

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

## INTRODUCTION

Some 1,500 years B.C. an arrogant pagan in Egypt demanded from an 80-year-old Jew: “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice...?” (Exod. 5:2).

Nearly 1,000 years later a similar question was raised by another pagan in Babylon, this time addressed to three young Jewish men: “Who is that God, that shall deliver you out of my hands?” (Dan. 3:15).

As both Pharaoh (the Egyptian pagan) and Nebuchadnezzar (the Babylonian pagan) would soon learn, the God they had reviled was able to punish his enemies (through the ten plagues), and protect his elect (in the fiery furnace).

This chapter provides a simple but systematic study of that God, the Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and Judge of all things and all men.

### I. Non-Christian Views of God

- A. The atheistic view – This denies the existence of any God or gods.
- B. The agnostic view – This holds that the existence and nature of God are unknown and unknowable.
- C. The polytheistic view – This holds that there are many gods.
- D. The dualistic view – This assumes that there are two distinct, eternal, irreducible realities (one good and the other evil) that oppose each other.
- E. The pantheistic view – This believes that all things are merely aspects, modifications, or parts of the one eternal self-existing being or principle; that God is everything and everything is God.
- F. The deistic view

This holds the existence of God but rejects his having any relation to the world or self-revelation. As pantheism accepts the immanence of God to the exclusion of his transcendence, so deism accepts the transcendence of God to the exclusion of his immanence. For deism, God is an absentee landlord who, having made the universe like a vast machine, allows it to operate on its own by inherent natural law without his personal supervision. It claims that all truths are discoverable by reason and that the Bible is merely a book on the principles of natural religion, which are discernible by the light of nature. (Floyd Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology*, p. 24)

### II. The Existence of God – The greatest and most profound idea the human mind can ever conceivably entertain concerns the possibility of the existence of a personal God. The sheer importance of man's response to this idea cannot be exaggerated, for it will not only govern his life down here but will also determine his ultimate destiny. Unless one satisfactorily answers the *who* question, he cannot possibly solve the *how*, *why*, *when*, and *where* problems of his own existence.

- A. Some philosophical arguments for the existence of God – Throughout the centuries certain extrabiblical arguments have been advanced to confirm the existence of a supreme being. While there is a valid place for them, it must be kept in mind the only acceptable approach to God is by faith and faith alone. “But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

Thus, in a real sense, the following arguments apply more to the believer than the unbeliever, serving to confirm that which has already been accepted by faith.

- 1. The universal belief argument – The universal belief argument says that all mankind has some idea of a supreme Being. This argument has often been challenged, but never refuted. While the concepts of God found among many cultures and civilizations differ greatly on the number, name and nature of this supreme being, nevertheless, the idea remains.

A classic example of this is the amazing story of Helen Keller (1880 – 1968). From the age of two, Miss Keller was blind, deaf, and without the sense of smell. After two months of agonizing and fruitless attempts on the part of her teacher to communicate with this young girl, a miracle occurred. One day Helen suddenly understood the concept and meaning of running water. From this humble foundation Miss Keller built a lofty tower of thought, including the ability to use her voice in speaking. She became an educated and articulate human being. Sometime after she had progressed to the point that she could engage in conversation, she was told of God and his love in sending Christ to die on the cross. She is said to have responded with joy, “I always knew he was there, but I didn't know his name!”

2. The cosmological argument – This argument says that every effect must have an adequate cause. Robert Culver writes:

One of the great names in British science, mathematics, and philosophy is Sir Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727). Sir Isaac had a miniature model of the solar system made. A large golden ball representing the sun was at its center and around it revolved smaller spheres, representing planets – Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and the others. They were each kept in an orbit relatively the same as in the real solar system. By means of rods, cogwheels, and belts they all moved around the center golden ball in exact precision. A friend called on the noted man one day while he was studying the model. The friend was not a believer in the biblical doctrine of divine creation. According to reports, their conversation went as follows:

Friend: “My, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?”

Newton:””Nobody.”

Friend: “Nobody?”

Newton: “That’s right! I said, ‘Nobody!’ All of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits with perfect timing!”

Of course, the visitor understood the unexpressed argument: “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” (*The Living God*, pp. 29-30)

3. The teleological argument – This argument says every design must have a designer. The entire universe is characterized by order and useful arrangement. This is readily seen by the constant speed of light, laws of gravity, the arrangement of the planets around the sun, the complexity of the tiny atom, and the amazing makeup of the human body. All this design literally cries out for a divine designer.
4. The ontological argument – This argument says:

Man has an idea of a Most Perfect Being. This idea includes the idea of existence, since a being, otherwise perfect, who did not exist would not be as perfect as a perfect being who did exist. Therefore, since the idea of existence is contained in the idea of the Most Perfect Being, the Most Perfect Being must exist. (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 32)

5. The anthropological argument – This argument says that the conscience and moral nature of man demands a self-conscious and moral Maker. This built-in barometer supplies no information, and the information on which it passes judgment may be incorrect. But nevertheless, conscience tells us we *ought* to do what is right regarding the information we have. Robert Culver writes as follows:

This sense of duty may be weak (1 Corinthians 8:12), good (1 Peter 3:16), defiled (1 Corinthians 8:7), seared (1 Timothy 4:2), strong or pure (1 Corinthians 8:7, 9). But it is never absent. The only accurate explanation is that the great Moral Being, who created us all, planted the moral sense in us. No other explanation is adequate. (*The Living God*, p. 31)

The following letter, reportedly received by the Internal Revenue Service, underlines this argument in an amusing way:

Dear Sir,

Some years ago I cheated on my income tax return by failing to report a large sum of money I had made that year. As a result, my conscience has bothered me terribly. Please find my enclosed check as part payment on my debt....

P.S. If my conscience continues to plague me, I'll send you more money at a later date!

- B. Scriptural arguments for the existence of God – None! The Bible simply assumes the existence of God. “The fool hath said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good” (Psa. 14:1). “But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

Clark Pinnock aptly summarizes all this when he writes:

For the Scripture then, the existence of God is both a historical truth (God acted into history), and an existential truth (God reveals himself to every soul). His existence is both objectively

and subjectively evident. It is necessary logically because our assumption of order, design, and rationality rests upon it. It is necessary morally because there is no explanation for the shape of morality apart from it. It is necessary personally because the exhaustion of all material possibilities still cannot give satisfaction to the heart. The deepest proof for God's existence apart from history is just life itself. God has created man in His image, and man cannot elude the implications of this fact. Everywhere his identity pursues him. (*Set Forth Your Case*, p. 77)

III. The Names of God – One of the most well-known passages in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* can be found in the second scene of the second act. As the story opens, Juliet is lamenting the fact that her parents (the Capulets) intensely dislike the parents of her lover, Romeo (the Montagues).

In an attempt to play down the situation, she sighs: "What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, nor arm, nor face, nor any other part belonging to a man. O, be some other name! What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Thus, to Juliet a person's name meant little or nothing. This is, however, decidedly not the case as one approaches the Bible. In fact, to the contrary, one may learn a great deal about a person simply by examining the names ascribed to him or her. This is especially true concerning the names for God.

A. Elohim – Used 2,570 times, it refers to God's power and might. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1).

B. El – There are four compounds of the name El.

1. Elyon, "the strongest strong one" – There are two significant places where this name was used in the Old Testament. One came from the lips of Jerusalem's first sovereign, and the other from history's first sinner.

a. Jerusalem's first sovereign, Melchizedek – "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (Gen. 14:18-20).

b. History's first sinner, Satan – "For thou has said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13-14).

2. Roi, "the strong one who sees" – In Genesis 16 an angered and barren Sarai had cast into the wilderness her pregnant and arrogant handmaiden, Hagar. When all hope for survival had fled, this pagan Egyptian girl was visited and ministered to by El Roi himself – the strong God who sees. "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" (Gen. 16:13).

3. El Shaddai, "the breasted one" – Used 48 times in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word shad is used often to designate the bosom of a nursing mother. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1).

This revelation of God came to Abraham at a much needed time in his life. His sin in marrying Hagar (Gen. 16) had doubtless prevented that full and unhindered fellowship which had previously flowed between him and God. In addition, his wife, Sarah, was now an old woman, nearly 90, humanly unable to give birth to Abraham's long-anticipated heir.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa. 91:1).

4. Olam, "the everlasting God" – Isaiah 40 is usually regarded as being one of the greatest Old Testament chapters. The prophet begins by predicting both the first and second advent of Christ. He then contrasts the awesome power of the true God with the miserable impotence of all idols. But carnal Israel had trouble accepting all this, wondering just how these wonderful events could transpire. To answer these doubts, Isaiah declares: "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:28-31).

- C. Adonai – The name means “Master, Lord.” The Hebrew Old Testament name *Adonai* and its Greek New Testament counterpart *Kurios* describe the relationship between master and slave. God owns all his children. Thus, *Adonai* carries with it a twofold implication:

1. The master has a right to expect obedience – Robert Lightner writes:

In Old Testament times the slave was the absolute possession of his master, having no rights of his own. His chief business was to carry out the wishes of his master. The slave had a relationship and responsibility different from that of the hired servant. The hired servant could quit if he did not like the orders of his master. But not so with the slave. He could do nothing but obey (cf. Gen. 24:1-12). (*The God of the Bible*, p. 116)

2. The slave may expect provision – Again, to quote Lightner:

The slave had no worry of his own. It was the master’s business to provide food, shelter, and the necessities of life. Since the slave is the possession of the master, his needs become the master’s. Obedience is the only condition for this provision. This truth is marvelously displayed in Paul, who was himself a bond slave, when he assured the Philippians that God would supply all their needs (Phil. 4:19). Only the obedient slave can expect this from his master. (Ibid., p. 117)

“A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?” (Mal. 1:6).

- D. Jehovah – This is the most common name for God, occurring 6,823 times. It means the “self-existent one, the God of the covenant.” “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exod. 3:13-14).

“And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers” (Exod. 6:2-4).

The name Jehovah here in Exodus 6:3 is the Hebrew tetragrammaton (a four-lettered expression) YHWH. Because of the sacredness of it, the Jewish reader would not even pronounce it, substituting the word *Adonai* in its place when read aloud.

There are nine compound names of Jehovah:

1. Jireh, “The Lord (Jehovah) will provide” – This is the name given by Abraham to the place where God provided a ram to be offered in sacrifice instead of Isaac. “And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen” (Gen. 22:13-14).
2. Nissi, “The Lord (Jehovah) is my banner” – “And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi” (Exod. 17:15). This passage is significant, for it marks the first battle and subsequent victory of Israel on its march after leaving Egypt. The great lawgiver, Moses, mounted a hill and, with outstretched arms, prayed for the Israelite armies, headed up by Joshua, in their pitched battle against the fierce Amalekites.
3. Shalom, “The Lord (Jehovah) is peace” – “Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites” (Judg. 6:24).

As one studies the thrilling account of Gideon, he reads how Jehovah-shalom did indeed bring peace to Israel over the Midianites through this warrior and his 300 trumpet-blowing soldiers. Our Lord Jesus would, of course, become both the Bringer and Giver of peace. Note: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:10). The word *Shiloh* here (meaning peace) is no doubt in reference to the Messiah.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph. 2:14).

4. Sabaoth, “The Lord (Jehovah) of hosts” – *Sabaoth* is derived from the Hebrew word *tsaba*, meaning “hosts.” The “Lord of hosts” is a reference to the captain of heaven’s armies. These armies are said to be composed of angels.

“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” (Psa. 68:17). “Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire” (Psa. 104:4). “Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.” (Psa. 148:2).

The great prophet Isaiah described his vision in which he was allowed to see Jehovah-Sabaoth – the Lord of hosts: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:1-3).

In Revelation 5 we read that John saw angels, “ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands” – an uncountable number. Jehovah Sabaoth is the Lord of hosts.

In the New Testament Christ himself is pictured as the leader of these angels. (See Matthew 26:53.) When Jesus was arrested, our Lord himself (the Lord Sabaoth) made an interesting comment when Simon Peter pulled out his sword and did violence to one of the servants of the high priest by cutting off his ear: “Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:52-53).

5. Maccaddeschem, “The Lord( Jehovah) thy sanctifier” (“the God who desires to set his people apart”) – “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Exod. 31:13).

This great name for God, first mentioned in Exodus, appears many times in the following book, Leviticus. To be sanctified is to be set apart, and that is what God desired to do for his people – to set them apart for special service.

In the New Testament we read how the Great Sanctifier set himself apart that he might set apart the sanctified. “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19). “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Thess. 4:3). “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23).

6. Rohi (Raah), “The Lord (Jehovah) my shepherd” – Of all the compound names of Jehovah, this is at once the most easily understood title because it literally means that good, and great, and chief Shepherd God – “the Lord, my shepherd.”

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep” (Heb. 13:20). “Feed the flock of God.... And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:4).

How wonderful to think upon Christ as one’s good, and great, and chief shepherd. But even more glorious to know him as David did when he wrote, “The Lord is *my* shepherd; I shall not want” (Psa. 23:1).

7. Tsidkenu, “The Lord (Jehovah) of righteousness” – According to the prophet Jeremiah, the official name for the Messiah during the future Millennium will be Jehovah-Tsidkenu. “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:6).
8. Shammah, “The Lord (Jehovah) who is present” – “It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35). In this passage Ezekiel describes for us the dimensions of the millennial temple and then gives us the new name for the earthly city of Jerusalem during earth’s Golden Age: Jehovah-Shammah. Of course, the obvious meaning is that God himself will be in that city. The psalmist had this idea when he wrote Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea” (Psa. 46:1-2).

He is a very present help in time of trouble. He is an ever-present help in time of need. He is Jehovah-Shammah at weddings. He is an ever present strength in times of sorrow. He is our joy in times of rejoicing. Jehovah-Shammah – the Lord who is present.

The greatest thing about heaven is probably connected to the worst thing about hell. The worst thing about hell is not the terrible pain and the eternity, but rather that hell will be a place where Jesus Christ will be conspicuously absent throughout all eternity. On the other hand, the greatest thing about heaven is not the pearly gates, the ivory palaces, the jasper walls, or the streets of gold, but rather, heaven will be a place where Jesus Christ will be conspicuously present throughout all eternity. Jehovah-Shammah – the Lord who is present.

9. Rapha, “The Lord (Jehovah) our healer” – By this new name God introduced to Israel the terms of his heavenly “medicare” health plan while they were on their way to Canaan. If only they had accepted this gracious policy. The Israelites were challenged to obey God, and God would instruct them in every area of life, including health and nutrition, in order to keep them from disease and illness. “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Exod. 15:26).

God desires to heal many things:

- a. He desires to heal nations – “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2).
- b. He desires to heal backsliders – In Jeremiah 3:22 we are told, “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.”
- c. He desires to heal broken hearts – David says in Psalm 147:3, “He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds.”
- d. He desires to heal sinful souls – Note the words of David in Psalm 41:4: “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.”
- e. Sometimes, but not all times, Jehovah Rapha heals human bodies – It is not always God’s will to heal broken bodies belonging to believers. In 2 Corinthians 1:7, we are told of Paul’s infirmity in the flesh. Paul asked God to heal him. God said, “My grace is sufficient.” Many believe this infirmity of Paul’s was an actual physical infirmity because of what Paul said in Galatians 4:13-15: “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you... my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God... if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.” Based on this passage, many believe that Paul’s infirmity was poor eyesight; Galatians 6:11 seems to strengthen their position: “Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.”

Truly, God – Jehovah Rapha – is our healer. Note two other related passages of Scripture: “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand” (Deut. 32:39). “For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall” (Mal. 4:1-2).

- IV. The Attributes of God – Reduced to its simplest definition, an attribute of God is whatever God has in any way revealed as being true of himself. Some theologians prefer the word *perfection* to that of attribute. A. W. Tozer has written:

In the awful abyss of the Divine being may be attributes of which we know nothing and which can have no meaning for us, just as the attributes of mercy and grace can have no personal meaning for seraphim or cherubim. These holy beings may know of these qualities of God but be unable to feel them sympathetically for the reason that they have not sinned and so do not call forth God’s mercy and grace. So there may be, and I believe there surely are, other aspects of God’s essential being which He has not revealed even to His ransomed and Spirit-illuminated children. (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 52)

Thus, it must be concluded that there are hidden facts of God’s nature wholly unknown (and perhaps unknowable) by any created being, even angels. They are known only by Jehovah God himself. Let us now consider some 30 attributes, or perfections, of God.

- A. God is Spirit – Jesus made this clear when he told the Samaritan woman: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Emery Bancroft has written: “God as Spirit is incorporeal, invisible, without material substance, without physical parts or passions and therefore free from all temporal limitations” (*Elemental Theory*, p. 23).

Some have been disturbed as they compare these statements with certain Old Testament expressions that speak of God’s arms (Deut. 33:27), his eyes (Psa. 33:18), his ears (2 Kings 19:16), and his mouth (Isa. 58:14). However, these terms are simply anthropomorphic expressions, terms used to explain some function or characteristic of God by using words descriptive of human elements. Robert Lightner writes: “Such expressions do not mean that God possesses these physical parts. He is Spirit (John 4:24). Rather, they mean since God is Spirit and eternal, He is capable of doing precisely the functions which are performed by these physical properties in man” (*The God of the Bible*, p. 67).

- B. God is a Person – One of the greatest books ever written on the person of God is entitled *The Pursuit of God*, by the late A. W. Tozer. In this book Dr. Tozer wrote the following:

In this hour of all but universal darkness, one cheering gleam appears. Within the fold of conservative Christianity, there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself. They are eager for spiritual realities, and will not be put off with words, nor will they be content with correct “interpretations” of truth. They are athirst for God, and they will not be satisfied until they have drunk deep at the fountain of living water.

The modern scientist has lost God amid the wonders of His world. We Christians are in real danger of losing God amid the wonders of His Word. We have almost forgotten that God is a person; and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can. It is inherent in personality to be able to know other personalities, but full knowledge of one personality by another cannot be achieved in one encounter. It is only after long and loving mental communication that the full possibilities both can be explored. (*The Pursuit of God*, pp. 7, 13)

Dr. Robert Lightner has written the following about the personality of God:

Personality involves existence with the power of self-consciousness and self-determination. To be self-conscious means to be able to be aware of one’s own self among others. It is more than mere consciousness. Even animals possess something which makes them aware of things around them. The brute, however, is not able to objectify himself. Man, in contrast to the brute, possesses both consciousness and self-consciousness. Self-determination has to do with the ability to look to the future and prepare an intelligent course of action. It also involves the power of choice. The brute also has determination, but he does not have self-determination – the power to act from his own free will and to thus determine his acts. It is usually admitted that there are three elements of personality – intellect, emotion and will. (*The God of the Bible*, p. 65)

Thus, as a person, God exhibits all those elements involved in personality. Let us now look at some of the things God does which prove that he is indeed not some mystical principle, but an actual person.

1. He creates – “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).
2. He destroys – “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous.... Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground” (Gen. 18:20; 19:24-25).
3. He provides – “These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hands, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psa. 104:27-30). “Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?” (Luke 12:24).
4. He promotes – “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psa. 75:6-7).

5. He cares – “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all you care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:6-7). “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (Heb. 10:35).

No principle can care. Only a person can care for another person or another object. Poet Thomas Baird wrote these thrilling words concerning these verses in 1 Peter and Hebrews:

*It is His will that I should cast my cares on him each day,  
He also bids me not to cast my confidence away;  
But oh! how foolishly I act when taken unaware,  
I cast away my confidence and carry all my care.*

6. He hears – “He that planteth the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?” (Psa. 94:9-10).

The fact that God hears is mentioned nearly 70 times in the Psalms alone. In almost all cases this fact is connected to hearing our prayers. For example, in Psalm 6:8 God says that he hears in time of sorrow. Then in Psalm 34:6 we are told God hears in time of trouble. Perhaps the greatest passage is found in Psalm 55:17, where we are told that God hears us anytime we pray. David says: “Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

7. He hates – There are certain things that God hates, and only a person can be involved in this manner. “These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him. A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Prov. 6:16-19).
8. He grieves – “And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen. 6:6). As humans are grieved, God grieves. In the New Testament we are told concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).
9. He loves – “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Perhaps the greatest song ever written is a song that we sometimes limit the singing of to little children. It is the song that, as small children, we learned in Sunday school:

*Jesus loves me, this I know;  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to him belong,  
They are weak, but he is strong.*

- C. God is one – God is not only a Spirit, he is not only a Person, but he is one. Probably the greatest and most descriptive summary statement in the entire Bible about God is found in Deuteronomy 6. It could be called the theme of the entire Old Testament, and indeed, of the whole Bible: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut. 6:4-5).

There are so many passages in both the Old and the New Testaments that speak of the unity of God. Listed here are but a few: “That all people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else” (1 Kings 8:60). “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:5-6). “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:4-6). “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

- D. God is a Trinity – B. B. Warfield has suggested the following definition concerning the Trinity: “There is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead, there are three eternal and co-equal Persons, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence” (James Orr, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 3,012).

Robert Culver writes:

Two expressions have been traditionally employed to designate certain inner relations between the Father and the Son, and the Father and the Son with the Spirit. These two expressions are the

eternal generation of the Son by the Father and the eternal spiration (or procession) of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. They began to be employed about the time of Nicea (A.D. 325). They expressed in Scriptural language the idea that the Son and the Spirit were eternally with the Godhead. John 1:14 refers to our Lord as the “only begotten of the Father.” John 14:16, 26 and 15:26 speak of the Spirit as “proceeding from the Father and the Son.” (*The Living God*, p. 96)

1. False views concerning the Trinity – There are serious errors about the doctrine of the Trinity.
  - a. The error of tri-theism – This says that the Trinity consists of three separate (but cooperating) Gods.
  - b. The error of modalism – According to this view there is but one God who simply reveals himself through three different modes, or roles. For example, a particular man could be considered a “husband” to his wife, a “father” to his children, and an “employee” to his boss.

Both tri-theism and modalism are totally unscriptural.
2. Proposed illustrations demonstrating the Trinity – Throughout church history various illustrations have been offered to demonstrate the Trinity. Eight such examples are as follows. The first four are totally unscriptural, while the final four possess some limited possibilities.
  - a. A three-leaf clover – Each leaf enjoys the same stem, but this is a poor illustration of the Trinity because these leaves can be separated one from the other, and you cannot separate the Trinity.
  - b. The three states of water (liquid, vapor, and solid) – In its natural form, water is liquid. When boiled it turns into vapor, and when frozen, it becomes solid. This, too, is a poor illustration of the Trinity.
  - c. The threefold nature of man (body, soul, spirit) – Man possesses body, soul, and spirit, but they can be separated. At death the body is buried; the soul (the spirit) goes to be with the Lord. You cannot separate the Trinity. Therefore this, too, is a poor illustration.
  - d. The three parts of an egg (shell, white, yolk) – These three parts can be separated, thus making a bad illustration.
  - e. The nature of light, consisting of three kinds of rays:
    - (1) chemical rays – Rays that are invisible, and can neither be felt nor seen
    - (2) light rays – Rays that are seen, but cannot be felt
    - (3) heat rays – Rays that are felt, but never seen. Some have said this is a good illustration of the Trinity, because chemical rays are invisible and could illustrate a type of the Father (can neither be felt nor seen). Light rays can be seen but cannot be felt, thus illustrating a type of the Son. Heat rays illustrate a type of the Holy Spirit because they are felt but never seen. This is a possible illustration of the Trinity.
  - f. The dimensional example – A book has height, width, and length. This is my favorite example of the Trinity because these three factors cannot be separated, yet they are not the same.
  - g. A triangle – This is a fairly good example of the Trinity because it has three sides, and yet, it is a triangle.
  - h. Fire – A fire must have three things to exist. They are not the same, but if any ingredient is absent the fire ceases to be. These are: fuel, heat, and oxygen.
    - (1) Remove the fuel and the fire goes out.
    - (2) Lower the heat and the fire goes out.
    - (3) Take away the oxygen and the fire goes out.
3. Old Testament passages regarding the Trinity
  - a. The usage of the Hebrew word *Elohim* – The very first verse in the Bible contains God’s great name Elohim (Gen. 1:1): “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”
    - (1) Elohim is a plural name – However, when used in reference to the one true God, it is constantly joined with verbs and adjectives in the singular. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). “See not that I, even I, am he” (Deut. 32:39).
    - (2) In many Old Testament passages Elohim is plurally used – “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil” (Gen. 3:22). “Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language” (Gen. 11:7).
    - (3) Certain variants of Elohim are plural – Often one must go back to the original Hebrew translation to see that certain variants of Elohim are plural, although the more current writing would indicate that they are singular. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Eccles. 12:1). In the original, this is literally “thy

Creators.” “For thy Maker is thine husband” (Isa. 54:5). Here, Maker should be translated “Makers.”

- b. The triune conversations in Isaiah – “Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isa. 6:8). This passage is a reference to the Trinity.

Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret, from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me” (Isa. 48:16). In this passage the “Son” is speaking about the “Father” who sent him, and the “Holy Spirit.”

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy” (Isa. 63:9-10). In this passage there is a reference to the “Father,” the “Son,” and the “Holy Spirit.”
- c. The conversation between the Father and the Son in the Psalms – “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.... I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Psa. 2:2-3, 7). “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” (Psa. 110:1)
4. New Testament passages regarding the Trinity.
  - a. The baptism of Christ – “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16-17).
  - b. The temptation of Christ – “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matt. 4:1).
  - c. The teachings of Jesus – “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever” (John 14:16). The Greek word here translated “another” is *allos*, meaning another of the same kind. *Heteros* is the Greek word for another of a different kind. It is never used in referring to the Trinity.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).
  - d. The baptismal formula – “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt. 28:19-20).
  - e. The apostolic benediction – “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen” (2 Cor. 13:14).
5. A scriptural summary of the Trinity
  - a. The Father is God – “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44). “Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:7). “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Pet. 1:2).
  - b. The Son is God – “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). “In the beginning was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). “And Thomas answered and said unto him [the Son], My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Heb. 1:8).
  - c. The Spirit is God – “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou has not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:3-4). “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered

himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14).

Actually, Reginald Hernber, the great songwriter, put the doctrine of the Trinity in poetic form when he wrote the beautiful hymn:

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,  
Early in the morning, our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty,  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.*

- E. God is self-existent – This is simply to say (with staggering implications) that God exists because he exists. He is not dependent upon anything or anyone for his thoughts (Rom. 11:33-34), his will (Rom. 9:19; Eph. 1:5), his power (Psa. 115:3), or his counsel (Psa. 33:10-11). “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exod. 3:13-14).
- In a nutshell, *we* exist because our *parents* existed (past tense), but *God* exists because *he* exists (eternal tense).
- F. God is self-sufficient – “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof” (Psa. 50:10-12).
- This attribute is closely connected to the attribute of self-existence, but carries it a step further. This means God has never had in eternity past, nor can ever have in the ages to come, a single need for which his own divine nature has not already provided.
- G. God is eternal – Simply defined, this means God is absolutely free from the tyranny of time. In him there is no past or future, but one always and never-ending present. He is neither conditioned nor confined by time. “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them” (Deut. 33:27). “My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever; and thy remembrance unto all generations” (Psa. 102:11-12).
- During one of his dialogues with the wicked Pharisees, the Son of God made reference to his attribute of eternity. Note his declaration: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” (John 8:56-57). In response, it should be noted that Jesus did not say, “Before Abraham was, I *was*,” but, “Before Abraham was, I *am*” (John 8:58).
- “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psa. 90:2).
- We see things only as they occur, if we see them at all. Man may be pictured as peeking through a small knothole in a huge fence, watching the parade of life go by. He can only see that tiny section of the parade that passes immediately before his eyes. This section he calls the present. That part of the parade already gone by is the past, while the final part of the parade he calls the future. But the eternal God stands on top of the fence and sees easily the entire panorama. He views the beginning (the past to us), the middle (our present), and looks upon the coming parade (the future to us).
- H. God is infinite – God has no limitations. He is bound only by his own nature and will.
- “And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (1 Kings 8:22-23, 27). “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? said the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? said the Lord” (Jer. 23:24).
- These verses totally refute the “God-in-a-box” charge, namely, that the Old Testament God was confined to the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies.
- I. God is perfect – “As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him” (Psa. 18:30). “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

The word *perfect* means “complete,” without the slightest flaw. This states, therefore, that anything God *is, has, or does* is perfect.

1. His various characteristics (attributes) are perfect – His love is a perfect love, his grace is perfect, his holiness is perfect, etc.
2. His law is perfect – “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7).
3. His actions toward believers are perfect – “The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever: forsake not the works of thine own hands” (Psa. 138:8). Thus, all of God's dealings with his people are perfect, that is to say, complete, without the slightest flaw or mistake.

- J. God is omnipresent – The great theologian A. H. Strong defines this attribute as follows: “God, in the totality of His essence, without diffusion or expansion, multiplication or division, penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 279).

The omnipresence of God thus means he is present everywhere with his whole being at the same time. The great danger to avoid in rightly understanding this attribute is the grievous error of pantheism, which says that God is everywhere, and everything is God. This is totally false. God is everywhere, but everything is not God.

Paul Enns writes: “The doctrine of omnipresence is a comfort to the believer who recognizes that no calamity can befall him that God is not present with him; it is also a warning to the disobedient person that he cannot escape the presence of God” (*Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 194).

Two aspects should be kept in mind as one studies the omnipresence of God.

1. God’s immanence – This speaks of God being in the world, acting within and through his creation. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).
2. God’s transcendence – This affirms that God is above and beyond his creation. “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee” (Psa. 139:7-12). Charles Ryrie observes:

Omnipresent does not mean that the immediacy of His presence does not vary. It does. His presence on His throne (Rev. 4:2), in Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 7:2), or in the believer (Gal. 2:20) certainly differs in its immediacy from His presence in the lake of fire (Rev. 14:10). Though in the lake of fire people will be separated from the face-presence of God (2 Thess. 1:9, “*prosopon*”), they will never be separated from Him who is omnipresent (Rev. 14:10, “*enopion*”). There is obviously no presence of fellowship (for His face will be turned away from the wicked in the lake of fire) as exists when He indwells believers. (*Basic Theology*, p. 41)

- K. God is omnipotent (all powerful) – “Is there anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son” (Gen. 18:14). “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev. 19:6).

This means God can do anything if it can be done and if it does not contradict his own nature. To illustrate these two things: God cannot create a rock so heavy that he couldn’t lift it, because the very nature of this act would be impossible to perform. God cannot lie, or steal, for these things would contradict his own nature. Here are some areas in which God’s omnipotence is clearly seen:

1. Over nature
  - a. He separates light from darkness (Gen. 1:4).
  - b. He separates the waters by the firmament (space) (Gen. 1:7).
  - c. He separates the seas from the dry land (Gen. 1:10).
  - d. He measures oceans in his hands (Isa. 40:12).
  - e. He weighs mountains in his scale (Isa. 40:12).
  - f. He regards nations as a drop in the bucket (Isa. 40:15).
  - g. He looks upon the islands as small particles of dirt (Isa. 40:15).

2. Over men – “The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee horn men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan. 4:30-32).
  3. Over angels – “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word” (Psa. 103:20).
  4. Over Satan – The first two chapters of Job deal with Satan’s accusations against the patriarch before God. The devil then subjects Job to various fierce and fiery trials, but not before being granted the needed specific permission from the omnipotent God himself. (See Job 1:12; 2:6.)
  5. Over death – “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18). “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14-15).
- L. God is omniscient (all knowing) – God possesses (without prior discovery of facts) complete and universal knowledge of all things past, present, and future. This includes not only the actual, but also the possible. This total and immediate knowledge is based on his eternity (he has always and will always exist), and his omnipresence (he has been, is, and will always be everywhere at the same time). In essence, God knows everything completely, perfectly, independently, simultaneously, and innately. Thus:
- The quantity of his knowledge – complete.
  - The quality of his knowledge – perfect.
  - The source of his knowledge – independent.
  - The time involved concerning his knowledge – simultaneous.
  - The method of his knowledge – innate.
- “Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite” (Psa. 147:5). “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?” (Isa. 40:13-14). “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches” (Psa. 104:24).
1. He sees all things – “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3).
  2. He knows all things – “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them by their names” (Psa. 147:4). “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matt. 10:29-30).
  3. He knows mankind.
    - a. Our thoughts – “Thou understandest my thought afar off” (Psa. 139:2b). “Shall not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart” (Psa. 44:21).
    - b. Our words – “For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether” (Psa. 139:4). “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name” (Mal. 3:16).
    - c. Our deeds – “Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising” (Psa. 139:2a). “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience” (Rev. 2:19). (See also Psa. 139:3; Rev. 2:2, 9, 13; 3:1, 8, 15.)
    - d. Our sorrows – “And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows” (Exod. 3:7).
    - e. Our needs – “(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matt. 6:32).
    - f. Our devotion – “And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and

judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen. 18:17-19).

“And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Gen. 22:11-12).

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: Therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars” (2 Chron. 16:9).

To illustrate this, imagine yourself in the vicinity of the Garden of Gethsemane on a warm April night some 2,000 years ago. As you watch, a man walks up to Jesus and begins kissing him. You would probably conclude, “How this man must love the Master!” Shortly after this you are shocked to hear another man bitterly cursing Christ. Now your conclusion would be, “How this man must hate the Master!” But both times you would be wrong. Judas, the man who kissed Christ, really hated him, and Peter, the one who cursed him, really loved him.

- g. Our frailties – “For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psa. 103:14).
- h. Our foolishness – “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee” (Psa. 69:5).
- 4. He knows his own – “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine” (John 10:14). “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19).
- 5. He knows the past, present and future – “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18).
- 6. He knows what might or could have been – “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day” (Matt. 11:23).

A. W. Tozer has written:

God perfectly knows Himself and, being the source and author of all things, it follows that He knows all that can be known. And this He knows instantly and with a fulness of perfection that includes every possible item of knowledge concerning everything that exists or could have existed anywhere in the universe at any time in the past or that may exist in the centuries or ages yet unborn. God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all beings and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell. (*The Knowledge of The Holy*, p. 62)

- M. God is wise – We have already noted that God’s omniscience is based upon his eternity and omnipresence. We may now suggest his wisdom is grounded upon his omniscience. Robert Lightner writes:

Though very closely related, knowledge and wisdom are not the same. Nor do they always accompany each other. No doubt we have all known those who have acquired a great deal of facts but who lacked the ability to use them wisely. Both knowledge and wisdom are imperfect in man but perfect and perfectly related to each other in God. Only He knows how to use His infinite knowledge to the best possible end. Through His wisdom God applies His knowledge to the fulfillment of His own purposes in ways which will bring the most glory to Him. (*The God of the Bible*, p. 99)

A single definition of knowledge and wisdom would read: Knowledge is the accumulation of facts. Wisdom is the ability to rightfully apply those facts.

Following are but a few of the passages that declare the wisdom of God. “To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth forever” (Psa. 136:5). “The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens” (Prov. 3:19). “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the

world unto our glory” (1 Cor. 2:7). “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen” (1 Tim. 1:17). “To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 25).

- N. God is immutable – In a sentence, this says that God never differs from himself. He may on occasion alter his dealings with men in a dispensational sense, but his divine character remains constant. This is a vital attribute of God, without which he could not be God. For example, a person may only change in two directions. He may go from better to worse, or from worse to better. But it is unthinkable that God could travel down either of these roads. To go from worse to better implies past imperfection. To go from better to worse implies present imperfection. However, how can we understand those occasions when we read of God repenting? In fact, this is recorded no less than 15 times in the Old Testament. Note but a few examples:

“And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen. 6:6). “And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people” (Exod. 32:14). “And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel” (1 Sam. 15:35). “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not” (John. 3:10).

Here it is vital to observe God’s immutable plan in dealing with man as stated in the Bible. In a nutshell:

1. God will always bless when men do good.
2. God will always judge when men do evil.
3. God will always forgive when men repent.

Thus, in the above cases it was *man* who changed, not God.

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Heb. 1:10-12). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (1:17). “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

- O. God is sovereign – This means that God is the absolute and sole ruler in the universe. To be truly sovereign demands that one have the total freedom, power, knowledge, wisdom, and determination to carry out a predetermined course of action. God possesses all these in infinite measure, and he is thus sovereign.

The word means principal, chief, supreme. It speaks first of position (God is the chief Being in the universe), then of power (God is supreme in power in the universe). How He exercises that power is revealed in the Scriptures. A sovereign could be a dictator (God is not), or a sovereign could abdicate the use of his powers (God has not). Ultimately God is in complete control of all things, though He may choose to let certain events happen according to natural laws which He has ordained. (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 43)

Two ancient problems usually surface during any discussion of the sovereignty of God.

1. If God is sovereign, how do we explain the presence of sin and evil? A. W. Tozer writes:

The Zend-Avesta, sacred book of Zoroastrianism, loftiest of the great non-biblical religions, got around this difficulty neatly enough by postulating a theological dualism. There were two gods, Ormazd and Ahriman, and these between them created the world. The good Ormazd made all good things and the evil Ahriman made the rest. It was quite simple. Ormazd had no sovereignty to worry about, and apparently did not mind sharing his prerogatives with another. (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 117)

This explanation is, of course, totally unscriptural. The only positive statement in our present ignorance is that the sovereign God has indeed allowed (but not arranged) for sin to enter this universe, that through it all he might receive the most glory (Rev. 4:11), and that the elect (Rom. 8:28) might receive the most good.

2. If God is sovereign, how do we reconcile the responsibility and freedom of man? Again, to quote from A. W. Tozer:

Here is my view: God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God, but fulfills it, inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice man should make, but that he should be free to make it. (Ibid., p. 118)

“Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Psa. 135:6). “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isa. 46:9-11). Charles Ryrie aptly summarizes:

The sovereignty of God seems to contradict the freedom or actual responsibility of man. But even though it may seem to do so, the perfection of sovereignty is clearly taught in the Scriptures so must not be denied because of our inability to reconcile it with freedom or responsibility. Also, if God is sovereign, how can the creation be so filled with evil?

Man was created with genuine freedom, but the exercise of that freedom in rebellion against God introduced sin into the human race. Though God was the Designer of the plan, He was in no way involved in the commission of evil either on the part of Satan originally, or of Adam subsequently. Even though God hates sin, for reasons not revealed to us, sin is present by His permission. Sin must be within God’s eternal plan (or God would not be sovereign) in some way in which He is not the author of it (or God could not be holy). (*Basic Theology*, p. 43)

- P. God is incomprehensible – By this it is stated that no one except God himself can even remotely understand and comprehend God. “Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number” (Job 5:7-9). “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea” (Job 11:7-9).

“Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast” (Psa. 36:5-6). “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33).

To illustrate this attribute, consider the following: Let us suppose in heaven we are able to double our learning each year concerning the person and attributes of God. This is not at all an unreasonable assumption, for the Christian will possess a sinless and glorified body, along with a holy and tireless desire to know more about Jesus. So here is a believer who begins eternity with  $x$  amount of knowledge about God. At the beginning of the second year he has doubled this, the third year he learns four times as much, the fourth year, eight times as much, etc. By the end of his eleventh year he will have increased his knowledge concerning God a thousandfold. At the conclusion of year number 21 the figure jumps to one million. At the end of the thirty-first year the number leaps to one billion. Following the forty-first year it reaches one trillion. As he finishes his first century in eternity his knowledge of God (doubling each year) would reach  $10^{30}$  (one followed by 30 zeroes) times his original amount of knowledge. This figure is thousands of times more than the combined total of all the grains of sand on all the seashores of the earth. But this number simply marks his first 100 years. How much knowledge-doubling will he have experienced at the end of his first one million years? This staggering figure cannot even be comprehended by the mortal mind, but whatever it is, and however many zeroes it represents, it will double itself the very next year.

The point of all the above is simply this: Throughout the untold and unnumbered trillions and trillions of years in timeless eternity, each child of God can double his or her learning about the Creator each year and yet never even remotely exhaust the awesome height, depth, or length to be known of the person of God.

- Q. God is inscrutable – “How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33).

This attribute refers to the inexplicable and mysterious ways of God. It raises the most painful question of all: Why does a loving and wise God allow certain terrible tragedies to occur? As an

example, here is a young, spirit-filled pastor. He has spent a number of years diligently preparing for the ministry. His wife has sacrificed to help put him through school. But now all this is paying off. His church is experiencing an amazing growth. Souls are saved weekly. New converts are baptized each Sunday. Additional Sunday school buses are purchased, and a new building is planned. A skeptical community slowly finds itself being profoundly influenced by this vibrant and exciting pastor and his people. Suddenly, without any warning, the minister is killed in a freak accident. Shortly after the funeral the still confused and stunned congregation extends a call to another man. But the new minister shows little compassion and less leadership ability. Soon the flock is scattered and the once thrilling testimony of a growing and glowing work is all but stilled.

How many times since Abel's martyrdom at the dawn of human history have similar tragedies taken place? One need only change the names, places, and rearrange some of the details. But the searing and searching question remains: Why does God permit such terrible things? A clue (and only a clue) to this question is seen in the tenth chapter of Revelation: "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:7). But until the sound of that blessed trumpet, the perplexed child of God can arrive at no better conclusion than once offered by Abraham: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right." (Gen. 18:25).

This sublime statement is amplified on at least three other biblical occasions:

1. By Moses – "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4).
  2. By Job – "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15).
  3. By a Galilean crowd in Jesus' day – "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7:37).
- R. God is holy – Without a doubt, the most prominent attribute of God as presented by both Old and New Testament Scriptures is his holiness. This one single perfection would perhaps come closer to describing the eternal Creator than any other characteristic he possesses. It has been suggested that his holiness is the union of all other attributes, as pure white light is the union of all the colored rays of the spectrum. Note but a few biblical references: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy" (Psa. 99:9). "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. 1:15).

A. W. Tozer writes:

"Holy" is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He *is* that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, all His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy.

God is holy and He made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. Sin's temporary presence in the world only accents this. Whatever is holy is healthy: evil is a moral sickness that must end ultimately in death. The formation of the language itself suggests this, the English word "holy" deriving from the Anglo-Saxon "halig, hal," meaning "well, whole."

Since God's first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from inseparable moral collapse, He is said to be angry. Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that would take the life of her child. (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 113)

In a sense there are both negative and positive aspects to God's holiness:

Negative – The absence of any unclean or evil element

Positive – The abundance of every clean and pure element

In the Bible God underlines his holiness by direct commands, objects, personal visions, and individual judgments.

1. Direct commandments
  - a. The moral law (Ten Commandments) (Exod. 19:10-25; 20:1-17)
  - b. The spiritual law (feasts and offerings) (Exod. 35-40; Lev. 1 – 7; 23)
  - c. The ceremonial law (diet, sanitation, etc.) (Lev. 11:15)

2. Objects – The main object was the tabernacle itself.
3. Personal visions
  - a. Moses' vision – “And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:  
 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen” (Exod. 33:18-23).
  - b. Isaiah's vision – “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:1-5).
  - c. Daniel's vision – “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:9-14).
  - d. John's vision – “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:8-11). Note the threefold usage of the word *holy* here. In the Scriptures we never read the expression, “grace, grace, grace, Lord God Almighty,” or “love, love, love, Lord God Almighty.” But on two specific occasions we do read, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty” (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). It is as if this attribute of God is so important that one “holy” will not suffice.
4. Individual judgments
  - a. Upon Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire (Lev. 10:1-3)
  - b. Upon Korah, for rebellion (Num. 16:4-12, 31-33)
  - c. Upon Uzziah, for intruding into the office of the priest (2 Chron. 26:16-21)
  - d. Upon Herod, for blasphemy (Acts 12:20-23)
  - e. Upon Christ, for the sins of the world (Isa. 53:1-10; Psa. 22:1; Heb. 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:21-25; 3:18) – Without a doubt, the greatest historical example of God's holiness was Calvary.
- S. God is righteous and just – Righteousness can be defined as moral equity. Justice is the illustration of this moral equity. In righteousness, God reveals his love for holiness. In justice, God reveals his hatred for sin. The Scriptures present this twin attribute in a threefold light.
  1. The intrinsic righteousness and justice of God – “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” (Exod. 9:27). “O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this” (Ezra 9:15).

2. The legislative righteousness and justice of God – “O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah” (Psa. 67:4). “Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and wins” (Psa. 7:9). “Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously” (Psa. 96:10). “Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments” (Psa. 119:137).
  - a. Rewarding the good – “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).  
It should be pointed out, however, that while God’s righteousness guarantees rewards, it does not bestow them. A. H. Strong writes as follows:  
  
Neither justice or righteousness bestows reward. This follows from the fact that obedience is due to God, instead of being optional or a gratuity. No creature can claim anything for his obedience. If God rewards, He rewards by virtue of His goodness and faithfulness, but not by virtue of His justice or His righteousness. (*Systematic Theology*, p. 293)
  - b. Punishing the evil – “Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works” (2 Tim. 4:14). “And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments” (Rev. 16:5-7).
3. The imputed righteousness of God – “And what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). (See also Rom. 4:6-8; Phil. 3:7-9; 1 Pet. 2:24.)
- T. God is true – “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:1-2). “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). (See also 1 Thess. 1:9; Rom. 3:4.)

A. H. Strong makes the following statement: “By truth we mean that attribute of the Divine nature in virtue of which God’s being and God’s knowledge eternally conform to each other” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 260).

Truth is therefore anything factual about God. The child of God may well say, “I speak (or serve) the truth,” but only the Son of God can say, “I *am* the truth” (John 14:6). Again to quote from A. H. Strong:

Since Christ is the truth of God, we are successful in our search for truth only as we recognize Him. Whether all roads lead to Rome depends upon which way your face is turned. Follow a point of land out into the sea, and you find only ocean. With the back turned upon Jesus Christ all following after truth leads only into mist and darkness. (Ibid., p. 262)

God is the ultimate and only source and standard of truth. This is why the Bible describes the “God that cannot lie” (Titus 1:2), and concludes that it is utterly “impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18).

This may be taken a step further and stated that he not only *cannot* lie, but he *need not* lie. A lie is almost always resorted to by human beings to get out of a tight spot, to impress someone, to gain an advantage, etc., but Almighty God never finds himself in any of these situations. In Psalms he speaks to us concerning this: “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof” (Psa. 50:10-12). To summarize this attribute:

1. God is true because his character and reputation are identical.
2. In light of this, he is both the source and standard of all truth, which is derived from him and defined by him. Thus, as *all* truth resides in him, then *any* truth must be revealed by him. This includes every fact concerning time, space, the universe, angels, man, animals, and the very atoms themselves.

3. How does this attribute relate to man? Consider the following illustration, which may be referred to as “Nile River knowledge.”

One’s first flight over Egypt is a remarkable experience. To describe the sight from the air, imagine a sheet of light brown construction paper. Take a blue felt-tip pen and make a line down the center of the sheet horn top to bottom. Now take a green felt-tip pen and make two lines, one on each side of the blue line. This is how Egypt looks from a plane; the blue line is the Nile, and the green line on either side is the fertile and productive strip of land created by the life-giving waters. The brown sheet itself represents the desert.

All knowledge possessed by human beings can be pictured as the untold grains of sand represented by that brown sheet. It is there, but totally useless and unproductive in and by itself. But allow the waters of the Word of God to occupy the central place, then suddenly any and all facts become fertile, useful, and productive wisdom.

- U. God is faithful – God’s faithfulness refers to his self-loyalty and to his loyalty to his entire creation. He will not (indeed, he cannot) change his character nor fail to perform all he has promised.

“Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations” (Deut. 7:9). “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds” (Psa. 36:5). “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens” (Psa. 89:1-2). “It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: peat is thy faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22-23).

God’s faithfulness is seen in many areas.

1. In nature – “Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth” (Psa. 119:90). “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22). “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col. 1:17).
2. In keeping his promises to his friends
  - a. Adam – He promised Adam that someday a Savior would come from the seed of a woman. (Compare Gen. 3:15 with Gal. 4:4.)
  - b. Abraham – He promised Abraham he would father a son in his old age. (Compare Gen. 15:4; 18:14 with Gen. 21:1-2.)
  - c. Moses – He promised Moses that Israel would not leave Egypt empty-handed. (Compare Exod. 3:2 with Exod. 12:35-36.)
  - d. Joshua – He promised Joshua glorious victory. (Compare Josh. 1:1-5 with Josh. 23:14.)
  - e. David – He promised David a king would come from his line who would rule eternally. (Compare 2 Sam. 7:12-13 with Luke 1:31-33.)
3. In keeping his warnings against his enemies
  - a. Ahab – He warned wicked King Ahab that because he had murdered godly Naboth, the very location “where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood.” (Compare 1 Kings 21:17-19 with 1 Kings 22:34-38.)
  - b. Jezebel – He warned wicked Jezebel that the wild dogs of Jezreel would someday eat her dead body beside the city wall. (Compare 1 Kings 21:23 with 2 Kings 9:30-37.)
4. In times of temptation – “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (2 Cor. 10:13).
5. In chastening his children – “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me” (Psa. 119:75). “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:6).
6. In forgiving our sins – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
7. In answering our prayers – “Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications; in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness” (Psa. 143:1).
8. In keeping the saved saved – “Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:8-9). “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:23-24). “But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil” (2 Thess. 3:3).

9. In defending his people – God defended the city of Jerusalem against its enemies on at least three occasions.
- In the days of King Asa (2 Chron. 14:9-15)
  - In the days of King Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:1-25)
  - In the days of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:32-35)  
 “For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people” (1 Sam. 12:22). “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself” (2 Tim. 2:13).
- V. God is light – He is both the source and strength of all illumination. This refers not only to those golden beams of energy radiating from the sun and stars, but also to moral, mental, and spiritual rays of information and inspiration. “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Psa. 36:9). “Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain” (Psa. 104:2).
- “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Tim. 6:16).
- “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).
- “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).
- This attribute of God is referred to some 100 times in the Bible.
- The first occasion has to do with the earth and creation – “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3).
  - The final occasion has to do with the heavenly city and redemption – “And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:5).
  - This attribute as related to the saints – “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psa. 27:1). (See also Psa. 43:3; 89:15; 112:4; 119:105; 139:11-12.)
  - This attribute as related to the Savior – “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). (See also Isa. 9:2; 42:6; 49:6; Matt. 4:16; 17:2; Luke 2:32; John 1:4-5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46.)
- W. God is good – A. H. Strong defines goodness as follows: “Goodness is the eternal principle of God’s nature which leads Him to communicate of His own life and blessedness to those who are like Him in moral character” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 289).
- A. W. Tozer writes in similar fashion as follows:  
 The goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of good will toward men. He is tenderhearted and of quick sympathy, and His unflinching attitude toward all moral beings is open, frank, and friendly. By His nature He is inclined to bestow blessedness, and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people. (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 88)
- “Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psa. 107:8). “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Psa. 23:6). “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4).
- X. God is patient and long-suffering – This attribute has to do with God’s restraint concerning his righteous wrath and judgment in the face of rebellion and sin. “And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Exod. 34:6). “But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy and truth” (Psa. 86:15). “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Psa. 103:8).
- “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4). “The Lord is not slack

concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Y. God is merciful – Mercy is that eternal principle of God’s nature that leads him to seek the temporal good and eternal salvation of those who have opposed themselves to his will, even at the cost of infinite self-sacrifice. God’s mercy is optional, in that he is in no way obligated to save sinners. However, he chooses to do so. The Old Testament speaks four times as much about the mercy of God as does the New Testament. It is mentioned twenty-six times in Psalm 136 alone. Mercy then, among other things, is not getting what we deserve, namely, hell.

1. The example of David – Psalm 51 is the confessional psalm prayed by David after his shameful sin with Bathsheba, which included both adultery and murder. He begins by pleading for mercy and ends by acknowledging that no animal sacrifice could cleanse his sin. He then bypasses the Levitical offerings and throws himself completely upon the mercy of God (see Psalm 51). “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.... For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa. 51:1, 16-17).

2. The example of Israel – “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children” (Psa. 103:8-17).

“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.... For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:8, 12).

3. The example of Jonah – “And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” (Jonah. 4:2).

4. The example of Paul – “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.... Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Tim. 1:13, 16).

Z. God is gracious – The very simplest definition of this beautiful attribute is unmerited favor. It is helpful at this point to contrast mercy with grace. God’s *mercy* allows him to withhold *merited* punishment. God’s *grace* allows him to freely bestow *unmerited* favor. *Mercy* is not getting what we deserve, namely, hell. *Grace* is getting what we do not deserve, namely, heaven.

Consider the following illustration: A young man has been sentenced to life imprisonment for leading a violent rebellion against his king. One day the king himself visits the prisoner. To the amazement of the young rebel, his ruler sets him free. After releasing him, the king then offers to provide a permanent place in the royal palace for the ex-convict. Finally, the ruler states his intention to adopt the former rebel as his own son. At this point, the prisoner has experienced both mercy and grace. When released, he experienced mercy, that is, he did *not* receive that which he deserved, namely, the life of a prisoner. When adopted, he experienced grace, that is he *did* receive that which he did not deserve, namely, the life of a prince.

“He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion” (Psa. 111:4). “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful” (Psa. 116:5). “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pet. 2:3). “But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pet. 5:10).

1. God’s grace is seen through all dispensations in history – God’s grace is first mentioned on the eve of the first universal world destruction: “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). The last reference to grace occurs in Scripture’s final verse: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Rev. 22:21).

2. God's grace is always a free gift – “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24). “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).
3. God's grace always precedes his peace – “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:7).

The phrase “Grace to you and peace,” a common salutation in that day, is found many times in the New Testament, but always in this order – never “peace and grace.” It is spiritually true that one cannot experience God's peace until he has first appropriated his grace.

4. God's grace was incarnate in Christ – “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth”(John 1:14). “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11).
5. God's grace is greater than man's sin – “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).
6. God's grace was displayed at Calvary – “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9).
7. God's grace makes a man what he is – “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9). “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).
8. God's grace was perhaps the attribute that prompted him to create the world in the first place. (See Ephesians 2.)

AA. God is love – This is at once the most universally known and universally misunderstood attribute of all. Millions have simply equated love with God, thus weakening or totally denying his other perfections. A man and woman may have an affair hidden from their spouses and justify their adulterous relationship by their great “love” for each other. But God's love cannot be separated or isolated from his holiness and hatred for sin. Having said all this, however, it must be admitted that of all his attributes, God's love is probably more quickly seized upon by seeking sinners than any other perfection. The smallest child can sing with great understanding, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!”

1. Definitions of love

- a. Love is unselfish concern about another's welfare.
- b. Love is that act of one person seeking the highest good for another person.

Of all the 30 attributes presented during this study, three of them (mercy, grace, love) will probably be the most difficult to explain to angels, who have never experienced them. It would be like attempting to explain the breathtaking majesty of the Grand Canyon during a magnificent sunset and the glorious sound coming from a nearby symphony orchestra to a friend who was born blind and deaf.

2. Important truths concerning God's love

- a. It is impartial – “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4). (See also Deut. 10:17; Acts 10:34-35.)
- b. It is universal (John 3:16).
- c. It is everlasting – “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3).
- d. It is independent – The Greek word used in describing God's love for man is *agape*. This kind of love is absolutely unique, for it is not dependent upon the beauty of the object being loved. Naturally, human love does not function this way. We love others because they love us or because we see some beauty or value in them. But note how and when God loved us: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).
- e. It is proven loved demonstrated his love for us at Calvary. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).

3. Objects of God's love

- a. God loves Israel – “The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your father, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt” (Deut. 7:7-8). “Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isa. 49:15). “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3). “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 11:1). “I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob” (Mal. 1:2).
- b. God loves the world – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4). “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).
- c. God loves the church – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:25-32).
- d. God loves the sinner – “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).
- e. God loves the spiritual Christian – “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).
- f. God loves the carnal Christian (Luke 15:12-24).
- g. God loves his Son – “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand” (John 3:35). “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17). “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love” (John 15:9). “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”(John 17:23-24).  
“And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5).
- h. God loves the cheerful giver – “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).  
Consider one final illustration: When God was about to create man, says a Jewish legend, he took into his counsel the angels that stood about his throne. “Create him not,” said the angel of Justice, “for if thou dost he will commit all kinds of wickedness against his fellow men; he will be hard and cruel and dishonest and unrighteous.” “Create him not,” said the angel of Truth, “for he will be false and deceitful to his brother-man, and even to thee.” “Create him not,” said the angel of Holiness, “he will follow that which is impure in thy sight, and dishonor thee to thy face.” Then stepped forward the angel of Love (God's best beloved) and said: “Create him, our heavenly Father, for when he sins and turns from the path of right and truth and holiness, I will take him tenderly by the hand, and speak loving words to him, and then lead him back to thee.”

BB. God is glorious – This attribute is referred to perhaps more than any other, being mentioned over 150 times. Some of these instances are: “Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful praises, doing wonders? (Exod. 15:11). “Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place” (1 Chron. 16:27). “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens” (Psa. 8:1). “And blessed be his glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen” (Psa. 72:19).

The basic Old Testament word for glory is *kabed*, meaning, “to be weighted down with riches, beauty, honor, and fame.” The basic New Testament word for glory is *doxazo*, meaning, “brilliance, brightness, radiance, shining.” Thus, God is glorious in that he is weighted down with brilliant and dazzling riches, beauty, honor, and fame.

This glory, furthermore, is seen in all his possessions. These include:

1. His name (Neh. 9:5; Psa. 72:9)
2. His voice (Isa. 30:30)
3. His arm (Isa. 63:12)
4. His hand (Exod. 15:6)
5. His feet (Isa. 60:13)
6. His kingdom (Psa. 145:12)
7. His city (Psa. 87:3; Rev. 21:11, 23)
8. His temple (Isa. 60:7)
9. His throne (Matt. 19:28; 25:31)
10. His power (Col. 1:12)
11. His work (Psa. 111:3)
12. His gospel (1 Tim. 1:11)
13. His Son (John 17:5, 24; Acts 3:13; 1 Cor. 2:8)
14. His church (Eph. 5:27)

CC. God is unique – This attribute is inescapable in light of the first 28 attributes. Certainly he is absolutely, eternally, and infinitely unique from anything and anyone in his creation. The following passages bring this out:

“Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.... Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else” (Deut. 4:35, 39). “Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any” (Isa. 44:8). “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things” (Isa. 45:5-7). “To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?... Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isa. 46:5, 9).

DD. God is a God of wrath – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18).

1. Definition of God’s wrath – It may be defined as God’s immediate and continuous response to man’s wickedness. It is the settled opposition of his holiness to evil. “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psa. 7:11).
2. Objects of God's wrath
  - a. Upon the nations
    - (1) Israel – “Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you” (Ezek. 22:21-22).
      - (a) For idolatry (Exod. 32:10; Deut. 11:17; 2 Chron. 34:25; Psa. 106:40)
      - (b) For slanderous complaining (Num. 11:33; Psa. 78:31)
      - (c) For disobedience (Deut. 29:23, 28)
      - (d) For mocking his prophets (2 Chron. 36:16; Zech. 7:12)
      - (e) For intermarriage with pagan women (Ezra 10:14)
      - (f) For unbelief (Psa. 95:11; Heb. 3:11; 4:3)
    - (2) Babylon (Jer. 50:13; Rev. 16:19)
    - (3) Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38:18-19)
    - (4) All pagan nations (Psa. 9:17; Rev. 11:18)

- b. Upon individuals
  - (1) Those who mistreat widows and orphans (Exod. 22:24)
  - (2) Job's three friends (Job 42:7)
  - (3) Saul (Hos. 13:11)
  - (4) Achan (Josh. 22:20)
  - (5) Moses (Exod. 4:14)
  - (6) Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:25)
  - (7) Balaam (Num. 22:22)
  - (8) The sexually impure (Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6)
  - (9) Worshipers of Antichrist (Rev. 14:10)
  - (10) Truth rejecters (Rom. 1:18)
  - (11) Christ rejecters (Psa. 2:5; John 3:36; 1 Thess. 2:16)
- 3. Special demonstrations of God's wrath
  - a. The universal flood (Gen. 6-8)
  - b. Calvary (1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21)
  - c. The coming great tribulation (Psa. 110:5-6; Isa. 13:9, 11; Zeph. 1:14-15, 18; Jer. 10:10; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 15:1, 7; 16:1) – “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16-17).
  - d. Armageddon (Rev. 14:19; 19:15)
  - e. Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 11:18)
  - f. Eternal hell (Rev. 14:10)
- 4. Only protection from God's wrath – “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. 5:9). “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1:10).