believers has an additional intimacy or a more personal facet. There is also far more latitude for God to express his love in his dealings with those who are in a right or true relationship with him.

God loves his people . . .

JOHN 16:27 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.*

. . . God loves them greatly

Ps 86:5 [DAVID, TO GOD:] You are good to us and forgiving, *full of constant love for all who pray to you.* GNT

Ps 32:10 Wicked people have many troubles, but *the LORD's love surrounds those who trust him.* NCV™

God's love is with his people always – forever

Ps 89:28 [GOD, SPEAKING OF DAVID:] *My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him.* ESV

The reference to God's "steadfast love" is indicative of the constancy and reliability of God's love. What God says here of his love in regard to David is applicable to each of his people.

God shows his love for his people in delivering them . . .

Ps 86:13 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *For you will extend your great loyal love to me, and will deliver my life from the depths of Sheol.*

"Sheol" is a reference to the grave.

. . . and God shows his love for his people in protecting them

DEUT 33:12B *"The LORD's loved ones will lie down in safety, because he protects them all day long. The ones he loves rest with him."* NCV™

b) God Works in His People through the Holy Spirit

God saves his people through the Holy Spirit

2THES 2:13 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because *God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

God instructs and teaches his people through the Holy Spirit

NEH 9:20A [LEVITES, TO GOD:] *You imparted your good Spirit to instruct them.*

1COR 2:9–10 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But just as it is written, "Things that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love him."¹⁰ *God has revealed these to us by the Spirit.* For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

God works through his people by the Holy Spirit . . .

ZEC 4:6B–7 [GOD, TO ZERUBBABEL WHO WAS A LEADER OF THE JEWS:] 'Not by strength and not by power, *but by my Spirit,*' says the LORD who rules over all."⁷ *"What are you, you great mountain? Because of Zerubbabel you will become a level plain! And he will bring forth the temple capstone with shoutings of 'Grace! Grace!' because of this."*

God would accomplish the work he was doing through Zerubbabel by his Spirit. Mountainous problems would be overcome and Zerubbabel would "bring forth the temple capstone" (v. 7b) signifying the completion of the work (the rebuilding of the temple).

. . . As such, God speaks through them by the Holy Spirit

NEH 9:30A [LEVITES, TO GOD:] You were patient with them for many years. *You warned them by your Spirit through your prophets.* GW

God spoke through his prophets by the Holy Spirit, often to admonish the Israelites. Note that speaking through his people by

What or who is the Holy Spirit?

Why do you think God gives his people the Holy Spirit?

Do people receive the Holy Spirit as soon as they become a Christian? Use Bible verses to support your answer.

God also shows his love in his kindness and blessings to his people

NUM 14:19 [MOSES, TO GOD:] *Please forgive the iniquity of this people according to your great loyal love, just as you have forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.*

1JN 3:1A [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children—and so, in fact, we are.* GNT

Jesus Christ loves God's people – as he showed when he gave his life for them

JOHN 15:9, 12–13 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you; remain in my love. ...* ¹²*My commandment is this – to love one another just as I have loved you.* ¹³*No one has greater love than this – that one lays down his life for his friends.*

Note: God delights and rejoices in his people

ZEPH 3:17 The LORD your God is in your midst; he is a warrior who can deliver. *He takes great delight in you; he renews you by his love; he shouts for joy over you.*

How does God show his love to you?

How do you respond to God's love? What is something else you could do in response to or in acknowledgement of God's love (either a one-off act or something you could start doing regularly)?

Why does God delight and rejoice in his people?

. . . and it indicates that God lives in them

1JN 3:24B Now *by this we know that God resides in us: by the Spirit he has given us.*

Having the Spirit of God verifies that God himself lives in us.

The Holy Spirit is God's seal, guaranteeing what is to come

EPH 1:13–14 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] You, too, have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. *When you believed in him you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,* ¹⁴*who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of God's own possession, to his praise and glory.* ISV

God's "own possession" refers to believers, who have been marked as such by being given God's Holy Spirit.

a) God Gives the Holy Spirit to His People

God gives his people his Holy Spirit . . .

GAL 4:6 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Since you are God’s children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, and the Spirit cries out, “Father.”* NCV™

ROM 5:5 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through *the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

. . . As such, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe and obey him

JOHN 7:38–39A [JESUS:] *The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have rivers of living water flowing from his heart.* ³⁹*Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who were believing in him were to receive . . .* ISV

ACTS 5:32 [THE APOSTLES:] And we are witnesses of these events, and so is *the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.*

The Holy Spirit lives in God’s people

2TIM 1:14 [PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] Protect that good thing [the truth] entrusted to you, through *the Holy Spirit who lives within us.*

Having the Holy Spirit verifies that a person is one of God’s people . . .

ROM 8:15–16 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but *you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, “Abba, Father.”* ¹⁶*The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God’s children.*

The Holy Spirit testifies to and assures believers that they are God’s children (v. 16). Accordingly, by the Holy Spirit believers can acknowledge and address God as “Abba” or Father (v. 15).

d) God Is Faithful to His People

(⇒ [God’s] Faithfulness, in 2. God’s Character)

God is always faithful to his people

PS 25:10 *The LORD always proves faithful and reliable to those who follow the demands of his covenant.*

God is faithful even if his people are unfaithful and do wrong

ROM 3:3–4A *But what if some of them were not faithful? Does this mean that God will not be faithful?* ⁴*Certainly not!* GNT

NEH 9:33 [LEVITES, TO GOD:] You are righteous in all that is happening to us, because *you have acted faithfully while we have practiced evil.* ISV

God shows his faithfulness in helping his people

PS 91:4 [A PSALMIST, TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN GOD:] He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care; *his faithfulness will protect and defend you.* GNT

LAM 3:22–23 [JEREMIAH, REFERRING TO HIS PEOPLE:] The LORD’s gracious love is the reason we are not consumed, since *his compassions never end.* ²³*They are new every morning—great is your faithfulness!* ISV

1COR 10:13B [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *God is faithful: He will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it.*

God faithfully maintains his covenants with his people forever . . .

DEUT 7:9 [MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] Know that the LORD your God is God, the trusted *God who faithfully keeps his covenant to the thousandth generation of those who love him and obey his commands.*

ISV

Ps 89:28 [GOD, SPEAKING OF DAVID:] *I will show my gracious love toward him forever, since my covenant is securely established with him.* ISV

. . . God faithfully keeps his promises to his people

JOSH 21:45 *Not one of the LORD's faithful promises to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; every one was realized.*

Ps 119:140 [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *Your promises are proven, so I, your servant, love them.* NCV™

Note: God remembers his people

ISA 49:14–16 The people of Zion said, “The LORD has turned away and forgotten us.” ¹⁵*The LORD answered, “Could a mother forget a child who nurses at her breast? Could she fail to love an infant who came from her own body? Even if a mother could forget, I will never forget you. ¹⁶A picture of your city is drawn on my hand. You are always in my thoughts!* CEV

II. God's Holy Spirit in His People

God's incomparable gift of his Holy Spirit is critical to God's relationship with each of his people – including God's work in and through them. In part at least, this is due to the Holy Spirit being the prime means by which God renews and helps believers.

What does “grace” mean? Give a brief explanation of God’s grace.

How does the grace of God affect our everyday lives?

Do we ourselves need to do anything to be strengthened by God’s grace? If so, what?

What is one way or situation in which God has shown his faithfulness to you, or to someone close to you?

Why does God remain faithful even when his people are unfaithful?

How can we imitate God’s steadfast faithfulness? (Perhaps include examples of relevant situations in your answer.)

e) God Shows Grace to His People

(⇒ *Salvation by Grace, through Jesus Christ, in 14. The New Order*)

What God does for his people is based on his “grace” – his free and undeserved favour. God’s wonderful grace in the believer’s salvation is discussed largely in *Salvation by Grace, through Jesus Christ, in 14. The New Order*. This section primarily deals with the ongoing role of God’s grace in his people’s lives.

God and Jesus Christ show abundant grace towards their people

2COR 9:14 [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIANS:] And in their [needy believers’] prayers on your behalf they long for you because of *the extraordinary grace God has shown to you*.

Here Paul speaks of God’s grace in moving the Corinthians to generously give towards supporting needy believers.

1TIM 1:14 [PAUL:] And *our Lord poured out his abundant grace on me* and gave me the faith and love which are ours in union with Christ Jesus. GNT

By grace God’s people are given spiritual blessings and gifts

JOHN 1:16 [JOHN, PRIMARILY TO BELIEVERS:] *Out of the fullness of his [Christ’s] grace he has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another.* GNT

ROM 12:6 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And *we have different gifts according to the grace given to us*. If the gift is prophecy, that individual must use it in proportion to his faith.

The spiritual gifts given to believers are manifestations of God’s grace (cf. v. 3).

By grace God’s people are entrusted with his work . . .

EPH 3:7–9 [PAUL:] *I became a servant of this gospel according to the gift of God’s grace that was given to me* by the exercise of his power.

⁸To me – less than the least of all the saints – *this grace was given, to proclaim to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ* ⁹*and to enlighten everyone about God’s secret plan* – a secret that has been hidden for ages in God who has created all things.

. . . and by grace they are enabled to do God’s work

2COR 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace overflow to you so that because you have enough of everything in every way at all times, you will overflow in every good work.*

By grace God’s people are strengthened

HEB 13:9 [THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you from the right way. *It is good to receive inner strength from God’s grace*, and not by obeying rules about foods; those who obey these rules have not been helped by them. GNT

2COR 12:9–10 [PAUL, SPEAKING OF CHRIST’S RESPONSE TO A REQUEST:] But *he said to me, “My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me.* ¹⁰*Therefore I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with troubles, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.*

Jesus Christ’s grace was sufficient for Paul in his weakness. For the more Paul was aware of his weaknesses, the more he was open to depending on Christ’s power – in which by grace he was truly made strong.

By grace God’s people avoid sin

HEB 4:15–16 [THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but *one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.* ¹⁶*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* ESV