

# The **Bible** Unpacked

This series of studies is based on the  
*Foundations 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.

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## **Foundations Study Series**

A compilation of the Bible's teaching  
for believers consolidating their faith











## Notes

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## Suggestions for Study Groups

### Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

### Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.

### General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
  - (a) how you relate to God and/or to other people; or
  - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?
 If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?

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How should the statement that God is the judge of the world encourage us?

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What factors make God's judgment just?

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How do you think God may carry out his judicial retribution in the present time? Are there any happenings that you think may be God's judgment?

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Why do you think that God's judgment of the wicked is not more immediate?

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If God did not judge us, would there have been any need for Jesus Christ to die?

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## The Wicked and God’s Judgment

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### People may question God’s apparent lack of judgment regarding the wicked

[JEREMIAH:] LORD, when I bring my case to you, you are always right. But *I want to ask you about the justice you give. Why are evil people successful? Why do dishonest people have such easy lives?*

JEREMIAH 12:1 NCV™

### But in due time God does take action against the wicked

[GOD:] *To me belong vengeance and recompense. In due time their feet will slip, because their time of calamity is near and the things prepared for them draw near.* DEUTERONOMY 32:35 ISV

## Israel and God’s Judgment

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### Eventually God decided to bring destruction on unfaithful Israel

[GOD:] *My people, you abandoned me and walked away. I am tired of showing mercy; that’s why I’ll destroy you <sup>7</sup>by scattering you like straw blown by the wind. I will punish you with sorrow and death, because you refuse to change your ways.* JEREMIAH 15:6–7 CEV

### But God promised to spare a remnant of Israel

[ISAIAH, SPEAKING A MESSAGE FROM GOD:] *Those who remain in Judah will take root in the ground and bear fruit. <sup>31</sup>For a remnant will leave Jerusalem; survivors will come out of Mount Zion. The intense devotion of the sovereign Lord to his people will accomplish this.*

2 KINGS 19:30–31 NET

Note that Judah was the name of the southern Israelite kingdom and that Mount Zion refers to Jerusalem. (Zion was originally the name of one of the hills on which Jerusalem was built.)

## 6. God’s Creation

God Makes Everything .....	2
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God’s Creation of People.....	3
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The formation of the universe – including the world and everything in it – is the most astonishing thing that has ever occurred. If we accept the following teaching about God and creation, then we should have little trouble in accepting the other claims that the Bible makes about God.





*because of the way you destroyed the wild animals living there.*

HABAKKUK 2:17A NET

The Babylonians' devastation of the forests of Lebanon (cf. CEV, GNT, NLT) and their destruction of animals violated humankind's responsibility towards nature – and they would be punished for it.

## People and Death

### Every person will die

It is better to go to a funeral than a feast. For *death is the destiny of every person, and the living should take this to heart.* ECCLESIASTES 7:2 NET

### People's spirits exist after death

*As they [Jews] continued to stone Stephen, he kept praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"* ACTS 7:59 ISV

*Here also are the spirits of those good people who have been made perfect.* HEBREWS 12:23B CEV

The reference is to the spirits of righteous people who had died, and are now linked with the heavenly Jerusalem (cf. v. 22; NLT).

## 10. God's Judgment

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The Power of God's Judgment .....	27
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An understanding of God's judgment is needed to understand God himself, and also his salvation for people. Additionally, the topic of God's judgment contains some of the most awe-inspiring teaching, and even reasons for hope for God's people.

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Do you believe that God created the world? Why or why not?

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What does God being our creator mean for our relationship with him?

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What is our "spirit"?

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How should the fact that people are made in God's image influence us?

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How could you use the world as evidence for God's existence, when talking to a non-Christian?

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Give a definition of sin.

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Why is sin so bad?

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What is involved in being separated from God (as a consequence of sin)? What are the implications?

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Why does sin result in people facing God's anger?

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Explain as simply as you can the concept of making atonement for a person who has sinned.

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<sup>34</sup>This is to be a perpetual statute for you *to make atonement for the Israelites for all their sins once a year.*” LEVITICUS 16:32–34A NET

### However, Israel did not keep God’s law and broke his covenant

Samaria [the capital city of northern Israel] fell because *the Israelites did not obey the LORD their God, but broke the covenant he had made with them and disobeyed all the laws given by Moses, the servant of the LORD. They would not listen and they would not obey.*

2 KINGS 18:12 GNT

Despite the law’s provision for Israel’s sin, the Israelites as a whole persisted in sin – rebelling against God and breaking his covenant with them. This showed that ultimately the law was not sufficient to deal with sin.

## 7. God’s Sovereignty

God Rules Supreme .....	8
God Asserts His Authority .....	8
God Has Control over All Things .....	9
God Has Control over People .....	10

As the one and only God, God has supreme power and control over all things. Comprehending this and its implications is vital to having a sound understanding of God and of his relationship to the world – including his relationship with ourselves.





## God Has Control over People

### God has control over people’s hearts and minds

*When Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart.*

1 SAMUEL 10:9A NCV™

*The LORD caused the Egyptians to think well of them, and the Egyptians gave the people everything they asked for. So the Israelites took rich gifts from them.* EXODUS 12:36 NCV™

### God has control over people’s actions

[DANIEL, TO KING BELSHAZZAR:] *But you have not glorified the God who has in his control your very breath and all your ways!* DANIEL 5:23B NET

### God controls all that happens to people

*Good and bad each happen at the command of God Most High.*

LAMENTATIONS 3:38 CEV

[A WISE TEACHER:] *When life is good, enjoy it. But when life is hard, remember: God gives good times and hard times, and no one knows what tomorrow will bring.* ECCLESIASTES 7:14 NCV™

## 9. The Problem of Sin

What and Who.....	20
Consequences of Sin.....	20
The Law’s Provision for Sin .....	21

Knowing what sin is and what its consequences are is vital to understanding both God’s relationship with humankind and the need for Jesus Christ’s mission. Knowing about the law’s provision of “atonement” is also critical to understanding these things.

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What makes you think that God reigns supreme in the world?

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What plans has God carried out - in the world and/or in the lives of people you know?

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How should the teaching that God has control over evil influence us?

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To what degree does God impose his control over the nations? What does he do?

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In what way/s does God exert control over our lives? (In your answer you could make reference to your own life.)

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Should we accept every verse of Scripture as God's word? What dangers are there in not doing so?

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In what way/s is God's word active and powerful?

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How does - or how should - God's word impact the lives of his people?

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Which of the Ten Commandments do you need to be more mindful of? How would doing so affect you/ your life?

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Is God's covenant with Israel relevant in any way to God's relationship with his people today? If so, how?

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## The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments form the basis of the law that God gave through Moses. This law is sometimes referred to as the Mosaic Law.

### Commandments for our relationship with God

Then God spoke all these words [to the Israelites]: “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>3</sup>“You shall have no other gods besides me. <sup>4</sup>“You shall not make for yourselves an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above, or on earth below, or in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them in worship or serve them ... <sup>7</sup>“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, because the LORD will not leave the one who misuses his name unpunished. <sup>8</sup>“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. And you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male or female servants, nor your livestock, nor the alien who is within your gates. EXODUS 20:1–5B, 7–10 ISV

### Commandments for our relationships with people

“Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>13</sup>“You shall not murder. <sup>14</sup>“You shall not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup>“You shall not steal. <sup>16</sup>“You shall not testify falsely against your neighbor. <sup>17</sup>“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” EXODUS 20:12–17 ISV

## 8. God’s Word

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God’s word is our window to God. For through it we learn about God and his relationship with us. This chapter begins with some basic concepts and then looks at a key aspect of God’s word – God’s covenant with Israel. This defined God’s relationship with his people in the Old Testament and is critical to understanding the New Testament.

