

The **Bible** Unpacked

Foundations Study Series

The Bible's teaching condensed
for young believers

Paul Mallison

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Part D. God and His Own People

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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 free downloads and information on other study series based on editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, go to: www.thebibleunpacked.net.

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?

16. The Standing of God's People

This chapter looks at the position or standing of God's people in relationship to God. Probably the most basic aspect of this is simply that they are God's people and so belong to him. As such the relationship between believers and God is both a strong one and a close one. This is underlined by the teaching that God's people are now "in" Jesus Christ.

Belonging to God

God's people belong to him

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] You put your faith in Christ and were given the promised Holy Spirit to show that *you belong to God*.
EPHESIANS 1:13 CEV

They are God's people

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] God loves you and has chosen you as *his own special people*. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient.
COLOSSIANS 3:12 CEV

God is their God

[ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH:] But as for us, *the LORD is our God* and we have not rejected him. 2 CHRONICLES 13:10A NET

Being God's Family

Each believer belongs to the family of God

[PAUL, TO NON-JEWISH BELIEVERS:] *You belong to God's family*. EPHESIANS 2:19B NCV

God is the Father of his people

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Grace and peace to you from *God our Father* and the Lord Jesus Christ! ROMANS 1:7B NET

God's people are his children

But to all who did accept him [Jesus] and believe in him he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They did not become his children in any human way—by any human parents or human desire. They were born of God. JOHN 1:12–13 NCV

Those who accept Jesus Christ and believe in him (v. 12a) are enabled to become God's children (v. 12b) – born of God (v. 13) into spiritual life.

Being "in" Jesus Christ

God's people are "in" Jesus Christ

From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints [believers], *the faithful in Christ Jesus*. EPHESIANS 1:1 NET

Being "in" Jesus Christ involves the association of believers with Jesus Christ. Through this association they participate with Jesus Christ in such things as: his victory over sin and death; his life; and other blessings he has won.

"In" Jesus Christ they are redeemed and forgiven

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*. COLOSSIANS 1:14 ISV

Note that "redemption" or being "redeemed" refers to the concept of being bought by God, with Jesus Christ's death, from enslavement to sin.

Through Jesus Christ God's people have access to God

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Yes, it is through Christ we all have the right to come to the Father in one Spirit*. EPHESIANS 2:18 NCV

Verses such as this which speak of God's people relating to God (e.g. praying to him) "through" Jesus Christ, appear to have in view one or more of the following three concepts: Jesus Christ's death opening the way into God's presence; Jesus Christ's priesthood; and God's people being "in" Jesus Christ. All three of these are aspects of Jesus Christ's role as a mediator in a believer's relationship with God.

In what sense do Christians belong to God?

What is one significant way in which belonging to the family of God should affect our relationships with other Christians?

What does being a child of God mean to you?

In your own words explain what being "in Jesus Christ" means.

What do you think relating to God through Jesus Christ involves?

17. Keys to God’s Interaction with His People

This chapter discusses key factors that underlie and influence all God does in relating to his people. The latter part looks at God’s incomparable gift of his Holy Spirit, which is at the heart of God’s relationship with each believer.

God’s Presence with His People

God and Jesus Christ are always with their people

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

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

Note that most of what this and the following chapters in *Part D* say about God is also applicable to Jesus Christ.

God is with his people in trouble

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

God’s Knowledge of His People

God knows his people

[GOD, TO MOSES:] *I know you by name.* EXODUS 33:17B ISV

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

God knows his people’s needs

Your Father [God] already knows what you need before you ask him. MATTHEW 6:8B GNT

God's Love and Grace

God loves his people greatly

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

God shows much grace to his people

[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.* 2 CORINTHIANS 9:14 NET

Here Paul speaks of God's grace in moving the Corinthians to generously give towards supporting needy believers. The verse illustrates that God's grace (his undeserved favor) is shown not only in his provision of salvation, but also in his ongoing dealings with his people.

God's Gift of the Holy Spirit

God gives his people his Holy Spirit, to help and live in them

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] All of this happens because *God has given us the Holy Spirit*, who fills our hearts with his love. ROMANS 5:5B CEV

[PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] *With the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us*, protect the Good News that has been entrusted to you. 2 TIMOTHY 1:14 GW

God works through his people by the Holy Spirit

[GOD, TO ZERUBBABEL WHO WAS A LEADER OF THE JEWS:] I am the LORD All-Powerful. So *don't depend on your own power or strength, but on my Spirit.* ⁷*Zerubbabel, that mountain in front of you will be leveled to the ground. Then you will bring out the temple's most important stone and shout, "God has been very kind."* ZECHARIAH 4:6B-7 CEV

God would accomplish the work he was doing through Zerubbabel by his Spirit. By the Holy Spirit Zerubbabel would overcome mountainous problems, in completing the work of rebuilding the temple.

How should knowing that God is always with his people affect the way we think and act?

How should God's knowledge of his people encourage us?

How has God shown his love to you?

In what ways does the Holy Spirit help us?

Are you aware of the Holy Spirit's work in your life? If so, how? If not, what can you do about it?

18. God's Transformation of His People

Each Christian is being remarkably transformed by God. This chapter looks at what changes are involved and how God brings these about.

Spiritual Life

God's people are given 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

Jesus' words, together with the Holy Spirit, bring life. They give believers a spiritual awareness that enables them to live in relationship with God. As such they are "alive to God".

As such, God's people are spiritually reborn of God

They did not become his children in any human way—by any human parents or human desire. They were born of God. JOHN 1:12–13 NCV

Holiness

God's people are made holy, through Jesus Christ's sacrifice

He [Jesus] suffered to make the people holy with his own blood.

HEBREWS 13:12B GW

God's people are being transformed to be like Jesus Christ

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Our faces, then, are not covered. We all show the Lord's glory, and we are being changed to be like him.*

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18A NCV

With the development of the believer's holiness, their characters grow more like Christ. As such believers increasingly reflect Christ's glory.

Spiritual Attributes

God gives his people love and faith

Peace to the brothers and sisters [believers], and *love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* [EPHESIANS 6:23](#) NET

God gives his people peace

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Never worry about anything. But in every situation let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks. ⁷*Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus.*

[PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7](#) GW

God gives his people joy

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.* [ROMANS 15:13](#) GNT

God gives his people wisdom and knowledge

God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to anyone who pleases him.

[ECCLESIASTES 2:26A](#) GW

How God Transforms

God disciplines his people as his children, who he loves

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] *The Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as his child.* ⁷*So hold on through your sufferings, because they are like a father's discipline. God is treating you as children. All children are disciplined by their fathers.* ⁸*If you are never disciplined (and every child must be disciplined), you are not true children.* [HEBREWS 12:6–8](#) NCV

God teaches his people

He shows those who are humble how to do right, and he teaches them his ways. [PSALMS 25:9](#) NCV

Explain in your own words the "spiritual life" that believers have.

What changes are you seeing in yourself, compared to before you became a Christian? How are you more like Jesus Christ?

What, if anything, is unique about the love that Christians have?

To what degree do you experience God's joy and peace? What should we do to know more of this joy and peace?

What does God do to transform his people?

19. God's Care of His People

This topic has some of the best-loved verses in the Bible. They include some of the Bible's great promises, which reassure us at times when we wonder if God has "lost our address".

Basics

God cares for his people

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand ⁷by casting all your cares on him because *he cares for you*. 1 PETER 5:6–7 NET

God consistently helps his people in need

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

God Saves His People

God saves his people out of all troubles

[DAVID:] I sought the LORD's help and he answered me; *he delivered me from all my fears*. ... ⁶This oppressed man cried out and the LORD heard; *he saved him from all his troubles*. ... ¹⁷The godly cry out and the LORD hears; *he saves them from all their troubles*. ... ¹⁹*The godly face many dangers, but the LORD saves them from each one of them.* PSALMS 34:4, 6, 17, 19 NET

God enables them to overcome all that is in the world

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *If God is with us, no one can defeat us*. ... ³⁵Can anything separate us from the love Christ has for us? Can troubles or problems or sufferings or hunger or nakedness or danger or violent death? ... ³⁷*But in all these things we have full victory through God who showed his love for us.* ROMANS 8:31B, 35, 37 NCV

God Protects His People

God is a refuge for his people

He [David] said, *"The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, ³my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence.* 2 SAMUEL 22:2-3 ESV

God guards his people

Look! The one who is guarding Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. ⁵The LORD is your guardian; the LORD is your shade at your right side. ⁶The sun will not ravage you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The LORD will guard you from all evil, preserving your life. ⁸The LORD will guard your goings and comings, from this time on and forever. PSALMS 121:4-8 ISV

God protects them until the end

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] *You have faith in God, whose power will protect you until the last day. Then he will save you, just as he has always planned to do.* 1 PETER 1:5 CEV

God protects his faithful people from spiritual harm, bringing their salvation to fruition at the end of the age.

God Sustains His People

God strengthens his people

Even children become tired and need to rest, and young people trip and fall. ³¹*But the people who trust the LORD will become strong again. They will rise up as an eagle in the sky; they will run and not need rest; they will walk and not become tired.* ISAIAH 40:30-31 NCV

God provides for all their needs

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS WHO HAD SUPPORTED HIM:] *And my God will fully supply your every need according to his glorious riches in the Messiah Jesus.* PHILIPPIANS 4:19 ISV

What troubles have you had in which God has helped you?

How should believing that God is always able to save, affect the way we act and think?

Even with all the great promises of God's protection, bad things still happen to some of God's people. Why do you think this is so?

In what ways does God strengthen his people?

How does God provide for you? How do you and/or how should you respond to this?

20. God's Plans for His People

God has wonderful plans and purposes for his people. Many of these concern the work he does through his people, with his incomparably great power. As this chapter shows, God promises to fulfill these plans and purposes – equipping and guiding his people accordingly.

Basics

God has plans and purposes for his people

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *You have made many wonderful plans for us. I could never speak of them all—their number is so great!* PSALMS 40:5B GNT

For David, after *he had served God's purpose in his own generation*, died and was laid to rest with his ancestors, and so he experienced decay. ACTS 13:36 ISV

In spite of their troubles, God will fulfill his purposes for them

[DAVID:] *Though I walk straight into trouble, you [God] preserve my life, stretching out your hand to fight the vehemence of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.* ⁸*The LORD will complete what his purpose is for me.* PSALMS 138:7–8A ISV

For the LORD says, *'Only when the seventy years of Babylonian rule are over will I again take up consideration for you. Then I will fulfill my gracious promise to you and restore you to your homeland.* ¹¹*For I know what I have planned for you,' says the LORD. 'I have plans to prosper you, not to harm you. I have plans to give you a future filled with hope.* JEREMIAH 29:10–11 NET

Despite his people's exile in Babylon and the apparent decimation of Israel as a nation, God would fulfill his promise and plans for them.

God's Work for His People to Do

God's plans for his people include work for them to do

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] God has made us what we are. *He has created us in Christ Jesus to live lives filled with good works that he has prepared for us to do.* [EPHESIANS 2:10](#) GW

God makes them willing and able to do his work

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *God is working in you to make you willing and able to obey him.* [PHILIPPIANS 2:13](#) CEV

God has great power for his people in doing his work

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was on them all. [ACTS 4:33](#) ISV

God's Guidance of His People

God guides his people always

[GOD, TO HIS PEOPLE:] *The LORD will continually guide you and satisfy you even in sun-baked places.* [ISAIAH 58:11A](#) GW

Note that the Bible speaks of God guiding his people in fulfilling his plans and purposes for them. More particularly, it tells of God guiding them in: living righteous lives; doing his work; and making choices in other matters.

God guides them in difficult circumstances

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *He was the one who led you through that vast and dangerous desert—a thirsty and arid land, with poisonous snakes and scorpions.* [DEUTERONOMY 8:15A](#) GW

[DAVID:] *When I am ready to give up, he knows what I should do.* [PSALMS 142:3](#) GNT

The implication of the second clause is that God not only knows but also guides in what one should do.

How specific do you think God's plans are for each Christian?

What examples do you know of, where God has worked in bad things for his purposes?

Are you aware of a particular role or kind of work that God wants you to do? If not, what can you do to be open to God guiding you towards the work he wants you to do?

In what ways does God's power work through his people?

How does God guide us?

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

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7. God's Sovereignty
8. God's Word
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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.

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Two-Minute Edition – *Key Bible teachings for everyone.* For giving to non-Christians.
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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.


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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 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.

Open Doors – sb.od.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.au

It provides weekly bulletins. Send a blank email to join-rlpb@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 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
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from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

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