

The **Bible** Unpacked

Foundations Study Series

The Bible's teaching condensed
for young believers

Paul Mallison

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The Bible's teaching condensed
for young believers

Part B. God and the World: Basics

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 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.

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

Users are asked to pray regularly for persecuted Christians and, if possible, support them financially. These things can be done through organizations that provide aid to them and/or prayer notices, such as those listed under [Supporting Persecuted Christians](#).

Paul Mallison

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?

6. God's Creation

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.

God Makes Everything

God made the heavens, the earth and everything in them

You are the only LORD. *You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, with all the stars. You made the earth and everything on it, the seas and everything in them; you give life to everything.*

NEHEMIAH 9:6A NCV™

Because he made everything, all things belong to God

The heavens and the earth belong to you. And so does the world with all its people because you created them ¹²and everything else.

PSALMS 89:11–12A CEV

Creation is evidence of God and what he is like, to all people

[PAUL, REFERRING TO WICKED PEOPLE:] *They know everything that can be known about God, because God has shown it all to them. ²⁰God's eternal power and character cannot be seen. But from the beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all he has made. That's why those people don't have any excuse.* ROMANS 1:19–20 CEV

God Sustains Everything

Every creature's life is dependent on God

The life of every living creature and the spirit in every human body are in his hands. JOB 12:10 GW

God made and sustains all things through Jesus Christ

God created the universe by his Son, and everything will someday belong to the Son. ³God's Son has all the brightness of God's own glory and is like him in every way. By his own mighty word, he holds the universe together. [HEBREWS 1:2B–3A CEV](#)

God's Creation of People

God has made people with a spirit

The LORD – he who stretches out the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth, *who forms the human spirit within a person* – says, ... [ZECHARIAH 12:1B NET](#)

God has made people in his own image

Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, in our likeness. Let them rule the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the domestic animals all over the earth, and all the animals that crawl on the earth." ²⁷*So God created humans in his image. In the image of God he created them. He created them male and female.* [GENESIS 1:26–27 GW](#)

That God has made people in his own image is evident in that they reflect such things as his personal traits – e.g. aspects of his character and intellect – and that they have a spirit (as discussed in the previous subsection). Additionally, it is noteworthy that although God essentially is spirit, some descriptions of visions or "appearances" of God speak of him in terms of a human-like form (cf. Ezekiel 1:26–28; Daniel 7:9).

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](#)

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

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

What is our "spirit"?

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

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

7. God's Sovereignty

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 Rules Supreme

He is the one and only God

[GOD:] *And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me.* ²²“Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. [ISAIAH 45:21B–22](#) ESV

God rules over all

O LORD, you are great, mighty, majestic, magnificent, glorious, and sovereign over all the sky and earth! You have dominion and exalt yourself as the ruler of all. [1 CHRONICLES 29:11](#) NET

God will reign forever

But you, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. [LAMENTATIONS 5:19](#) NET

God carries out his plans

The LORD Almighty has sworn an oath: “*What I have planned will happen. What I have determined to do will be done.*” [ISAIAH 14:24](#) GNT

God will impose his absolute rule on all

[JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION:] They said, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, because *you have taken your great power and have begun to rule.*” [REVELATION 11:17](#) ISV

God Has Control over All Things

God has control over evil

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] The only temptation that has come to you is that which everyone has. But you can trust *God, who will not permit you to be tempted more than you can stand. But when you are tempted, he will also give you a way to escape so that you will be able to stand it.* 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 NCV™

God has control over nature

He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through the clouds. ¹²The clouds go round in circles, wheeling about according to his plans, to carry out all that he commands them over the face of the whole inhabited world. JOB 37:11–12 NET

God has control over the nations

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] May the nations be glad and sing for joy, because you *judge the peoples with justice and guide every nation on earth.* PSALMS 67:4 GNT

God Has Control over People

God has control over people's minds

The LORD caused the Egyptians to think well of them, and the Egyptians gave the people everything they asked for. EXODUS 12:36A 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

[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™

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

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

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

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

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

8. God's Word

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.

General

The Bible is God's word

Everything in the Scriptures is God's Word. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16A CEV

The Scriptures are the writings contained in the Bible – God's word.

God's word is true

The words of the LORD are true ... PSALMS 33:4A GNT

God's word is active and powerful

God's word is alive and working and is sharper than a double-edged sword. It cuts all the way into us, where the soul and the spirit are joined, to the center of our joints and bones. And it judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts. HEBREWS 4:12 NCV™

God's word can penetrate to the very depths of our inner-selves, exposing our thoughts and attitudes for what they really are.

God's word brings spiritual life

[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.*

JOHN 6:63 NET

God's word gives light

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.* PSALMS 119:105 GW

God's word gives "light" – guidance and spiritual insight.

God's Covenant with Israel

A covenant is a firm agreement made between two parties. God's covenants are a key aspect and expression of his word – as are his commands, prophecies and promises.

God made a covenant with Israel, based on the laws he gave through Moses

The LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." ²⁸So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread, and he did not drink water. *He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.*

EXODUS 34:27–28 NET

If the Israelites obeyed God, then they would be his people and he would be their God

[GOD, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *Obey me and carry out the terms of the agreement exactly as I commanded you. If you do, you will be my people and I will be your God.* JEREMIAH 11:4B NET

Faithful obedience to the law would bring righteousness

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *It will be righteousness for us, if we're careful to obey all the law before the LORD our God, as he commanded.* DEUTERONOMY 6:25 ISV

The Ten Commandments

[GOD:] *Do not worship any god except me. ...* ⁵*Don't bow down and worship idols. ...* ⁷*Do not misuse my name. ...* ⁸*Remember that the Sabbath Day belongs to me. ...* ¹⁰*... No one is to work on that day...* ¹²*Respect your father and your mother ...* ¹³*Do not murder.* ¹⁴*Be faithful in marriage.* ¹⁵*Do not steal.* ¹⁶*Do not tell lies about others.* ¹⁷*Do not want anything that belongs to someone else.* EXODUS 20:3, 5A, 7–8, 10B, 12–17A CEV

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. The Problem of Sin

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.

What and Who

Sin is breaking God's law

Whoever sins is guilty of breaking God's law, because sin is a breaking of the law. 1 JOHN 3:4 GNT

Sin is committed by all people

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

The expression "fallen short of God's glory" (v. 23) most likely means that all people have failed to live up to a standard that matches God's glory. Sin is the reason for this.

Consequences of Sin

Sin means that we face God's anger

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Actually all of us were like them and lived according to our natural desires, doing whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds. In our natural condition we, like everyone else, were destined to suffer God's anger.* EPHESIANS 2:3 GNT

All people have lived sinful lives and face the consequences.

Sin results in physical death

Sin came into the world through one man, and *his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned.* ROMANS 5:12 GNT

Note that this verse refers to death initially coming as a consequence of the first sin, committed by the first man, Adam.

Sin brings the prospect of eternal death

For *the payoff of sin is death*, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 6:23 NET

God's holiness and justice mean that unforgiven sin must be punished with everlasting death. It involves everlasting separation from God, in hell.

The Law's Provision for Sin

An animal was offered by a priest to God to make atonement for anyone who sinned

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *If any person sins unintentionally, then he must bring a yearling female goat for a purification offering. ²⁸And the priest must make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally ... to make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.*

NUMBERS 15:27–28 NET

"Atonement" is where God accepts such an offering or sacrifice of a living being as a substitute for the life of a person who has sinned. God accepts the sacrifice as payment for the person's sin.

The high priest made atonement for Israel as a whole

[GOD, TO MOSES:] *... he is to make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.* LEVITICUS 16:33B 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.

Give a definition of sin.

Why is sin so bad?

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

What other consequences of sin are there (in addition to those mentioned in this chapter)?

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

10. God's Judgment

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.

Reasons for God's Judgment

God's judgment is to punish sin

[DANIEL, TO GOD:] All Israel has broken your law and turned away by not obeying you. *Therefore you have poured out on us the judgment solemnly threatened in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against you.* DANIEL 9:11 NET

God's judgment is to discipline his people

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But *when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined* so that we may not be condemned with the world. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:32 NET

God's judgment is to punish the wicked

But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for *the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.* 2 PETER 3:7 NET

The Justice of God's Judgment

God judges fairly

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *You are fair and honest in your judgments,* and you have judged in my favour. PSALMS 9:4 GNT

God judges correctly

"Yes, Lord God Almighty, your judgments are true and fair." REVELATION 16:7B GW

God repays people according to what they have done

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF GOD'S FINAL JUDGMENT:] *On that day everyone will see God's right judgments. ⁶God will reward or punish every person for what that person has done.* ROMANS 2:5B–6 NCV™

God gives fair warning of judgment

[GOD:] *There are times, Jeremiah, when I threaten to uproot, tear down, and destroy a nation or kingdom. ⁸But if that nation I threatened stops doing wrong, I will cancel the destruction I intended to do to it.* JEREMIAH 18:7–8 NET

What God says here regarding nations is also applicable to individuals.

The Wicked and God's Judgment

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

Pray for persecuted Christians

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

What factors make God's judgment just?

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?

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

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

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
18. God's Transformation of His People
19. God's Care of His People
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Section II: What to Do

Part E. Relating to God

21. Being Right with God
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23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God
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Part F. Church Life

26. Being One Body
27. Worshiping God
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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.



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

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

Christian Solidarity International – csi-usa.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.

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

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

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org.

Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin – rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com

This site provides weekly prayer bulletins.

The Bible League – bl.org.au/get-involved/bibles-for-the-persecuted

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com

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

World Watch Monitor – 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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