

# The **Bible** Unpacked

## **Foundations Study Series**

The Bible's teaching condensed  
for young believers

Paul Mallison



# **The Bible Unpacked™**

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The Bible's teaching condensed  
for young believers

## **Part A. God and Spiritual Powers**

Paul Mallison

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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 eight booklets in the series, based on the eight parts of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Foundations Edition*. Each booklet has five chapters, with questions added.

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.

For free downloads and information on other study series based on editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, go to: [www.thebibleunpacked.net](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net).

Paul Mallison

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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?





# 1. God's Being

To begin to understand the Bible, we must know what God is like. This chapter teaches key fundamentals, providing the basic concepts for understanding how awesome God is.

## God's Form

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### God is one

[JESUS, QUOTING MOSES:] Listen, Israel, *the Lord our God, the Lord is one.* MARK 12:29B NET

God is a single thing. He is only one being.

### God is spirit

*God is spirit*, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. JOHN 4:24 NCV™

God is a spiritual being. He is not physical like people are.

### God is everywhere

[GOD:] *I am everywhere— both near and far, <sup>24</sup>in heaven and on earth.* JEREMIAH 23:23–24A CEV

### God has great glory

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

God's glory is a prominent part of his actual being. In fact his presence is sometimes described in terms of his glory. God's glory is also revealed or reflected in his extraordinary deeds.

## God's Eternity

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### God has always been alive

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

**God will live forever**

[NEBUCHADNEZZAR:] Then I gave praise to *the Most High God*; I gave honor and glory to *him who lives forever*. *God's rule is forever, and his kingdom continues for all time.* DANIEL 4:34B NCV™

**God does not change**

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.* JAMES 1:17 NET

**God's Power and Knowledge**

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**God can do all things – nothing is too hard**

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

[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. <sup>37</sup>*Nothing is impossible for God!* LUKE 1:36–37 CEV

**God knows everything**

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

**God even knows the future**

[GOD, SPEAKING TO HIS PEOPLE:] *From the beginning I told you what would happen in the end. A long time ago I told you things that have not yet happened.* When I plan something, it happens. What I want to do, I will do. ISAIAH 46:10 NCV™

**God has incredible wisdom**

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

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How can we relate to God if we cannot see him?

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Write down a couple of observations about God's glory.

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How is the fact that God does not change helpful to us?

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Knowing that God can do all things, is there anything that you should ask and trust him to do?

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

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## 2. God's Character

In order to relate to God, we need to know who God is – what his character is like. In tackling this topic, this chapter includes teaching on the two primary personal characteristics of God, from which his other characteristics come. These are his holiness and his love.

### God's Holiness

#### God is holy

*Holy, holy, holy! The LORD Almighty is holy!* [ISAIAH 6:3B GNT](#)

Being holy means that God is morally pure. It also means that he is separate from and intolerant of anything which is not morally pure.

#### There is nothing bad in God

[A PSALMIST:] They will say that the LORD is good. He is my Rock, and *there is no wrong in him.* [PSALMS 92:15 NCV™](#)

#### God cannot tolerate evil

[HABAKKUK, TO GOD:] *You are too just to tolerate evil; you are unable to condone wrongdoing.* [HABAKKUK 1:13A NET](#)

### God's Righteousness and Faithfulness

#### All God does is right and just

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, for *all his deeds are right and his ways are just.* [DANIEL 4:37A NET](#)

[BELIEVERS, TO GOD:] *Just and true are your ways, King over the nations!* [REVELATION 15:3B NET](#)

#### God does not lie nor change his mind – he keeps his promises

God is no mere human! *He doesn't tell lies or change his mind. God always keeps his promises.* [NUMBERS 23:19 CEV](#)

## God's Anger

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### God's anger is awesome

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *No one knows the full power of your furious anger, but it is as great as the fear that we owe to you.* PSALMS 90:11 CEV

### But God is slow to anger and does not stay angry

*The LORD is merciful and loving, slow to become angry and full of constant love. <sup>9</sup>He does not keep on rebuking; he is not angry for ever.* PSALMS 103:8–9 GNT

## God's Love and Mercy

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### God is love

The person who doesn't love doesn't know God, because *God is love. <sup>9</sup>God has shown us his love by sending his only Son into the world so that we could have life through him.* 1 JOHN 4:8–9 GW

The phrase "God is love" (v. 8) implies that God's nature is fundamentally love, rather than that love is simply a characteristic of God. It also reflects that God is the sole source of love.

### God is merciful and compassionate

[JAMES, TO BELIEVERS:] You have heard of Job's patience, and you know how the Lord provided for him in the end. For *the Lord is full of mercy and compassion.* JAMES 5:11B GNT

## God's Goodness

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### God is good

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *You are good and you do good.* PSALMS 119:68A NET

### God exercises kindness

[A PSALMIST:] *How can I repay the LORD for all his acts of kindness to me?* PSALMS 116:12 NET

What is "holiness"?

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If God is good, how can anger be one of his characteristics?

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Explain in your own words what the Bible means by saying: "God is love" (1Jn 4:8, 16)?

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What does "compassion" mean? How does God show compassion?

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How has God shown kindness to you?

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## 3. Jesus Christ

What distinguishes Christianity from other religions is largely its teachings about Jesus Christ. This chapter looks at this central figure, including the amazing claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

### Jesus Christ's Eternity

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#### Jesus Christ existed in the beginning

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] I'm writing to you, fathers, because you know *Christ who has existed from the beginning.* 1 JOHN 2:13A GW

Jesus Christ existed before the world was created.

#### Jesus Christ will be alive forever

But *Jesus lives forever, so he serves as a priest forever.* HEBREWS 7:24 GW

#### Jesus Christ remains the same

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!* HEBREWS 13:8 NET

### Jesus Christ's Pre-Eminence

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#### Jesus Christ has sovereign power

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF CHRIST:] *By his power to rule all things, he will change our simple bodies and make them like his own glorious body.* PHILIPPIANS 3:20B–21 NCV™

#### Jesus Christ has supreme knowledge and wisdom

[THE DISCIPLES, TO JESUS:] Now we know that *you know everything.* JOHN 16:30A GW

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *I will give you words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to oppose or prove wrong.* LUKE 21:15 GW

Jesus Christ has wisdom far superior to that of any enemy that believers may encounter.

## Jesus Christ is everywhere

So Jesus came down, and he is the same One who went up above all the sky. *Christ did that to fill everything with his presence.*

EPHESIANS 4:10 NCV™

The whole universe is filled with Jesus Christ's presence.

## Jesus Christ's Character

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### Jesus Christ is holy

[BELIEVERS, TO GOD:] Then they turned against *your holy Servant Jesus*, your chosen Messiah. ACTS 4:27 CEV

### Jesus Christ is righteous

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous One*, ... 1 JOHN 2:1B NET

### Jesus Christ is loving

[PAUL, TO THE BELIEVERS IN EPHESUS:] And I pray that you and all God's holy people will have the power to *understand the greatness of Christ's love—how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is.* <sup>19</sup>*Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know*, but I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God. EPHESIANS 3:18–19 NCV™

## Jesus Christ's Divinity

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### Jesus Christ is the Son of God

We have a great high priest, who has gone into heaven, and he is *Jesus the Son of God.* HEBREWS 4:14A CEV

### Jesus Christ has the nature and fullness of God

*He always had the nature of God ...* PHILIPPIANS 2:6A GNT

For *God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son ...* COLOSSIANS 1:19 NET



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Why is it important that Jesus Christ remains alive forever?

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What is one attribute of Jesus Christ that you need to be more mindful of in your daily living? How would doing so affect you?

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What does the Bible mean in saying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? In what sense is he God's Son?

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What reasons are there to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

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What attributes of Jesus Christ reflect that he has the nature of God?

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## 4. The Holy Spirit

To have a good understanding of God, it is vital that we know about the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit. As such the Holy Spirit is closely linked with God and what he does.

Note that in regard to the Holy Spirit and God's people, see the second half of *17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People*, p. 87.

### The Holy Spirit and God

#### The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God

The earth [in the beginning] was barren, with no form of life; it was under a roaring ocean covered with darkness. But *the Spirit of God* was moving over the water. [GENESIS 1:2 CEV](#)

The Holy Spirit is God's spirit. As such one should bear in mind that when the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit, it is in effect speaking of God himself. This is reflected by the Holy Spirit's divine characteristics, spoken of later in this chapter.

#### The Holy Spirit is linked with God's presence

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] The people who obey God's commands live in God, and God lives in them. *We know that God lives in us because of the Spirit God gave us.* [1 JOHN 3:24 NCV™](#)

This verse links the Holy Spirit with God's presence by teaching that because believers have God's Spirit, God lives in them.

#### God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are very closely associated

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them *in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ...* [MATTHEW 28:19 NET](#)

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* [2 CORINTHIANS 13:14](#)

## The Holy Spirit's Divine Characteristics

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### The Holy Spirit is everywhere

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *Where could I go to escape from your Spirit or from your sight?* PSALMS 139:7 CEV

### The Holy Spirit is eternal

Through *the eternal Spirit* he offered himself to God and cleansed our consciences from the useless things we had done. Now we can serve the living God. HEBREWS 9:14B GW

### The Holy Spirit has sovereign power

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *God's Spirit is in you and is more powerful than the one that is in the world* [Satan]. 1 JOHN 4:4B CEV

The description of the Holy Spirit as greater than Satan – “the one that is in the world” – shows the Spirit's great power.

### The Holy Spirit has complete knowledge

For *the Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God*. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10 ISV

This speaks of the Holy Spirit searching out or finding out all things (cf. CEV, NCV, NLT).

## The Holy Spirit Is Personal

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### The Holy Spirit communicates

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But *the Spirit himself speaks to God for us*, even begs God for us with deep feelings that words cannot explain. ROMANS 8:26B NCV™

### The Holy Spirit interacts in other ways

The church became stronger, as *the Holy Spirit encouraged it and helped it grow*. ACTS 9:31B CEV

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. GALATIANS 5:18 NET

What does the Bible mean in describing the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of God”?

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What reasons are there to associate the Holy Spirit with God and Jesus Christ?

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In what ways does the Holy Spirit communicate? (Write down any that you know of.)

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What things might indicate that the Holy Spirit is a personal being rather than simply a thing?

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Write down things you could say about the Holy Spirit in explaining him to someone who had not heard of him.

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## 5. Angels, Satan and Demons

To live the Christian life we must be aware of our allies and chief opponents in the spiritual world. The following teaching about them includes reasons to always be wary, but also reasons to be greatly encouraged.

### Angels

#### There are millions of angels, surrounding God

[JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION OF A SCENE IN HEAVEN:] Again I looked, and I heard *angels, thousands and millions of them! They stood round the throne* [of God] ... [REVELATION 5:11 GNT](#)

#### Angels are powerful beings who serve God

*Praise the LORD, you angels of his, you powerful warriors who carry out his decrees and obey his orders!* <sup>21</sup>*Praise the LORD, all you warriors of his, you servants of his who carry out his desires!* [PSALMS 103:20–21 NET](#)

#### Angels help and care for God's people

*All the angels are spirits who serve God and are sent to help those who will receive salvation.* [HEBREWS 1:14 NCV™](#)

*The LORD's angel camps around the LORD's loyal followers and delivers them.* [PSALMS 34:7 NET](#)

### Satan

#### Satan is evil and is opposed to God's kingdom

[JESUS, EXPLAINING THE MEANING OF A STORY:] The seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear *the message about the kingdom*, but don't understand it. *Then the evil one* [Satan] *comes and snatches the message from their hearts.* [MATTHEW 13:19 CEV](#)

**Satan is deceitful**

[JESUS, SPEAKING ABOUT SATAN:] *Whenever he tells a lie, he's doing what comes naturally to him. He's a liar and the father of lies.*

JOHN 8:44B GW

**Satan has great power and authority in the world**

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *We are certain that we come from God and that the rest of the world is under the power of the devil [Satan].* 1 JOHN

5:19 CEV

**But Satan is not as powerful as God**

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *The God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet.* ROMANS 16:20A NET

**Satan has been condemned**

*God has already judged the ruler of this world.* JOHN 16:11B CEV

**Demons**

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**Demons are evil and powerful spiritual beings**

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age.* EPHESIANS 6:12 GNT

The terms “rulers”, “authorities” and “powers” are indicative of the great – but limited – power of demons.

**Demons can possess people and cause them great harm**

*A Canaanite woman from that area came to Jesus and cried out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter has a demon, and she is suffering very much.”* MATTHEW 15:22 NCV™

**Demons fear God**

[JAMES, EXHORTING HIS READERS:] *You believe there is one God. Good! But the demons believe that, too, and they tremble with fear.* JAMES

2:19 NCV™

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Why are angels so special?

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In what ways do angels help God's people?

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What is one way that Satan deceives people?

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Why should you be wary of but not frightened of Satan?

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Do you know of any indicators that a person may be possessed by a demon?

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## Topics in This Series

### Section I: What to Know

#### **Part A.** God and Spiritual Powers

1. God's Being
2. God's Character
3. Jesus Christ
4. The Holy Spirit
5. Angels, Demons and Satan

#### **Part B.** God and the World: Basics

6. God's Creation
7. God's Sovereignty
8. God's Word
9. The Problem of Sin
10. God's Judgment

#### **Part C.** God and the World: Jesus Christ

11. God's Promised Messiah
12. Jesus Christ's Mission
13. Salvation through Jesus Christ
14. The New Order
15. 'The Last Things'

#### **Part D.** God and His Own People

16. The Standing of God's People
17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People
18. God's Transformation of His People
19. God's Care of His People
20. God's Plans for His People

### Section II: What to Do

#### **Part E.** Relating to God

21. Being Right with God
22. Having Faith in God
23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God
24. Connecting with God
25. Exalting God

#### **Part F.** Church Life

26. Being One Body
27. Worshipping God
28. Serving God
29. Significant Practices
30. Church Leadership

#### **Part G.** Relating to People

31. Love
32. Justice
33. Wisdom
34. Common Relationships
35. Spreading the Gospel

#### **Part H.** Persevering

36. Standing Firm
37. Spurning Sin
38. Major Pitfalls
39. Hard Times
40. Persecution



## The Seven Editions

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next one. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text and questions added. For more details and free downloads, go to [www.thebibleunpacked.net](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net).



**Two-Minute Edition** – *Key Bible teachings for everyone.* 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** – *Key Bible teachings for new believers.* For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.



**Foundations Edition** – *The Bible's teaching condensed for young believers.* For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.



**Intermediate Edition** – *The Bible's teaching summarized for growing believers.* For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.



**Comprehensive Edition** – *The Bible's teaching presented for Bible students.* For a more comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.



**In-Depth Edition** – *The Bible's teaching expounded for Bible scholars.*

For pastors, church leaders, Bible students and all who want a deep understanding of the faith. Available in a single pdf file with some 100,000 hyperlinks.

## Supporting 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](http://www.barnabasfund.org)

It provides material and spiritual support based on locally identified needs.

**Christian Faith and Freedom** – [www.cffreedom.org](http://www.cffreedom.org)

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

**Christian Solidarity International** – [www.csi-int.org](http://www.csi-int.org)

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

**Christian Solidarity Worldwide** – [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

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

**Open Doors** – [sb.od.org](http://sb.od.org); [www.opendoors.org.au](http://www.opendoors.org.au)

It equips believers for persecution and maintaining a witness to the Gospel.

**Religious Liberty Commission** – [www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc)

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also [www.idop.org](http://www.idop.org).

**Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin** – [rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com.au](http://rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com.au)

It provides weekly bulletins. Send a blank email to [join-rlpb@hub.xc.org](mailto:join-rlpb@hub.xc.org).

**The Bible League** – [www.bibleleague.org/persecuted](http://www.bibleleague.org/persecuted); [www.bibleleague.com](http://www.bibleleague.com)

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

**Voice of the Martyrs** – [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com); [www.persecution.com.au](http://www.persecution.com.au)

VOM helps persecuted Christians spread the gospel. It also gives material aid.

**World Watch Monitor** – [www.worldwatchmonitor.org](http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org)

It reports the story of Christians under pressure for their faith.

*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



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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