Theology Proper
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Theology Proper in the Old Testament

The focal point of God's revelation in Scripture is His self-revelation to His people; the revelation of His person and character precedes and explains the revelation of His purposes. Revelation is to lead to a personal relationship between God and His people. If communion is to be possible, we must know the character of God through His self-disclosure. Our purpose in this session and the next seven sessions will be to study key Scripture passages from the Old Testament to learn what God has revealed about Himself, in order to begin to establish a doctrine of God from the Bible.

1. Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 (selected passages):

   a. This whole passage . . . describes the work of God wherein was brought into existence out of nothing the visible universe, including the earth, all living creatures, and man himself. God is here seen to fashioning the earth into a most excellent habitation for man, filled with all things necessary to the sustenance of the beasts of the field and of man who is His special creation made in the image of God. The encomium expressed over the separate phases, "It was good," and the last (1:31) "everything . . . was very good," makes it impossible to find in any part of the creation any influence that would predispose Adam to evil. God is seen as most beneficent and perfect in His work. (Stigers, Genesis, p. 47)

   1:1-3: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 3. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

   b. God is (Elohim; used 35 times in 35 verses of this chapter!)

   i. The etymology of  is debated. Most likely it comes from an Arabic root meaning "to fear" or "to reverence". The plural is generally thought of as a plural of majesty, not a plurality of persons. This is substantiated by the use of the singular verb, adjective, and pronounal forms used grammatically with it (Scott, TWOT, p. 44). However, as Erickson points out, this does not have to be the case (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 328). This could be a "quantitative plural". Terms such as "heaven" and "water" are also used as plurals, denoting a quantitative diversity in unity (e.g., water is composed of many drops; heavens of many stars or layers.

   ii. Many of the titles for God found in the OT use (developed from information in Scott, TWOT, p. 44):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>TITLE(S) and REFERENCE(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God's work of creation</td>
<td>God, Former of the Earth (Isa. 45:18); God of Heaven Who Made the Sea and the Dry Land (Jon. 1:9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
God's sovereignty

God of All the Earth (Isa. 54:5); God of the Hills (1 Kings 20:28); God of All Flesh (Jer. 32:27); The God of All the Kingdoms of the Earth (Isa. 37:16); God of Heaven (Neh. 2:4, 20); Yahweh, God of Heaven (Gen. 24:7; 2 Chr. 36:23); God in the Heaven (2 Chron. 20:6); The Lord God of the Heaven and God of the Earth (Gen. 24:3; see Deut. 4:39; Josh. 2:11); God of Gods and Lord of Lords, the Gerat, the Mighty, and the Terrible Who Does Not Regard Favorites and Does Not Take Bribes (Deut. 10:17); God Most High (Ps. 57:2); God Judge (Ps. 50:6; 75:7); God Judge in the Earth (Ps. 58:11)

God's majesty

God of Eternity (Isa. 40:28); God of Justice (Isa. 30:18); God of Certainty (Isa. 65:16); Living God (Jер. 10:10); This Holy God (1 Sam. 6:20)

God's saving

God of Salvation (1 Chron. 16:35; Ps. 18:46); see especially linked to people who experience His blessing, such as The God of Abraham ... and the God of Isaac (Gen. 28:13); God of the Armies of Israel (1 Sam. 17:45); God of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32:19)

God's acting

The Living God, Speaker from the Midst of the Fire (Deut. 5:23); God, the Bringer of Prisoners into Prosperity (Ps. 68:7); God ... the Bringer Out to You Water from the Flinty Rock (Deut. 8:15); Your God Who Separated You from the Peoples (Lev. 20:24).

God's intimacy

The God of Nearness (Jer. 23:23); Your God in Whom You Trust (2 Kings 19:10); God Your Chastener (Deut. 8:5); The God Feeding Me My Life Long Until Now (Gen. 48:15) God of My Righteousness (Ps. 4:1) God of My Mercy (Ps. 59:17); God of My Strength (Ps. 43:2); Our God Being Merciful (Ps. 116:5)

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Excursus: the Existence and Knowability of God (adapted from Sam Owen)

I. Introduction: The basis of a true belief in the true God is this: God has revealed Himself to us. The Bible offers no rational demonstration of God's existence, but rather points to His unquestionable reality (cf. Gen 1:1; Isa 45:5; Rom 11:36). His existence and self-disclosure are the ultimate presuppositions of biblical religion.

Scripture is clear that all men have a knowledge of God, both through creation (Rom 1:19-20; Psa 19:1) and conscious (Rom 2:14-15). Calvin described this elemental awareness of God as "a sense of divinity"; the American theologian Charles Hodge spoke of the universal conviction in man "that there is a Being on whom they are dependent and to whom they are responsible." However, we must not overvalue this innate awareness of God through natural revelation because:

A. The Bible does not view it as an adequate basis for a saving relationship with God. Indeed, men "suppress the truth" about God (Rom 1:18).

B. The Bible says man must approach God by faith (Heb 11:6); since the cross faith in God must
be mediated by Christ (1 Pet 1:21; 1 Tim 2:6). Hence, the historic creeds of the Church, "I believe in God ..."

II. What may be known of God: Granting special revelation in deeds and words; verbal, plenary inspiration; and the Spirit's illumination—what may be known about God?

A. We may know that God is through His mighty acts and miracles
   1. These visible "signs" point to a power beyond that of the atom, nature's laws and man, and transcendent power that reversed the irreversible forces of decay and raised Christ from the dead.
   2. Those miracles also point to the activity of the transcendent One in nature, to divine immanence.

B. We may know who God is through His revealed names and characteristics, as well as by His deeds. In brief, these names and deeds indicate that God is personal, holy, and loving.

C. We may know God's intentions, for He has disclosed His changeless plans for the changing world of time and space.
   1. We know that ultimately justice will be done and good will triumph over evil.
   2. We know that sinners can be justly accepted by God on the basis of His provision of atonement through Christ.

D. We may know God Himself in personal communion with the Holy Spirit. Personal experience of God is made possible through the revealed truth as attested by the Spirit.

E. We may know what God is, in Himself, in part (1 Cor. 13:9)
   1. We can never know God as He knows Himself completely.
   2. But He has informed us of what He really is propositionally.
   3. For example, "God is spirit" "God is holy" "God is love"
   4. These assertions originated with God and came through men; they are not simply human opinions which have no counterpart in the divine being.

F. Points to remember
   1. God cannot be known unless He wills to be known (Deut. 29:29)
   2. Our knowledge of God is incomplete (1 Cor. 13:12); it is sufficient, but not exhaustive
   3. Man is inferior to God, his object of study
   4. Man is in complete dependence on God for knowledge of God (2 Pet. 1:21).
5. Humility is becoming the theologian or preacher.

c. God is the **creator** of the universe (see also Ps. 96:5; 104:30; Isa. 37:16; 40:12-13; 44:24; 45:12; John 1:3; Acts 4:24; 15:15; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11; 10:6)

i. "Created" is *(bara)*, a word found 49 times in the OT. God is always the subject, and it never occurs with the object of material. The basic meaning is to create with the sense that what is created is new (McComiskey, TWOT, p. 127). While it thus allows an **ex nihilo** creation (and the only Hebrew word that does so; Ibid. and Waltke, "The Creation Account", pp. 335-37), it does not demand it (it is paralleled with *(to form)* and *(to fashion)* in Isa. 43:7). Erickson notes that "the idea of creation out of nothing is not excluded as the meaning of the word, although it has not been conclusively proved to be its meaning either" (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 368).

ii. God created the universe simply by speaking. Erickson notes three conclusions we may draw from this (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 370):

1. God has the power simply to will situations to be, and they immediately come to pass exactly as he has willed.

2. Creation is an act of his will, not an act to which he is driven by any force or consideration outside himself.

3. God does not involve himself, his own being, in the process. Creation is not something made out of him. It is not part of him or an emanation from his reality.

iii. In terms of the roles of the Trinity in creation, "It appears from Scripture that it was the Father who brought the created universe into existence. But it was the Spirit and the Son who fashioned it, who carried out the details of the design. Although the creation if *from* the Father, it is *through* the Son and *by* the Holy Spirit." (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, pp. 372-3)

iv. The significance of the doctrine of God creating the universe (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, pp. 374-7):

1. The doctrine of creation is first and rather obviously a statement that everything that is not God has derived its existence from him. To put is another way, the idea that there is any ultimate reality other than God is rejected. There is no room for dualism.

2. The original act of divine creation is unique. It is unlike human 'creative' acts, which involve fashioning, using the materials at hand. . . . God . . . is not bound by anything external to himself. His only limitations are those of his own nature and the choices he has made. God needs no materials. Therefore, his purposes, unlike those of the human 'creator', will not be frustrated by any inherent qualities of material with which he must work.

3. The doctrine of creation also means that nothing made is intrinsically evil. Everything has come from God, and the creation narrative says five times that he saw that it was good (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25).
(4) The doctrine of creation also thrusts a responsibility upon man. He cannot justify his evil behavior by blaming the evil realm of the material. The material world is not inherently evil. Man's sin must be an exercise of his own freedom. He cannot escape responsibility for his own actions.

(5) The doctrine of creation also guards against depreciating the incarnation of Christ. If the material world were somehow inherently evil, it would be very difficult to accept the fact that the second person of the Trinity took on human form, including a physical body.

(6) If all of creation has been made by God, there are a connection and an affinity among the various parts of it. I am a brother to all other men, for the same God created us and watches over us.

(7) While the doctrine of creation excludes any dualism, it also excluded any type of monism that regards the world as an emanation from God. According to the doctrine of creation, God simply wills things into existence out of nothing.

v. Implications of the Doctrine of Creation (adapted in part from Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 385-6):

(1) The world is not to be denied or despised
   (a) Everything that is has value
   (b) "God likes matter; he invented it" (C. S. Lewis)

(2) The world is not to be idolized
   (a) It is from God, but it is not itself God
   (b) Nothing other than God is self-sufficient or eternal

(3) The world is to be used and enjoyed
   (a) It is the "theatre of God's glory"
   (b) Stewardship (1 Tim. 4:4-5)

(4) There is justification for scientifically investigating the creation.

d. God's Spirit hovered over the creation. The Hebrew word for "spirit" is (ruah), which is found 387 times in the OT.

i. The basic idea is "air in motion" (Payne, TWOT, p. 836). Its meaning ranges from

   (1) Air or wind to
   (2) An immaterial being (whether good or evil) to
   (3) The immaterial part of man to
   (4) The Holy Spirit of God to
   (5) An attitude or mood.
ii. A few conservative commentators maintain that this refers to God's energy or power, and not the Holy Spirit (see Bush, *Genesis*, p. 29). Leupold shows the weakness of this understanding, though he notes that it is only with the light we have from the NT that enables us to be certain that this refers to the Holy Spirit (Leupold, *Genesis*, 1:49-50).

iii. Finally, we note that Wenham takes "the rendering 'Wind of God' as a concrete and vivid image of the Spirit of God. The phrase does really express the powerful presence of God moving mysteriously over the face of the waters." (Wenham, *Genesis*, p. 17)

e. In this verse, we see the role of God's Spirit in creation.

i. He "hovers" over the waters, a verb used in Deuteronomy "to describe the eagle's movements in stirring its young into flight; this aspect of intimate contact must be kept in mind throughout" (Kidner, *Genesis*, p. 45).

ii. Stigers maintains: "As in the new birth the Spirit is the source of life, so in creation was the Spirit the source of vitality and life" (Stigers, *Genesis*, pp. 52-3).

iii. Finally, Keil and Delitzsch relate that "the creative Spirit of God, . . . which worked upon the formless, lifeless mass, separating, quickening, and preparing the living forms, which were called into being by the creative words that followed" (Keil and Delitzsch, *Pentateuch, "Genesis-Exodus"*, p. 49).

iv. Wood writes: "The idea of Genesis 1:2, then, is that the Holy Spirit; fluttered over,' 'took care of,' 'moved upon' the chaotic state of the world in the interest of bringing order and design. Since the indication comes immediately before the description of the six-day creative activity, the implication is that the work of the six days was performed by the Spirit" (Wood, *Holy Spirit*, p. 30).

v. Inch speculates: "This might include such things as allowing the light to break through the dense cloud cover enveloping the earth, dividing between the atmospheric and terrestrial water and then between the terrestrial water and land, and the fashioning of plant and animal life. He is displayed as designing the delicate balance of life with regard to the earth" (Inch, *Saga*, pp. 20-1)

vi. Though the earth is "formless and void", God is still in control. Here the Spirit of God is "depicted as a living Being, who hovers over the created earth like a bird" (Young, *Studies in Genesis One*, p. 37). It is He who keeps the earth from being destroyed, holding it together while until the creative word of God forms it into the shape He has designed (this process begins in v. 3).

vii. Ewert points out: "In spite of the ambiguity in the meaning of ruach, we would not be wide of the mark if we said that God's Spirit is seen in the Old Testament as, among other things, that power by which man and the cosmos as a whole is created and sustained." (Ewert, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 23)

1:26-27: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the treasures
that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

f. Let *us* make

i. Note the difference with the rest of creation. Previously, God had said, "Let there be . . ." Here, He says, "Let Us make." The rest of creation is formed by God's command; man is brought into existence after God's counsel. This is a tribute to man's dignity (Calvin, *Genesis*, p. 91).

ii. Why the plural? Note the shift in number: "Then God said [singular], 'Let us make [plural] man in our [plural] image.'" (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 329). Thus, it appears that something other than a plural of majesty is in mind.

iii. Finally, the fact that man is "male and female" and that this is in "God's image" may indicate that, just as God is unity in plurality, so "man" is unity in plurality. Further buttressing this is the idea that man and woman become one ( --'echad; Gen. 2:24), and the same word is used in Deut 6:4: "The LORD our God is one LORD" (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 329).

iv. H. D. McDonald relates concerning man's creation:

The impression conveyed by the account is that when God came to the creation of man, he entered upon something different and distinctive. At the end of each stage in the world's creation God stopped and contemplated what he had wrought and pronounced the satisfying verdict that it was good (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). Then he set about creating a being worthy of all he had made. So God brought man into existence to have lordship over the world; man with whom he could walk and talk. (McDonald, *Christian View*, p. 32)

g. Let us *make*

i. Make ( , 'asa) is commonly used in the OT. It is used with the verb create ( , bara') throughout the creation passages. It emphasizes the actual fashioning of the object being made, though it does not reflect any other particular nuances (McComiskey, TWOT, p. 701). "Make" is used in 1:7, 11, 12, 16, 25, 26, 31, 2:2, 3, and 4.

ii. The basic concept is that man is not the result of chance and circumstances. He did not spontaneously arise; he was purposely fashioned by his Creator to meet a divine intention. Thus, he has a purpose for his existence.

**Excursus: Theism**
(adapted from Sam Owen)

I. Definition of Theism (Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 49):

A. The belief in a supernatural power or supernatural powers, in a spiritual agent or spiritual agents, in one or many gods.

B. The belief in the existence of but one God, whether personal or impersonal, whether at present
active in the universe or not [includes monotheism, pantheism, and deism; opposed to atheism, polytheism, and henotheism].

C. The belief in a personal God Who is both transcendent and immanent and exists in only one person [the Jewish, Muslim, and Unitarian concept of God; opposed to atheism, polytheism, pantheism, & deism].

D. The belief in one personal God, both immanent and transcendent, Who exists in three personal distinctions, known respectively as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [the position of Christian theism; opposed to all the other conceptions named]

II. Anti-Theistic Theories (a summary chart):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Gen. 1 Refutation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atheism</td>
<td>There is no God.</td>
<td>God is assumed alive from v. 1 on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnosticism</td>
<td>We cannot with any finality state whether God exists or not.</td>
<td>God is definitively stated as the Creator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>Ultimate reality is matter (the philosophy of Communism).</td>
<td>Matter had a beginning, found in God alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytheism</td>
<td>There is more than one God; &quot;divine reality is numerically multiple&quot; (but Deut. 6:4).</td>
<td>One God created all things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantheism</td>
<td>Everything in nature is divine; i.e., God is all and all is God.</td>
<td>God is transcendent to that which He created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panentheism</td>
<td>God is in, but is not to be equated with, everything that exists.</td>
<td>God is transcendent to that which He created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deism</td>
<td>God created but has no continuing involvement with the world and events within it.</td>
<td>God created and continued His involvement; seen in rest of Bible rather than in Gen. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monism</td>
<td>Everything is really only one thing; all is God and God is all.</td>
<td>God is separate from the universe He created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dualism</td>
<td>Reality is made of two fundamental opposing principles, such as matter and spirit,</td>
<td>God was alone when He created; He has no alternate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nature and supernature, or good and evil.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralism</td>
<td>There are many ultimate principles; unity of the world is denied.</td>
<td>God is the Ultimate Person who unifies reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheistic Evolutionism</td>
<td>Human life has arisen by means of immanent laws within the physical universe; it is</td>
<td>God created all things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>simply a matter of atoms, motion, time, and chance (totally impersonal).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>Any philosophy which emphasizes the mental or spiritual dimension as being more real</td>
<td>God created actual objects and creatures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Realism | Any philosophy which says that the only reality is that which comes through the senses and sense-perceptions. | God, who created the senses, is beyond them all.
---|---|---
Positivism | A philosophy which emphasizes the positive sciences and limits human knowledge to sense perceptions. | God has revealed to us how He created the Universe.
Humanism | Humans are the highest beings and the ultimate reality; or, if a god of some kind is acknowledged, man is still the measure of all things and the controller of his destiny. | God, not man, is the ultimate reality.

III. Issues in Christian Theism

A. Is God "Mother Nature", or any part or law of nature?
B. Is God static and passive, or living and active?
C. Is God a perfected man with a flesh and bones body (as the Mormons say) or an invisible spirit?
D. Does God possess the characteristics of impersonal principle (as the Christian Scientists say) or personal existence? Intelligence? Emotions? Will? Self-determination? Purpose?
E. Does everything come from God?
F. What is the relationship between God's immanence (His presence and activity within nature, human nature, and history) and His transcendence (God is separate from and independent of nature and humanity, and superior to them)?
G. Is God one, many, or triune?
H. Does everything take place according to the will of God?
I. How effective is prayer?
J. What is an "attribute" of God? How are attributes related to the being of God?

2. Genesis 14:22: But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath

a. God is \((\text{El Elyon}; \ "\text{Most High God}"; occurs 4 times in vv. 18-22)\). God is the "highest", the most prominent (see Ps. 83:18; Isa. 14:14). Variations on this name include (Lockyer, All the Divine Names, p. 9):

i. Highest (Ps. 18:13; 87:5)
ii. Most High (Num. 24:16; Deut. 32:8; 2 Sam. 22:14)
iii. Most High God (Gen. 14:18, 19, 20; Ps. 78:56)
iv. God Elohim Most High (Ps. 57:2)
v. Jehovah Most High (Ps. 7:17; 47:2)

b. God is \((\text{Adonai}); \ "\text{Creator of Heaven and Earth}"; see discussion above)
notes several features associated with (Lockyer, All the Names, pp. 15-6):

a. **Authority**: Ezekiel used the expression "Says the LORD God" ( ) over 200 times to indicate the authority under which he spoke.

b. **Power**: for life and service (Isa. 61:1; Ezek. 8:1)

c. **Deity**: Seen in "My Lord ( ) and my God ( )" (Ps. 35:23 and 38:15)

d. **Reverence**: Daniel confessed the sin of the nation, and appealed to God as Adonai, "suggesting a holy reverence as he approached the throne of Grace".

e. **Relationship**: David exclaimed, "I said to the LORD, 'You are my Lord (Adonai); apart from you I have no good thing.'"

f. **Responsibility**: After Isaiah had been cleansed, he heard Adonai saying, "Whom shall I send . . . ?" (Isa. 6:8)

4. Genesis 16:13: She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."

God is (El Roi; the "God who sees"). This is the only occurrence of this title in the OT (Lockyer, All the Names, p. 10). Hagar named God as the God Who Sees because her condition was not hidden from Him.

5. Genesis 17:1: When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.

God is (El Shaddai, "God Almighty" or "The All-Bountiful One" [Lockyer, All the Names, p. 13]).

a. This exact title occurs 8 times in the OT. It is a major name for God during the patriarchal period (see also Gen. 49:24, 25; Isa. 60:15-16; 66:10-13). He is infinite in power (omnipotent): "By this mean that God is able to do all things which are proper objects of his power" (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 276). Two nuances of His infinite power may be seen (Lockyer, All the Names, p. 13):

i. God's ability to fulfill every promise He has made to His children;

ii. God's faithfulness in performing every word He has spoken.

b. The root is obscure: it may mean "superior" (from a word meaning "mountain") or "sufficient" (from a word meaning "breast"); if the former, God is seen as majestically stable, the strong refuge, the pillar that remains unmoved in the most turbulent times; if the latter, God is seen as the One mighty to nourish, satisfy, and supply.

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**Excursus: Regarding the Attributes of God**

(adapted from Sam Owen)
I. The difference between an essence and an attribute:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essence</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The reality itself</td>
<td>The distinguishing properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>Sweetness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Kinds of attributes

A. **Essential** attributes

1. An essential attribute is something that without which it would no longer be that thing.

2. The property of something is essential if and only if the loss of that property would change the essence of that thing.

3. Does God have essential attributes? Yes. Do we (can we) know them? (i.e., can we know God as He is, or only as He acts [functional attributes])? Yes we can, because God tells us about His inner thinking and motivations in the Word. One essential attribute of God is love.

B. **Accidental** attributes

1. These characterize something and may or may not characterize different things with the same essence or the same thing at a different time.

2. An accidental attribute is not essential but characterizes an essence at a given time or in a given aspect of that essence.

3. Does God have relative attributes? Yes. He is Father to believers.

C. **Relative** attributes

1. This is an attribute which characterizes a relationship between two or more people.

2. For example, a man is a father only to his children.

3. Does God have functional attributes? Yes. He is a judge, creator, redeemer.

D. **Functional** attributes

1. This is an attribute that is taken on when a person performs a certain job.

2. An example of this is that we learn something about a person when we discover what their occupation is.
3. Does God have accidental attributes? See below in the discussion on His wrath.

III. Concerning the WRATH of God

A. Is this an attribute of God? Yes [contra Dodd]

B. Is this an essential or accidental attribute of God?

1. It is the expression (response) of God's justice (which is an essential attribute) against sin.

2. Mercy is a similar expression of God's love. For either wrath or mercy to happen some kind of failure must be involved.

3. If we say that God's wrath is at the same level as God's love, then we have serious problems in the way the Bible portrays God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential level:</th>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Righteousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accidental level:</td>
<td>Mercy</td>
<td>Wrath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definition: Wrath is the personal attitude of God against evil. Wrath is never petulant or capricious. It is the work God does constantly and "impassionately" (without losing control).

6. Genesis 18:25b: Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

   a. God is - , (shaphat kal erets; "Judge of All the Earth")

   b. He is righteous--He can only do what is right. "Because God is righteous, measuring up to the standard of his law, we can trust him. He is honest in his dealings. We need not be afraid to enter into a relationship with him." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 287)

7. Genesis 21:33: Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.

   God is (El Holam, "The Eternal God"). This is a "term describing what extends beyond our furthest vision, whether we look backward or forward till it is lost to sight (passages that expand on God's eternity include Ps. 90:2; Isa. 26:4; 40:28; 63:16; and Jer. 10:10). The tamarisk tree is a long-lived tree, a fitting symbol for God's eternity (Stigers, Genesis, p. 187).

8. Genesis 22:14: So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

   God is (also Gen. 24:8 and 1 Sam. 16:1--Yahweh Jireh, literally "Yahweh who sees", metaphorically "Yahweh who sees to something, as in to provide"; White, TWOT, p. 823). Here Abraham sees God's provision of the ram as a replacement sacrifice for Isaac, and declares God as "The LORD Will Provide" (see the extended discussion in Lockyer, All the Names, pp. 21-4).
9. Genesis 33:20: There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel.

God is (El Elohe Israel, "God, the God of Israel" or "mighty is the God of Israel"; see Lockyer, All the Names, p. 11). The sense is that God has become Israel's (or Jacob's) God; in essence, it is Jacob's personal statement of faith.

10. Genesis 50:19: But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

God is able to work in all circumstances, not just those which appear to benefit His cause on the surface. We can have the assurance that God remains in control, no matter how bad the circumstances may look.

Excursus: God's Providence
(adapted from Sam Owen)

I. Providence as government (we will deal with providence as preservation later): God's activity in the universe so that all its events fulfil His plan; the outworking in time of His eternal plan.

A. The extent of God's governing activity: Scripture witnesses to the universal range of God's government: God acts in all things (Ps. 115:3; Matt. 10:30; Eph. 1:11).

1. Natural events such as winds and rain (Ps. 135:5-7; Job 9:5-9; Ps. 147:8-15), animal creation (Ps. 104:21-29), even seeming disasters (Luke 13:1-5), are part of His ordering.

2. God's government involves human history and the destiny of nations (Dan. 2:21, 38-9; 4:17-5; Is. 10:5-12; Acts 17:26).

3. Evil is under His hand and He uses it for His own ends (Acts 2:23; Phil. 1:17f.).

4. Even people (and individuals) are under His sovereign government.
   a. Birth (Gal. 1:15; Jer. 1:5)
   b. Successes and failures (1 Sam. 2:6-8; Luke 1:52; Ps. 75:6-7)
   c. "Insignificant" things in life (Matt. 10:30; Prov. 16:33)

B. The major features of God's governing activity

1. God's governing activity is universal
2. God's providence does not extend merely to His own people (see Matt. 5:45)
3. God is good in His government
4. God is personally concerned about those who are His
5. Our activity and divine activity are not incompatible
6. God is sovereign in His government
7. We need to be careful as to what we identify as God's providence (e.g., Jonah 1:3--ship to Tarsus was not God's will; working of human government, e.g., 1934, Hitler in Germany seen as God working in history to many Christians of the day)
II. Implications of Divine Providence

A. God has His hand in all our affairs.
B. We should be humbled as we recognize our total dependence.
C. We can have comfort in difficulties and sorrows.
D. Times of success should lead to thankfulness.
E. We should have security even in these insecure times.
F. The ultimate triumph of God's purpose is assured.
G. We must recognize our responsibility as well.

III. Issues Regarding Divine Providence

A. Divine providence and prayer

1. Prayer affects only the one who prays?
   a. Psychological change?
   b. True spiritual, inner change?
   c. Prayer can change the one who prays and the spiritual world around him?

2. Prayer can affect the one who prays and both the spiritual and physical world?
   a. Compels God to do what the petitioner desires?
   b. A request to God which may or may not be answered?

B. Divine providence and the laws of nature (miracles)

1. Miracles are the manifestations of little known or virtually unknown natural laws?
2. Miracles break the laws of nature?
3. When miracles occur, natural forces are countered by supernatural force?
4. Miracles are God acting in nature in a way which would be the norm apart from the Fall and sin?

C. Divine providence and human freedom

D. Divine providence and moral evil

E. Conclusion: The doctrine of providence "produces praise in prosperity, patience in adversity, and peace for the future" (Calvin).

11. Exodus 3:1-22:

13-15: Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.
18-20: "The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.' 19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

a. The fact that God has a name indicates that He is a person. It "demonstrates that he is not an abstract, unknowable being, or a nameless force. Nor is this name used merely to refer to God or to describe him. It is also used to address him." (see also Gen. 4:26; 12:8; Exod. 20:7; Ps. 20:7, 9; Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 269). As noted above, we must bear in mind the significance of Hebrew names as embodying the essence or character of the person named (see Parke-Taylor, The Divine Name, pp. 1-2).

b. We are also again reminded of God's characteristic relatedness to His people in the use of the four verbs from 2:24-5:

i. "to hear" (vv. 7, 9; with compassion so as to deliver)

ii. "remember" (v. 6)

iii. "to see" (vv. 7, 9; with anticipated action)

iv. "to know" (v. 7; sense of participation with His people)

c. Moses was asking for the revelation of the essence, character, and meaning of the person of God to be found in His name (v. 13), which is the Hebrew concept of a name (see Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 269). In addition to Exodus 3, there are two other significant instances of God being asked His name in the OT (Gen. 32:22-32, where an answer is not given; and Judges 13:2-25, where Manoah was also refused an answer, though God's name is described as "wonderful" ["beyond understanding", NIV]; see Parke-Taylor, The Divine Name, pp. 12-3).

i. (YAHWEH)

(1) Occurs 6823 times in the OT (Parke-Taylor, The Divine Name, p. 5, n. 27; contra Payne, TWOT, p. 210 [who, following Raymond Abba, notes 5321]). The name became so sacred to the Jews that they read it as "Adonai" (Lord), so as not to take the name of God in vain even when reading scripture (Parke-Taylor, The Divine Name, pp. 9-10). The etymology of the name is difficult at best (see examples in Ibid., pp. 47-51). Though by no means certain, it may come from the Hebrew (hawa, "to be"; Ibid., p. 51 and Cassuto, Exodus, p. 37; though see Harris' editorial comments in Payne, TWOT, pp. 210-11).

(2) Refers to absolute existence. Yahweh exists dependent upon nothing or no one excepting His own will.

(3) Refers not to static being but to active existence. When God speaks of Himself, "I AM," He speaks of His active existence, pulsing with power and throbbing with life; "He is characterized by life" (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 271)

(4) Refers also to God's relatedness to His own people; this is the "covenant name" of God
Theology Proper in the OT

(5) The most noted Jewish commentator of the Middle Ages, Moses Maimonides, said with regard to this name: "All the names of God which occur in Scripture are derived from His works except one, and that is Jehovah; and this is called the plain name, because it teaches plainly and unequivocally of the substance of God."

ii. How are we to translate (note that the precise name occurs when others speak of God, and is translated as "He is"; Payne, TWOT, p. 211). Options include (see expansions on these in Parke-Taylor, The Divine Name, pp. 51-7 and Childs, Exodus, pp. 61-4):

1. "I am who I am"

2. "I will be who I will be" (Childs, Exodus, p. 76; highlights the sovereignty and mystery of God—He will rule forever, and we can never know him completely)

3. "I am and remain present," or "I will always be present" or "I am present is what I am" (emphasizes God's continuing presence with Moses and his people; Payne, TWOT, p. 485)

4. "I-AM is who I am" (a tautology, and least likely)

5. "I am the one who is," (note the LXX in which case "the formula expresses the reality of the existence of the God who reveals himself" (Parke-Taylor, The Divine Name, p. 52)

d. The major witness of this chapter lies in the revelation by God Himself to Moses as that divine reality who had already made Himself known in the past to the Fathers and who promised to execute His redemptive will toward Israel in the future. It is not an unknown God who encounters Moses, but the covenant God. The name Yahweh points to the future orientation of God's relationship with His people. Who He is and what He does will emerge in the history which yet lies ahead. Revelation is not just information about God and nature, but an invitation to trust in the One whose self-disclosure is a foretaste of the promised inheritance. The future for the community of faith is not an unknown leap into the dark because the Coming One accompanies the faithful toward that end. Yahweh "will be who He will be"—in dynamic Presence with His people.

12. Exodus 15:1-18 (selected points)

a. Verses 1-12: Yahweh's victory over Egypt in the Red Sea is recounted. He is praised for His greatness and power (vv. 1b, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12). The action is not confined to the Red Sea event, but flows into a broader description of Yahweh's attributes.

i. Each individual is to sing to Yahweh (v. 1) "... although the song was to be sung by the whole company, yet each one was to appropriate the burden of it to himself individually. The triumph of Israel over the Egyptians did not resemble the usual triumphs of nation over nation, where the individual is overlooked and lost in the mass. Every thing here is peculiar and personal. Every Israelite for himself reflects with joy on his own chains now for ever broken. He seems to exult over his own tyrant-master now subdued under him, and hails his own personal liberty as fully recovered." (Bush, Exodus, pp. 184-5)
ii. "... I will make Him beautiful" (v. 2; see Ps. 33:1). We bring adornment to God when we worship aright with music in the community; note also the covenant continuity here.

iii. A new element is added to the divine name (v. 3; added to the Exod. 3 and 6 revelation) -- Yahweh is a warrior who defends His people (see Ps. 18), shattering their enemies (v. 6). See Wright, The Old Testament and Theology and Longman, "The Divine Warrior", pp. 290-307.

iv. God has power over the sea, which the pagans supposed was a god in its own right (v. 8).

v. God is completely incomparability (v. 11): By virtue of His uniqueness, He is totally separate (qadosh; Holy) from all of His creation (see Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 284).

b. Verses 13-18: Yahweh's victory is interpreted in relation to Israel. Note the movement from the deliverance at sea to the leading into the land. Yahweh guides His people to His sanctuary, "to His holy habitation" (vv. 13, 17). He paralyzes the nations as His people cross through the land (vv. 14ff.). He brings them in, plants them on His mountain from where He rules His kingdom (v. 18). The poem ends, not by defining Israel's role in the land, but rather by reflecting Israel's function as the worshipping community.

i. Note Yahweh's role as (go'el; kinsman redeemer), a term commonly applied to Him in the Psalms and prophets (Harris, TWOT, p. 144). His nature is characterized by (hesed, lovingkindness or unfailing love, see the extended discussion in Harris, TWOT, pp. 305-6; v. 13).

ii. A royal picture [vv. 17-18; 18 is the centerpiece of the royal Psalms, e.g., Ps. 93, 97, 98, 99]. The rulership of God is in three dimensions:

   (1) As Creator He "is"
   (2) As Redeemer He has "become"
   (3) As Coming One He "will be"

13. Exodus 15:26: He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

a. God is (Yahweh Rophi, the "Yahweh Who Heals", or "The LORD, the Physician" (Lockyer, All the Names, p. 25); see the use of the term in Gen. 20:17; Exod. 21:19; Ps. 43:5; 103:3; 147:3; Isa. 19:22; 53:5; 57:18; Jer. 3:22). God is ever ready to heal us, though here the condition of complete obedience to Him must be noted.

b. In the context, God has just shown Moses a tree to throw into the waters at Marah which turned them from bitter to sweet. When we face times of distress, we need to remember that our God is the One who Heals (both physically and spiritually; see Stone, Names of God, p. 72), a theme exemplified in the life and ministry of Jesus (Luke 4:18-21).

c. This is the word used in Isaiah 53:5b, "the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and
by his wounds we are healed".

14. Exodus 17:15: Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner.

a. God is **(Yahweh Nissi, "Yahweh Our Banner")**. A banner (or flag) is "generally means a rallying point or standard which drew people together for some common action or for the communication of important information" (Wilson, TWOT, p. 583). Here we see that God Himself is our banner--He is the standard beneath which we rally (see Childs, Exodus, p. 315).

b. The same term is used in prophecy of Jesus in Isa. 11:10 and 12 ("In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious" and "He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel . . .").

c. Lockyer points out "Actually, the term Banner has the idea of something which gleams conspicuously from afar. If we are secret disciples, shrinking from 'nailing our colors to the mast' in open acknowledgment of our Lord, we can hardly look for victory over the principalities and powers arrayed against us." (Lockyer, All the Names, p. 32)

15. Exodus 20:2-7: "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

a. We are not to have any other gods (vv. 2-6)

i. Erickson notes: "We misread the passage if we interpret it as meaning that the Israelites were to put God first because of what he had done--that out of gratitude they were to make him their only God. Rather, what he had done was the proof of what he is; it is because of what he is that he is to be loved and served, not only supremely but exclusively. God as a person is to be loved for what he is, not for what he can do for us." (Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 270-1).

ii. Concerning v. 2, Cole notes: Whatever the literary form of this sentence, whether it be a statement or a command, it is the credal basis of all Israel's later faith. It embraces the great divine Self-disclosure contained in the new name YHWH, which affirms the personality of God in direct terms: it also shows Him as living, dynamic and active in Israel's history. The succeeding verses will go on to show that His nature can be understood by man only in moral terms. So we have the summary of Israel's faith: a God who speaks and a God who acts. (Cole, Exodus, p. 152)

iii. We are not to make idols, for God is a jealous (**, kannah) God (vv. 4-5; compare to Exodus 34:14, where God gives his name as Jealous). This term is also used of the jealous husband who suspects his wife of adultery; the sense here is that turning to idols is spiritual adultery, which merits death (just as physical adultery did; see Coppes, TWOT, p. 802 and Cole, Exodus, p. 153).
iv. God punishes sins to the third and fourth generations, but shows love to thousands of generations (the term implies a limitless number; Cole, Exodus, pp. 156-7) towards those who love Him. How great is God's mercy in comparison to His wrath!

b. God's name is holy, and we must not abuse it (v. 7). Cassuto remarks, "... you shall not use the name of the Lord for any valueless purpose, not just for a false oath, ... but in general for any worthless practice, in connection with which the gentiles mention the names of their gods, such as incantations, sorcery, divination, and the like" (Cassuto, Exodus, pp. 243-4).

16. Exodus 21:13: However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate.

God is in control of the least circumstances in our lives--no event is purely "circumstantial" (see the Excursus on God's Providence above).

17. Exodus 24:10: and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.

This is the first description of God's throne in the OT, though it appears to describe only the platform on which the throne stands rather than the throne itself. Childs notes, "The effect of the whole description os one of awe-inspiring majesty leading far beyond the human imagination, but one which recedes from all concrete particulars. The description turns to describe, as in amazement, the fact that the elders could behold God and still live (cf. 33:20). The shift from the verb r'h [   ] to hzh [   ], the latter word being the technical term for prophetic clairvoyance, again appears to be an attempt to characterize this viewing as a special category of perception. (Childs, Exodus, p. 507)

18. Exodus 33:17-19: And the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight, and I have known you by name." Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

a. (kabad, glory) carries the idea of heaviness, and is usually used negatively (e.g., slowness or dullness of a person, severity of experiences). It refers to God some 45 times, the bulk of which have to do with a visible manifestation related to the tabernacle (Exod. 16:10; 40:34) or with the restored temple in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. 9:3). "These manifestations are directly related to God's self-disclosure and his intent to dwell among men. As such they are commonly associated with his holiness. God wishes to dwell with men, to have his reality and his splendor known to them. But his is only possible when they take account of the stunning quality of his holiness and set out in faith and obedience to let that character be manifested in them (Num. 14:10; isa. 6:3, Ezr. 10, 10)" (Oswalt, TWOT, pp. 426-7). Jesus supremely manifested that glory (Isa. 4:2).

b. "I will make all My goodness pass before you." God is full of grace, and is willing to demonstrate that fact. His

c. "I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you", a reminder of Exodus 3:14, here fulfilled literally.

d. "I will have mercy ..."
i. Mercy (רָחָם, raham) in its root refers to the deep love of a superior for an inferior with whom he or she has a natural bond (it is linked to the Hebrew term for womb, and is used to speak of a mother's love for her nursing baby). It shows God's link to us as a father (or mother?) to his (or her) infant children and is also a reminder of His unconditional choice of us. It is closely related to the concept of grace (Coppes, TWOT, pp. 841-2).

   a. God is compassionate (רָחָם, raham; see on 33:19): denotes the strong tie that God has with His children; He looks upon them as a Father upon His children; and a deep, tender love.

   b. God is gracious (חֲנֻנָּה, hannun): depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need (Yamauchi, TWOT, p. 302)

   c. God is slow to anger (אֲרֵקָה, 'erek 'appayim; see Num 14:27); "His anger prolongs itself and is not quick to inflict punishment on the sinner, in order that he may repent" (Cassuto, Exodus, p. 439).

   d. God is abounding in lovingkindness (הֵסֶד, hesed: tender and benevolent affection; loyal covenant love) and truth (faithfulness) (אמת, emet: "reliability, trustworthiness," the attribute of someone one can depend on [the Hebrew is from the same root as our "amen," "it is certain"]; certainty, dependability). These two combine in a single attribute--"lovingkindness of truth, true and faithful lovingkindness. He keeps, with complete faithfulness, His promises to shew lovingkindness and bestow good . . ." (Cassuto, Exodus, p. 439).

   e. God keeps lovingkindness for thousands (see on Exod. 20:2-7)

   f. God forgives iniquity (see Lev. 1:4; 4:1-3, 35)

   g. Though He forgives iniquity, this it not a sign of weakness, for God will by no means leave the guilty unpunished (see Josh. 24:19; Exod. 14:3-13; Num. 14:22-25,34-35; Deut. 4:22-27; Num. 21:6-9; 32:13-15). In fact, He visits the iniquity to third and fourth generations (in contrast to the mercy extended for thousands of generations; see also Deut. 7:9).

   h. The frequent use through the rest of the OT of these verses by which the nature of God is portrayed (Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; etc.) is an eloquent testimony to the centrality of this understanding of God's person. Special note should be taken of its use in Jonah 4:2. Jonah obviously understood a universal extension of the Exod. 34:6 concept, not limiting it to Yahweh's relationship with Israel (an astounding thought to the average Israelite of the day!). The compassion of Yahweh is not bound by Mosaic limits, but is universal as is the Abrahamic covenant.

ii. Here God proves His mercy by responding to the request of Moses. In doing so, however, He reminds Moses that the choice of showing mercy is God's alone.

19. Exodus 34:6-7: And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.

   a. God is compassionate (רָחָם, raham; see on 33:19): denotes the strong tie that God has with His children; He looks upon them as a Father upon His children; and a deep, tender love.

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20. **Leviticus 11:44-45**: I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. 45 I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

   a. **Background**: Chapter 11 sets forth the laws on clean and unclean foods. Just as God has set some animals aside as clean from the rest, so He has set aside Israel as clean from the rest of the nations. The food regulations were to serve as a constant reminder of this (Lindsey, "Leviticus", BKC(OT), p. 191).

   b. Israel was to be holy because they served a holy God. Wenham points out that the call, "Be holy, for I am holy", may be considered as a slogan for Leviticus, as it is found four times in the book (here, 19:2, 20:7, and 20:26; Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 180).

   i. **(kadash)** is thought to be derived from a root concept of separation, but this is impossible to prove conclusively (McComiskey, TWOT, p. 787).

   ii. The whole framework of Leviticus seems to imply that holiness connects being given to God with wholeness and completeness (or maintenance of God's created order). That which is set aside to God is holy, but to qualify to be set aside and to remain in the "set aside" condition, it must be complete and whole within the class to which it belongs (i.e., it must remain within God's ordered system for it; see the discussion in Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 23-25).

   iii. Wenham describes holiness, cleanliness, and uncleanness:

   Cleanliness is the natural state of most creatures. Holiness is a state of grace to which men are called by God, and it is attained through obeying the law and carrying our rituals such as sacrifice. Uncleanness is a substandard condition to which men descend through bodily processes and sin. Every Israelite had a duty to seek release from uncleanness through washing and sacrifice, because uncleanness was quite incompatible with the holiness of the covenant people. (Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 23).

21. **Leviticus 20:8**: Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

   a. God is **(Yahweh M'Kadde sh, "Yahweh Who Sanctifies")**. He is the One who sets us apart, and we must respond appropriately to His saving activity. Several areas of holiness from chapters 20-22 of Leviticus should be noted (from Lockyer, *All the Names*, p. 34):

   i. **We are sanctified to obey** (Lev. 20:8: Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.)

   ii. **We are sanctified to purity** (Lev. 21:7-8: They must not marry women defiled by prostitution or divorced from their husbands, because priests are holy to their God. Regard them as holy, because they offer up the food of you God. Consider them holy, because I the LORD am holy--I who make you holy.)

   iii. **We are sanctified to God** (Lev. 21:15: So he will not defile his offspring among his people. I am the LORD, who makes him holy.)
iv. We are sanctified to healthiness (Lev. 21:23: yet because of the defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.)

v. We are sanctified to diet (Lev. 22:8-9: He must not eat anything found dead or torn by wild animals, and so become unclean through it. I am the LORD. The priests are to keep my requirements so that they do not become guilty and die for treating them with contempt. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.)

vi. We are sanctified to instruct (Lev. 22:15-16: The priests must not desecrate the sacred offerings the Israelites present to the LORD by allowing them to eat the sacred offerings and so bring upon them guilt requiring payment. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.)

vii. We are sanctified to remember (Lev. 22:32-33: Do not profane my holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who makes you holy and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD.)

b. God himself is holy (see notes above on Lev. 11:44-45).

22. Numbers 23:19: God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

a. God is not like man who changes (see also 1 Samuel 15:29: He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind). This does not mean that He is static, however—only that He is stable: "He is active and dynamic, but in a way which is stable and consistent with his nature." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 279). This is in marked contrast to the concept of God as put forth by process theology.

b. How, then, do we deal with passages that seem to indicate that He does change his mind (Gen. 6:7; 1 Sam. 15:11, 35; Amos 7:3, 6; and Jonah 3:9 all indicate this possibility, using the same Hebrew word for change, naham). Erickson notes three ways in which these passages may be accounted for (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 279):

i. Some of them are to be understood as anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms. They are simply descriptions of God's actions and feelings in human terms, and from a human perspective. Included here are representations of God as experiencing pain or regret. [As Keil and Delitzsch note of the passage under consideration, "With regard to His own counsels, God repents of nothing; but this does not prevent the repentance of God, understood as an anthropopathic expression, denoting the pain experienced by the love of God, on account of the destruction of its creatures (Keil and Delitzsch, The Pentateuch, 3:183).]

ii. What may seem to be changes of mind may actually be new stages in the working out of God's plan. An example of this is the offering of salvation to the Gentiles. While a part of God's original plan, it represented a rather sharp break with what had proceeded.

iii. Some apparent changes of mind are changes of orientation resulting from man's move into a different relationship with God. God did not change when Adam sinned; rather, man has
moved into God's disfavor. This works the other way as well. Take the case of Nineveh. God said, "Forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed, unless they repent." Ninevah repented and was spared. It was man that had changed, not God's plan.

c. God does not change--He is completely faithful (see also 1 Thess. 5:24). We can fully trust Him to do what He has said.

23. Deuteronomy 4:23-40: Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the LORD your God has forbidden. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

a. God's jealousy is described as (esh okla, a consuming or devouring [Thompson, Deuteronomy, p. 107] fire, v. 24). If the people turned their backs on God, they would experience "the reverse of the coin of love" (Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 138), seen in His wrath, which is like a consuming fire.

b. Even when Israel would turn their back on God, He would still allow Himself be found by those who seek Him (vv. 25-31). Moses has just finished telling Israel what would happen once they turned their backs on Him. In doing so, he shows the importance of having nothing to do with the people of the promised land, as their idolatry would be a snare to the Israelites (which is exactly what happened). Even so, even after they had turned their backs on God, He would work circumstances in such a way that they would once again seek Him, and He would reward their search by enabling them to find Him.

c. Israel had experienced God as no one ever had before (vv. 32-38):

i. He heard Him speaking out of the burning bush (v. 32-33)

ii. He saw Him take Israel out of Egypt through miraculous signs and wonders (vv. 34-35). These signs had one purpose: to show that the LORD is God, and there is no other God besides Him.

iii. He spoke to them audibly, and led them through the wilderness by means of a great fire (v. 36).

iv. Because of His covenant, He chose to dispossess nations greater than Israel and allow them to enter the land as their inheritance (v. 38)

d. All of this had a purpose: that Israel should "Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time" (vv. 39-40). God does not act without purpose--He always acts so as to lead His children to live in obedience to Him.

24. Deuteronomy 6:4-5: Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

a. This is known as the shema (Hebrew for "Hear"), in which both the fundamental truth and the
b. "The LORD our God, the LORD is one":

i. can be translated at least three different ways (see Thompson, Deuteronomy, p. 121):

(1) Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one
(2) Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is One
(3) Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone (stressing the uniqueness of Yahweh and that He only is our God)

ii. Concerning the theology:

(1) "While there are various legitimate translations of the Hebrew here, all alike emphasize the unique, unmatched deity of Jehovah." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 323; see also Zech. 14:9)

(2) The word expresses not only the uniqueness but also the unity of God. As one God (or the "Unique"), when he spoke there was no other to contradict; when he promised, there was no other to revoke that promise; when he warned, there was no other to provide refuge from that warning. (Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 169)

(3) This is the theme of Deuteronomy, and the core of the entire OT. On the truth of this statement is founded the command in v. 5 which, in turn, serves as the core guiding command for the entire OT (indeed, the entire Bible; see Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; and Luke 10:27).

c. Our response of love (v. 5): we are to respond totally, loving God with our entire being (heart, soul ["desire"?; see Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 132 n. 1], and strength). Jesus noted this as the greatest and chief of all commands, under which all others are subsumed. This should be the focus of our attention! "He was not only the first among the gods, . . . he was the one and only God who imposed on Israel the charge of loving him, thereby revealing another aspect of his character" (Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 169)

25. Deuteronomy 8:1-6:

a. God tested Israel during their sojourn in the wilderness in order to see what was in their hearts (vv. 1-2). Wilderness will make or break a person, and the one who comes through it fully refined is the one who has learned God-sufficiency rather than self-sufficiency through his wilderness experiences.

b. He also disciplined them to teach them that His words are more important to us than even our food (v. 3). Jesus learned this lesson so well that He quoted this verse to Satan when tempted to turn rocks into bread.

c. God disciplined Israel as a man disciplines his son, so that they would learn to obey Him, "walking in His ways and fearing Him". His discipline flows naturally from His love, and we must never forget this as we walk through our own wilderness experiences.
26. Deuteronomy 10:12-17: And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendents after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

a. God requires of Israel:

i. **Fear God** (see also 6:13 and 10:20): Fear (יָרָע; yare') in root meaning is "to tremble". In the OT the meaning ranges from emotional fear to reverence or awe to formal religious worship (Bowling, TWOT, pp. 399-401). Here, it is linked to what follows (walk in His ways, love Him, serve Him, and keep His commands) and conveys the idea of living properly before God. We fear God in that, as He is awesome and completely beyond us, we stand in a state of fright for what He can do and in a state of awe for who He is. It is this fear that is the beginning of true wisdom (Prov. 1:7). Godly fear is more than just an attitude, however; it involves a response of obedience and right living (Wanke, "Phobeo", TDNT Abridged).

ii. **Walk in His ways**: They are set forth in the Law. We are also to walk in the principles behind the Law.

iii. **Love Him**: be in a personal, intimate relationship with Him.

iv. **Serve Him with the whole heart and soul**: we are to follow Him with our entire being, and not hold anything back.

v. **Keep His commands and statutes**

vi. **Circumcise the "foreskin of their hearts"**: They already had the outward sign, but they needed the inward attitude.

b. The God of the universe set His affection on their fathers, and chose Israel. His choice was not based on their performance or strength, but on His love and grace (Deut. 7:6-7).

c. In the OT mere outward conformity is not enough; God had always demanded the inside to follow Him as well. Compare this with Deut. 30:6: "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants". What is man's role and what is God's?

27. Deuteronomy 29:29: The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

a. As to what the future would hold, God alone knows. The statement about the "secret things" comes immediately after the description of what would happen to Israel if she abandoned God. Whether or not this would happen, God alone know. Even though Israel did not know the final outcome, we are still given revealed knowledge (in context, the Law) so that they might live by
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it (see Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 360).

b. The application today still stands in this sense: God has revealed all we really need to know. The secret things, such as the final outworkings of biblical prophecy, belong to God. We may study them and puzzle over them, but that gives us no excuse for disobeying the very clear aspects of revelation (especially the Gospel, which fulfills the Law).

28. Deuteronomy 32:3-4: I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! 4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

God is (hatsor, "The Rock"). God is many times called "The Rock" (Num. 3:35; Deut. 32:15, 31; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Sam. 22:3, 47; Ps. 18:31; 28:1; 62:2, 6; 78:35; 89:26; 94:22; Is. 26:4; 30:29), which is a main theme for this song. It is a term showing His total reliability (Hartley, TWOT, p. 762) and unchanging nature (Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 378). The characteristics involved in this are elaborated as follows:

a. His works are perfect (, tamam) or complete. The sense here is ethically upright and sound as well as complete--perfect in the absolute sense of the word (see Payne, TWOT, p. 974).

b. His ways are just (, mishpat; justice, ordinance, custom, manner). The Hebrew term is used at least 13 distinct (though related) ways. Generally it refers to governmental (whether civil or religious) aspects. In this passage, it refers to the rightness of God's governance as an attribute rooted in His divine character (see Culver, TWOT, p. 949)

c. He is faithful (, emuna; firmness, fidelity, steadiness). At the heart of this term is firmness or certainty. When used of God, it is used "to express his total dependability" (Scott, TWOT, p. 52)

d. He does no wrong (lit. "without wrong")

e. He is upright (, tsadiq, "just, lawful, righteous). The root connotes conformity to an ethical standard, which in the OT is the nature and will of God (see Ps. 145:17; Stigers, TWOT, pp. 753-4)

f. He is also just (, yashar, "upright"). The root meaning is to be level or straight, with the ethical connotation of being just and lawful. This is used of God in a number of ways, describing (Wiseman, TWOT, p. 417):

i. His reign over His people (Deut. 34:5)

ii. His ways (Hos. 14:10)

iii. His words (Ps. 111:8)

iv. His judgments (Ps. 119:137)

29. Deuteronomy 32:8: When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.

God (, elyon, "Most High"--emphasizing His sovereignty over all nations [Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 379]; see above on Gen. 14:22) is sovereign over national and international affairs.
He sets them as He pleases. Concerning the textual problems and the difficulty of understanding "according to the number of the sons of Israel", see the commentaries.

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30. Judges 6:24: So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
   a. God is (Yahweh Shalom, "Yahweh is Peace"). "... means much more than mere absence of war. Rather, the root meaning of the verb shalem better expresses the true concept of shalom. Completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, are closer to the meaning. Implicit in shalom is the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfillment in one's undertakings." (Carr, TWOT, p. 931).
   b. Lockyer notes that God revealed Himself as Jehovah-Shalom more than 200 years after He had revealed Himself as Jehovah-M'Kaddesh (God Who Sanctifies, see notes on Lev. 20:8). The context of Judges was cyclical falling away from God (because Israel forgot that God sanctifies) and then repenting as a result of devastation by the enemies of Israel. The name indicated to Gideon "that peace for the individual and for the nation could only be found in returning to Jehovah, and that Jehovah alone was the Author and the Giver of Peace--yea, that Jehovah Himself was Peace" (Lockyer, All the Names, pp. 39-40)

31. 1 Samuel 1:3: Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, ...
   a. God is (Yahweh Sabaoth, "LORD of Hosts" [NASB]). "can refer to any arrayed army (Jud. 4:2), the inhabitants of heaven (1 Kgs. 22:19), or the celestial bodies (Deut. 4:19)." It reminds us that God is King over all the world (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 2:2:19; see Zech. 14:16, Is. 37:16) and that He is the source of all (Jer. 10:16). (Hartley, TWOT, p. 750).
   b. God is the leader of armies (angelic and human); used more frequently in Scripture than any other name of God (some 285 times). The name does not appear in the Pentateuch. Hartley notes its appearance in the historical circumstances:

   Now that Israel was emerging as a nation with international relationships, the language which exposed the theology of its God needed to keep pace. It was important to affirm that Yahweh was not merely one warrior god among the leading warrior gods of the nations, but that he was the Supreme God. Particularly for Israel, located on the landbridge between three major continents which was constantly crossed by the armies of the great world powers, it became essential to emphasize that Yahweh was King even of the armies of these mighty empires. (Hartley, TWOT, pp. 750-1)

32. 1 Samuel 2:2-3: "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God. 3 "Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed.

   In her psalm of praise, Hannah exalts God and testifies:
a. God is holy in a way that no one else is (see on Lev. 11:44-45), for:
   i. No one can compare to Him, and
   ii. There is no Rock like Him (see on Deut. 32:3-4).

b. God is One who knows (a God of knowledge—"who sees and knows every single thing", Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 2:2:31); He is omniscient (in context, He hears proud and arrogant talk, so we should avoid it).

c. God is the one who weighs (i.e., judges) our deeds. Alternately, this may mean that "the acts of God are . . . just"; Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 2:2:31).

33. 2 Samuel 7:22-28: "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. . . . 28 O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.
   a. David has just noted that he sits in a house of cedar while God's ark remained in a tent. Nathan receives instruction from the LORD that David will not build the temple, but his descendant will. He also notes to David how God will bless him, and establish his throne forever. David rejoices, and these two verses are part of David's prayer.
   b. There is no one like God, and no other God but Him.
   c. God's words are trustworthy, David's statement of faith that what Nathan has said to him will come to pass.

34. 2 Samuel 22:2-4: He said, "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer 3 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior--from violent men you save me. 4 I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

In the song sung by David after he had been delivered from his enemies (especially Saul), he notes:
   a. The LORD is my rock (see on Deut. 32:3-4).
   b. The LORD is my fortress ( , metsudati). From the root is derived the name for the famed fortress plateau of Herod called Masada (Hartley, TWOT, p. 756). God is this type of stronghold to those who cling to Him in trouble.
   c. The LORD is my deliverer ( , mepalti). is found primarily in the poetry of the OT (note that this occurrence is in a psalm of David), and is usually found in a testimony of praise for deliverance (Hamilton, TWOT, p. 725).
   d. God is my rock, in whom I take refuge (see on Deut. 32:3-4).
   e. God is my shield ( , magini). A shield is a small shield used by light infantry and officers. "Tin view of the fact that God is always the one who protects (ganan) his people, it is no surprise that hs is so often called the shield (magen) of Israel. He is the shield about his servants (Gen.
15:1), the house of Aaron (Ps. 115:10), the nation of Israel (Deut. 33:29) and all those who walk uprightly and put their trust in him (Prov. 2:7, 30:5)" (Smith, TWOT, p. 169)

f. God is the horn of my salvation ( , qeren yish′i). metaphorically denotes power or might (Coppes, TWOT, p. 816); God is David's "horn of salvation" because "He overcomes enemies, and rescues from foes, and gives salvation" (Luther; quoted in Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 2:2:471).

g. God is my stronghold ( , misgabbti). The verb form means "to be inaccessibly high". "In most appearances of the word it is used in a favorable sense. Misgab speaks of God being the believer's high tower (2 Sam. 22:3), or his refuge (Ps. 46:7; 11 [8, 12]), or defense (Isa. 33:16). The allusion is to the fact that in the ancient world, safety to either the one felling or to the one at rest was synonymous with reaching and remaining upon some fortified height which would be inaccessible to beast and enemy alike. The Psalmist, as well as the prophets, saw this to be the precise picture of the believer's security in God." (Cohen, TWOT, p. 871).

h. God is my refuge ( , menusi). The verb form denotes flight, the noun the place one to which flees (Coppes, TWOT, p. 564).

i. God is my savior ( , mishi′i). and its related words are used 353 times in the OT. The Arabic root means "to make wide" or "make sufficient" (Hartley, TWOT, pp. 414-5). In the OT there are different types of salvation; here physical deliverance from enemies is chiefly in mind.

j. God is worthy of praise ( , "the praised one" [Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 2:2:471]). The root connotes "being sincerely and deeply thankful for/or satisfied in lauding a superior quality(ies) or great, great act(s) of the object" (Coppes, TWOT, p. 217).

35. 1 Kings 8:27 "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

In Solomon's dedicatory prayer for the Temple, two aspects of God's nature shine forth:

a. The universe itself("the heavens in their widest extent"; Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 3:1:127) cannot contain God.

b. Even so, God lovingly chose to dwell in a special way in a Temple made by human hands. He is beyond our comprehension, yet stoops down to love us enough to dwell among men!

36. 1 Kings 18:21: Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.

1 Kings 18:36-9: At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. 39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried,
"The LORD--he is God! The LORD--he is God!"

a. Elijah's dramatic encounter on Mt. Carmel with the prophets of Baal vividly portrays the challenge we all face: if God is truly God, then we owe our total allegiance to Him. The silence of the people to Elijah's challenge speaks volumes: "They wanted to combine the worship of Jehovah and Baal, and not to assume a hostile attitude towards Jehovah by the worship of Baal" (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 3:1:245). On the translation options of "waver between two opinions" (v. 21), see Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, NCBC, pp. 317-18).

b. We should note here the stress on truth--we are to follow the true God, no matter which one that is. The question is not "Which god is stronger?", but "Who is the real God?". The absolute presupposition is that there is only one correct answer, and not a multitude of valid options.

c. Elijah's prayer is simple and straightforward. He does not dance, whip himself into a frenzy, or hurt himself in any way. He simply cries out to God, requesting God to answer, which God dramatically does.

d. The reason for Elijah's "challenge of the Gods" is given in v. 37, "So these people will know that you, O LORD, are God . . .". When God responds to Elijah, the people then respond to Him. Though God did not have to manifest Himself here, out of His love for His straying people, He does, and He accepts their worship.

37. 1 Kings 19:11-13: The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

a. Shortly after his great victory over the prophets of Baal, Elijah faces his own test in the threat of Jezebel. He flees from her, apparently forgetting God's ability to save.

b. God ministers to Elijah, but in a completely unexpected way. The parallel between this and the revelation of God's glory to Moses (Exod. 33:18-23) should be noted (see Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 3:1:257-8).

i. In this case, God does not appear in any of the powerful manifestations of nature (wind, earthquake, and fire) that He brings.


c. This appearance is used to cool Elijah's zeal and readiness to condemn by reminding Him of God's patience and longsuffering. God is not only the Almighty (as on Mt. Carmel), He is also the All-loving and All-merciful.

38. 1 Chronicles 29:11: Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are
exalted as head over all.

a. Because everything in the universe belongs to God, to Him is ascribed:

i. Greatness (hagdulah): refers to being great in size or importance (Smick, TWOT, p. 151).

ii. Power (hagburah): "The Hebrew root is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior." God is often depicted by the verb form concerning His mighty acts (ps. 106:8; 145:4, 11, 12). Messiah will be the Mighty King (Is. 9::6). God's might sets the limits for man's strength. (Oswalt, TWOT, p. 148)

iii. Glory (hatipe'ret): Means beauty, glory, pride. There are many words for beauty in the OT, seen especially in the parallels with this term, which include (from Hamilton, TWOT, p. 714):

(1) Clothes . . . for glory and beauty (Exod. 28:2, 40).
(2) To make you high . . . in praise, and in name, and in honor (Deut. 26:19).
(3) Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary (Ps. 96:6).
(4) And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and beautiful (Is. 4:2).
(5) The LORD will be a crown of glory, a diadem of beauty (Is. 28:5).
(6) Our holy and beautiful house (Is. 64:11).

iv. Majesty (hanetsach): Both noun and verb form of have two main meanings, each with a fairly wide range of possible connotations. First is "brilliance" (with the connotations "preeminence, surpassing, glory, victory, leadership"); second is "endurance" (with the connotations "longlasting, perpetual"). (Fisher, TWOT, p. 593).

v. Splendor (hahod): Used mainly of God. "His majesty can be seen in the creation: Ps. 8:2, 'God's glory is chanted above the heavens,' or 'by' the heavens if we are dealing with the music of the spheres; Ps. 148:13, God's glory is above the earth and heaven; Hab. 3:3, 'God's glory covers the heaven.' When the biblical writers look at the work of God's hand in the universe they can do nothing but speak of God's glory: Ps. 145:4. This glory is part of God's wardrobe (Ps. 104:1). It can be heard (Isa. 30:30; Ps. 8:2). God bequeaths this to the man who lives in fellowship with him: Ps. 21:6; 1 Chr. 29:25 (Solomon). This attribute is applied finally to the Messiah who shall build the temple and bear royal honor (Zech. 6:13)." (Hamilton, TWOT, p. 209)

b. God is exalted as head over all

39. 2 Chronicles 18:27, 33-34: Micaiah declared, "If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me." Then he added, "Mark my words, all you people!" . . . But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told the chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded." All day long the battle raged, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. Then at sunset he died.

God is in complete control--even over "random" events!

Whether this prayer is said by Ezra (RSV) or all the Levites is not critical. In any event, they call on the people to stand and bless God. "The barely habitable city, the encircling heathen, and the poverty and seeming insignificance of the Jews are all transcended by the glorious reality of God. The facts are not ignored, . . . but they will be seen in the context of eternity . . . and of God's unimaginable greatness." (Kidner, Ezra and Nehemiah, TOTC, p. 111; the first three outline headings follow his):

a. **God the creator and savior** (vv. 6-15): God alone is God; it is He who has made the heavens and their hose as well as the earth and all on it. It is He who gives life, and He chose Israel and has actively been working on their behalf through their history.

b. **God the generous and patient God** (vv. 16-25): Though the Israelites did not follow God, still He is a forgiving and loving God, who, because of His compassion, did not abandon them in the desert. Instead, He sustained them for forty years, and even gave kingdoms over to them when they moved into the promised land.

c. **God who warns and disciplines** (vv. 26-31): In spite of God's obvious grace on Israel, they still forgot Him. He sent His prophets, who were killed. Thus, He finally handed them over to their enemies. When they finally cried for mercy, He heard them and delivered them. Even so, they again abandoned Him, and again He came to their rescue when they finally cried for help. Though God continued to punish them for their disobedience, and to hand them over to their enemies, He never abandoned them.

d. **Confession, plea, and oath** (9:32-10:39): Because of the reminder, the people confess their sin, cry for help, and bind themselves with an oath to follow Him faithfully, trusting that God has not changed in character or love for His people.

41. Job 26:13: By His breath (lit. "spirit") the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.

Modern translations (NIV, Amplified, RSV, Good News, and NEB) take this as breath or wind, though the word is literally "spirit". Wood, however, maintains that this is an amplification on Gen. 1:2, and should be seen as the Holy Spirit (Wood, Holy Spirit, p. 23; see also Anderson, Job, p. 218 and Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 866-7). If so, it is a reminder of the Spirit's role in creating the universe by "garnishing" (beautifying or bringing to a state of order"; Wood, Holy Spirit, p. 31) the heavens.

42. Job 38:1-42:6 (Our outline follows that of Zuck, "Job", BKC(OT)):

In this magnificent section of Job, God reveals His power, majesty, knowledge, and planning through a series of questions designed to show Job that his complaint against God is sinful, because Job's understanding of God was far short of reality.

a. God's first speech (38:1-40:2)

   i. God's opening rebuke and challenge to Job (38:1-3)
ii. God's questioning of Job regarding inanimate nature (Job 38:4-38)

(1) Questions about the earth (38:4-21): Where was Job when it was created, and how could he possibly understand it since he was not present? How could he possibly advise God?

(2) Questions about the sky (38:22-30): Where does God store snow and rain, lightning and winds?

(3) Questions about the stars and clouds (38:31-38): Who is in control of the orbits of the stars? Who guides their paths? Does Job know the laws of the heavens? Can he set God up in dominion over them? Can Job call down rain at will, or send lightning when and where he wishes?

iii. God's questioning of Job regarding animate nature (38:39-39:30): "The 12 animals described here . . . all exhibit the creative genius and providential care of God. . . . Job's incompetence and ignorance are seen in that he could not provide food for the first two animals . . . , did not know of the birth of their offspring . . . , did not set them free or tame them . . . , did not give them their odd ways . . . , or provide them with their ability to flight . . ." (Zuck, "Job", BKC(OT), p. 768).


b. Job's first reply to God (40:3-5): Job responds with humility, but not yet with repentance.

c. God's second speech (40:6-41:34)

i. God's challenge and rebuke to Job (40:6-14): God returns to the attack. Job is contending with God, which requires him to assume that they are on an equal footing. God is going to show Job how wrong his thinking is.

ii. God's questioning about two animals (40:15-41:34): Here God challenges Job to subdue two of God's creatures (probably the hippopotamus and the crocodile) it Job wished to challenge God. "Job had been concerned that God had not dealt with evil; so God was showing Job that he was unqualified to take over God's job of controlling and conquering evil for he could not even conquer the animal symbols of evil. In fact God had made these animals, which suggests that evil forces are not beyond God's control. He permits evil and chaos to rule for a time just has he had given Satan permission to test Job (1:12; 2:6).

d. Job's second reply to God (42:1-6): This time Job repeats his acknowledgment of his inability, but he also repents of his bad attitude. Job had come to see that his former ideas about God were far too small, and he confessed his sin of questioning God.

43. Psalms 14:1-2: The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.
a. Only the fool (nabal) denies that God exists. In Romans 1:22, Paul captures the manifestation of this today: "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools." A is one who is "ignoble and disgraceful, a downright boor. Insensibility to God, as well as a moral insensibility, close the mind to reason." (Goldberg, TWOT, p. 547)

b. God searches the earth to see if any man is seeking Him. His "look" is thorough and overlooks no one. Even so, He finds no one who is doing good (see Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 5:1:204-5).

c. The fact that no one has done good is emphasized by the three fold repetition ("all", "together", "not even one").

i. They are "corrupt" (shahat, used 151 times in the OT), a verb which is more often translated "to destroy". Men are destructive in their nature (Hamilton, TWOT, p. 917).

ii. They do "abominable deeds". Abominable (ta`ab, the verb, as here, occurs 22 times, the noun 117) can refer to physical, ethical, or moral sin (see also 1 Kings 21:26 and Psalm 53:1 for examples of the same verb form as used here; Youngblood, TWOT, p. 976).

iii. They have all "turned aside" (sur, 191 times in the OT). This can refer to purely physical turning (Ruth 4:1), spiritual turning from the ways of God, or departing (as God departed from Samson, Jud. 16:20; Patterson, TWOT p. 621).

iv. Together they have become "corrupt" (a`wen, it may be linguistically tied to the term for "nothing") has two aspects: trouble which moves on to wickedness and emptiness which moves on to idolatry. It stresses the planning and expression of deception (Livingstone, TWOT, pp. 23-4). Girdlestone remarks:

> It presents the evil devices of man in their false, hollow, and unreal aspect; and by the use of this word the inspired writers put a stamp of nothingness or unreality upon every departure from the law of God, whether it consists of wrong-doing, evil devising, false speaking, or idolatrous worship. (Girdlestone, Synonyms, p. 83)

44. Psalms 23:1: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

God is (Yahweh Rohi, "Yahweh my Shepherd"). The verb form means to pasture, tend, or graze. In its participial form, it means shepherd (White, TWOT, p. 852). God is the one who feeds his people.

45. Psalms 34:8: Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

God is (tob, good): "The goodness of God which can be appealed to for forgiveness (Ps. 25:7) is something akin to kindness or graciousness." The term refers to many types of goodness, including superior quality and moral superiority (Bowling, TWOT, p. 346).

46. Psalms 50:1-2: The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets. 2 From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth. 3 Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages.
a. God is the Mighty One ( ), and here He summons the whole earth to come before Him.

b. He shines forth from Zion, perfect in beauty. Keil and Delitzsch note, "the place of the presence of God the glorious One, is the bright spot whence the brightness of the divine manifestation spreads forth like the rising sun . . . The poet beholds the appearing of God, an appearing that resembles the rising of the sun . . ." Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 5:2:125-6).

c. He comes, and will not be silent--He is going to judge, and His judgment will be strong, as seen in two pictures:
   i. A fire devours before Him and
   ii. Around Him a tempest rages (comp. Job 38:1).

47. Psalms 62:5-7: Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. 6 He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. 7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. 8. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

   a. Note two possible ways to understand v. 5 (emphasis mine):
      i. "Find rest, O my soul, In God alone" (NIV)
      ii. "My soul, wait in silence for God only" (NASB) "My soul, wait only upon God and silently submit to Him" (Amplified)

   b. Our salvation and honor depend on God, not us. We should learn from the psalmist to look to Him when we face trials or troubles. He is a mighty rock--not me! For many of these terms, see the notes on 2 Sam. 22:3-4.

   c. God is our refuge. Therefore, we should:
      i. Trust Him at all times (even when they are not comfortable to us)
      ii. Pour out our hearts to Him (this contrasts with vv. 1-5, which assume silent trust--in this we see both "poles" of prayer--silence and pouring out our needs; Kidner, Psalms 1-72, p. 222).

48. Psalms 84:11: For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

   a. God is pictured as
      i. A sun (this is the only direct reference to this, though see on Ps. 50:1-2) "as the Being who dwells in an unapproachable light" (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 5:3:7)
ii. A shield (see on 2 Sam. 22:3-4), "protecting those who flee to Him and rendering them in accessible to their foes (Ibid.)

b. As a sun and shield, God is the One who bestows:

i. Favor (, hen [grace]; this form occurs 13 times, 11 of them in combination with rahum "merciful, compassionate"). The noun depicts "a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give another who had a need" but no real claim to what he needs (Yamauchi, TWOT, p. 302; see on Exod. 34:6-7). Our God is one who gives freely to those who love Him, though we have no claim on His gifts.

ii. Honor (, kabod [glory]; see notes on Exod. 33:17-19).

c. He does not withhold any good thing from those whose walk is blameless.

49. Psalms 90:1-2: LORD, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

God is infinite in relation to time--he existed from eternity past, and will continue to exist to eternity future. "God is the one who always is. He was, he is, he will be." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 274)

50. Psalms 93:1: The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.

a. God reigns (as King). We will discuss God's Kingdom in the NT passages. See the extended discussion of the related terms in Culver, TWOT, pp. 507-10).

b. He is robed in majesty (, ge'ot). The primary meaning of the root is "to rise". It can be used positively (as here; Exod. 15:7; Deut. 33:26; Job 37:4; 40:10; Ps. 68:35; Is. 2:10, 19, 21; 24:14; and Mic. 5:3) or negatively (meaning "pride"; Is. 16:6, Ezek. 30:6) (Hamilton, TWOT, p. 143)

c. He is armed with strength (, `oz). "Primarily this word is related to God. Strength is an essential attribute of God (Pss. 62:11; 63:2), his voice (Os. 68:33) and his arm (Isa. 62:8) are mighty. . . .

The strength of the Lord is to be a common theme of our praise. WE are to ascribe strength to him. We are to recognize his glorious might and to praise him for it (Ps. 29:1; 96:7; 1 Chr. 16:28).

Thus in hymns of praise God's strength shows itself as his overwhelming majesty, and in the laments it appears as his helping protection." Schultz, TWOT, p. 660)

51. Psalms 100:1-5: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.
a. Invitation:

i. Shout for joy to the LORD: "The summons to manifest this joy in a religious, festive manner springs up out of an all-hopeful, world-embracing love, and this love is the spontaneous result of living faith in the promise that all tribes of the earth shall be blessed in the seed of Abraham . . ." (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 3:3:105)

ii. Serve God with gladness

iii. Come before Him with joyful songs (the word implies "in no uncertain voice"; Kidner, Psalms 73-150, p. 356

b. Reason: God is good (vv. 3, 5)

i. He made us (v. 3; see on Genesis 1)

ii. We are his people, the sheep of His pasture (v. 3; see His shepherding role in Ps. 23:1)

iii. His love ( , hesed) endures forever (v. 5; see also the refrain of Ps. 136). It "refers to attitude as well as actions. This attitude is parallel to love, rahum goodness, tob, etc. It is a kind of love, including mercy, hannun, when the object is in a pitiful state. It often takes verbs of action, 'do,' 'keep,' and so refers to acts of love as well as to the attribute." (Harris, TWOT, p. 307).

iv. His faithfulness ( , 'aman) continues to all generations (e.g., it is also eternal; v. 5; see discussion on Deut. 32:3-4). God is totally dependable and will remain so forever.

c. Response (v. 4):

i. Enter His gates with thanksgiving (parallel to "give thanks to Him" in 4b). Thanks ( , todah) is a derivative of (yada), "confess, praise, give thanks, thank). The primary meaning of the root is "to acknowledge or confess sin, God's character and works, or man's character"; it "emphasizes 'recognition' and 'declaration' of a fact" (Alexander, TWOT, p. 364).

ii. Enter His courts with praise (parallel to "praise His name" in 4b). Praise ( , halal) is a synonym of . The root "connotes being sincerely and deeply thankful for and/or satisfied in lauding a superior quality(ies) or great, great act(s) of the object." (Coppes, TWOT, p. 217)

52. Psalms 103:1-14: Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. 3 He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; 4 he redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. 5 He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. 7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel; 8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse nor will be harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is
his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

a. David directs us to praise God with all our beings

b. We are to remember his benefits, which David enumerates:
   i. He forgives all our sins. "Forgives" (or "abundantly pardons"); \textit{sallah} is a term for forgiveness used only of God (Kaiser, TWOT, p. 626). There is a rich vocabulary for forgiveness in the OT. The major Hebrew terms for forgiveness include (from Ibid.):

   (1) \textit{sallah} is used of God's forgiveness or pardoning of sin.

   (2) \textit{maha} is used of blotting out (or rubbing out) sin.

   (3) \textit{kasa} is used of covering or concealing the memory of sin.

   (4) \textit{nasa`} is used of the lifting up and removal of sin.

   (5) \textit{kapar} is used of pardoning on the basis of a substitute.

   (6) \textit{`abar} is used of the passing by of sin.

   ii. He heals all our diseases (see Is. 53:5, where Messiah does this).

   iii. He satisfies our desires with good things (comp. Ps. 84:11).

   iv. He works righteousness and justice for the oppressed, seen specifically in rescuing Israel from bondage in Egypt.

   v. He is compassionate and gracious (as a father is with his children), slow to anger, abounding in love (which greatness is as high as the heavens are above the earth). He is like a loving father, a picture which is expanded (at Jesus' initiative) in the NT.

   vi. He will not always accuse, and does not harbor his anger forever.

   vii. He does not treat us as we deserve--he forgives our sins and removes them as far as the east is from the west. The "measurements" of his love and forgiveness serve as vivid reminders of the fact that God is not limited as we are.

   viii. He knows that we are but dust, and is compassionate with us because of our frailty. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, and treats us according to our fragile nature.

53. Psalms 104:1-4: Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. 2 He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. 4 He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.
a. Kidner explains: These verses magnificently convey the intimate yet regal relationship of God to His world. He is distinct from His universe (whereas pantheism would have merged Him with it), but He is anything but remote from it [as deism would have it], as though He had merely set is going or given it orders. The metaphor of His taking up its parts and powers as His robe, tent, palace and chariot invites us to see the world as something He delights in, which is charged with His energy and alive with His presence. (Kidner, Psalms 73-150, pp. 368-9)

b. Leupold points out: "For nature regarded as an independent entity that operates on its own, and is governed solely by some omnipotent laws is quite foreign to the Biblical way of thinking, which sees God's hand in all the processes that we call natural." (Leupold, Psalms, p. 722)

54. Psalms 111:10: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

a. We are to fear God (see discussion on Deut. 10:12-17).

b. This fear is "the beginning of wisdom". This idea is "virtually the motto of the Wisdom writings, where its truth appears in various forms: cf. Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13. At each place the context gives it a particular nuance: here it relates especially to God in His character as Creator, Redeemer and Provider, for whom reverence will be mingled with delight (2), gratitude (4, 9) and trust (5). So men of God have the key to what life is about--that 'from Him, to Him and through Him are all things'--and have the benefit of perfect precepts for its handling." (Kidner, Psalms 73-150, p. 398)

c. All who follow God's precepts show true understanding.

d. To God belongs eternal praise.

55. Psalms 115:3: Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

God is not limited; His will is never frustrated. "What he chooses to do, he accomplishes, for he has the ability to do it." Further, whatever God chooses to do is correct; "... he is wise, so that he knows what to do; he is good, and thus he chooses to do the right; he is powerful, and therefore is capable of doing what he wills to do." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 277).

56. Proverbs 18:10: The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

God's name is (migdal 'oz, "Tower of Strength"; see also Ps. 61:4). He is a secure place of refuge for the righteous. The rich, on the other hand, trust in riches, imagining them to be "an unscalable wall" (v. 11).

57. Proverbs 25:2: It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

"The glory of God consists in this, to conceal a matter, i.e., to place before men mystery upon mystery, in which they become conscious of the limitation and insufficiency of their knowledge, so that they are constrained to acknowledge, Deut. xxix. 28, that 'secret things belong unto the Lord our God.'" (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 6:2:149).
58. Isaiah 9:6: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

a. Is there any hint of the trinitarian nature of God in the name of Messiah? Note that He is called:

i. Wonderful Counselor (Jesus' named the Spirit the "Counselor" in John)

ii. Mighty God and Everlasting Father

iii. Prince of Peace

b. Whether there is a "trinitarian hint" or not, one undeniable aspect of the verse is that Jesus is Deity.

59. Isaiah 11:2: And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

a. Messiah would have the Spirit of the LORD, Who is given three further titles (each listing two complimentary qualities of which the Spirit is the Source; see Alexander, Isaiah, 1:249-50). The picture is of a root (the Spirit of the LORD) with three sets of double branches (C1 through C3 below), a reminder of the seven-branched lampstand of the Tabernacle (Leupold, Isaiah, 1:217).

(N.B. Though we do note distinctions in the terms below, we should probably not try to press them too far. Taken together, they simply show the Spirit as the source of genuine piety; Alexander, Isaiah, 1:250)

i. Branch one: the spirit of wisdom and understanding

(1) Wisdom (הָזֶכֶר, hokma) is "the ability to render the right decisions at the right time" (Young Isaiah, 1:382) or "the ability to perceive relationships among elements" (Oswalt, Isaiah, p. 276, n. 3).

(2) Understanding (בִּינָה, bina) is "insight into the true nature of things" (Young, Isaiah, 1:382) or "the ability to divide a thing into its constituent parts (Oswalt, Isaiah, p. 276, n. 4).

Together they indicate the intellectual side life (though they are not just intellectual qualities, but practical moral and religious wisdom; Alexander, Isaiah, 1:250),

ii. Branch two: the Spirit of counsel and strength

(1) Counsel is the ability to plan or plot comprehensive strategy (Leupold, Isaiah, 1:217) or form right conclusions (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 7:1:282)

(2) Strength (or "heroic action"; Leupold, Isaiah, 1:215) is "the ability to execute a plan" (Alexander, Isaiah, 1:250).

Together they indicate the practical side of life (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the
iii. Branch three: the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD,

(1) Knowledge, which is more than mere just theoretical, seen the second clause.

(2) Fear of the LORD, which is "the heart and core of biblical religion. It involves a recognition of the absolute holiness of God; it is a fear based upon the recognition of that holiness and coupled with full reverence before Him" (Young, Isaiah, 1:383).

Together they show a genuine spirit of true religious piety (Alexander, Isaiah, 1:250), indicating the religious side of life (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 7:1:282).

N.B. Even Jesus was "imbued with the fear of the LORD in order to accomplish His mighty work" [Young Isaiah, 1:383]--we must have the same fear!

b. Messiah will not just "have" the Spirit--the Spirit will rest (., nuah; "not only absence of movement but being settled in a particular place"; Coppes, TWOT, p. 562) on Him.

c. Some commentators feel that this passage is the foundation for the mention of the "seven Spirits of God" in Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, and 5:6 (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 7:1:282-3; though Young disagrees, Isaiah, 1:381, n. 8). The seven here might also reflect that Messiah will be "perfectly endowed by the Spirit with everything requisite to his kingly task (Grogan, "Isaiah", EBC, 6:88).

60. Isaiah 30:18: Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

God is gracious, but in His timing and without contradicting His righteousness. The meaning is "Ye will pursue your foolish way of trust in Egypt, and a judgment will surely overtake you. For that reason the LORD will wait to show mercy to you." . . . The verb 'to wait' simply means, . . . 'to wait with an earnest expectation and longing, with a desire for something.' God's purpose is to show mercy, to be gracious; but until the judgment is past He will not do this. He longs, however, to be gracious, and earnestly awaits the time when He may." (Young, Isaiah, 2:353)

61. Isaiah 33:22: For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.

"LORD" is placed for emphasis--the focus is on HIM in the various roles, and no one else. In that context:

a. He is our judge: brings to mind the period of judges, when God raised them up as saviors of the people. The idea is of deliverance, not necessarily judgment (see Young, Isaiah, 2:425).

b. He is our lawgiver: "the word points to the true head of the people, whether in time of war or of peace" (Ibid.).

c. He is our king: the true ruler of His people.
62. Isaiah 40:13-4: Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, and informed Him of the way of understanding?

The Spirit is God—He needs direction and counseling from no one on earth.

63. Isaiah 44:24: "This is what the LORD says--your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,

a. God formed us in the womb--He remains intimately concerned for every human being on the earth.

b. He alone is the creator--there is no room for an absolute dualism in the Bible.

64. Isaiah 45:21-22: Declare what is to be, present it--let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. 22 "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

a. God is the only Savior; "The only One who has been able to predict beforehand the judgment and deliverance is the God of Israel, Yahweh, who is the only God in existence, and who has shown Himself to be just in that He has acted both in judgment and in salvation in accordance with the strictest demands of His holiness. He is also a Savior, whose salvation is not proffered at the expense of justice, but is accomplished to its satisfaction." (Young, Isaiah, 3:214-5)

b. God offers salvation to "all the ends of the earth", not just to Israel. Young notes, "Monotheism, true conversion and universalism go together. Out of true monotheism, the doctrine that Yahweh, the God of Israel, is the only true God, Creator of heaven and earth, flows the fact that there may be a true conversion. Men have rebelled against God, and can only find salvation when, having turned from the vain idols of abomination, they turn to the God who has made them. Furthermore, inasmuch as all men have rebelled, the invitation is open to all men to turn. In the Gospel alone is true universalism to be found." (Young, Isaiah, 3:216)

65. Isaiah 57:15: For this is what the high and lofty One says--he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

a. God is transcendent--he is "high and lofty one" who lives "in a high and holy place". "Transcendence" refers to the idea that "God is separate from and independent of nature and humanity. God is not simply attached to, or involved in, his creation. He is also superior to it in several significant ways" (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 312). Implications of God's transcendence include (Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 317-8):

i. There is something higher than man.

ii. God can never be completely captured in human concepts.
iii. Our salvation is not our achievement. . . . We are not able to raise ourselves to God's level by fulfilling his standards for us.

iv. There will always be a difference between God and man.

v. Reverence is appropriate in our relationship with God.

vi. We will look for genuinely transcendent working by God.

b. At the same time, God is immanent--he is "with him who is contrite". "Immanence" refers to "God's presence and activity within nature, human nature, and history" (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 302). Implications of the immanence of God include (Ibid., pp. 311-2):

i. God is not limited to working directly to accomplish his purposes.

ii. God may use persons and organizations that are not avowedly Christian.

iii. We should have an appreciation for all that God has created.

iv. We can learn something about God from his creation. All that is has been brought into being by God, and, further, is actively indwelt by him. We may therefore detect clues about what God is like by observing the behavior of the created universe.

v. God's immanence means that there are points at which the gospel can make contact with the unbeliever.

66. Isaiah 63:10-11: But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.

a. Israel's rebellion grieved (אַסַּב, 'atsab; also used of God's grief in making man in Gen. 6:6) Him. That God's Spirit can be grieved shows that He is a person (Alexander, Isaiah, p. 421).

b. The depth of his grief is seen in that He Himself turned against them and became their enemy (which finally resulted in the exile).

c. The reference to God putting the Holy Spirit in their midst may refer to Num. 11:24-30, when He came upon the seventy elders to equip them for leadership (Leupold, Isaiah, 2:345).

d. Some see the reference to the angel of God's Presence (v. 9), God, and the Holy Spirit as an implicit reference to the Trinity (Alexander, Isaiah, p. 421; Young, Isaiah, 3:482-3).

67. Jeremiah 9:23-24: This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.

a. Thompson points out that "true religion consists in a personal and existential knowledge of God, and in a commitment to those qualities displayed by Yahweh himself--unfailing loyalty, justice, and right dealing." (Thompson, Jeremiah, p. 318)
b. If we are to boast about anything, we are to boast that:

i. We understand (, sakal; "I wise(ly), understand") God: In sakal, "There is the process of thinking through a complex arrangement of thoughts resulting in a wise dealing and use of good practical common sense." It also "involves one in what he considers, or pays attention to". Here the idea is "has insight into" (comp. Prov. 1:3; Goldberg, TWOT, p. 877)

ii. We know (, yada`) God. The root "expresses a multitude of shades of knowledge gained by the senses". It ranges from the contemplative knowledge of the wise man (Prov. 1:4; 2:6; 5:2) to expressing acquaintance with (Gen. 29:5) to intimate acquaintance (Exod. 33:17) to sexual relations (Gen. 4:1) (Lewis, TWOT, p. 366).

c. The God we are to know and understand is explained as the One who, on earth, exercises and delights in:

i. Kindness (, hesed; see also on Exod. 15:1-18): "When the term is used of God it denotes that deep commitment of God to his people that reaches out beyond the mere demands of reciprocal obligation such as those specified by law or custom. In an attempt to give definition to this beautiful but elusive concept, translators have used such terms as 'loyalty,' 'covenant loyalty,' 'loving kindness' (AV, RV), 'steadfast love' (RSV), 'unfailing devotion' (NEB), 'kindness' (Jerusalem Bible), 'merciful love,' 'mercy' (AV), etc. Some small apprehension of this divine quality should be the pursuit of the wise man according to Jeremiah." (Thompson, Jeremiah, p. 319).

ii. Justice (, mishpat, see also on Deut. 32:3-4): "It was important in society to establish a state of affairs where right-doing was encouraged and made possible. At times this involved the protection of citizens from those who would harm them and in some cases deliverance from oppressors. Yahweh as Judge sought out both the wrongdoer to restrain him or to punish him, and the righteous man to deliver him and to vindicate him. His judgment would stand up to the utmost scrutiny, for it conformed perfectly to the principles he had laid down for men. For that reason those who were oppressed in society appealed to him, and men in Israel called upon him to judge between them. He would perfectly establish the rights of every man, that is, he would establish mishpat." (Thompson, Jeremiah, pp. 319-20)

iii. Righteousness (, tsedaga, see also on Deut. 32:3-4): Core is "a definition of what was normal or standard. The man of Israel was involved in many relationships--family, clan, nation, economic, social, political, religious. Over and above all these lay the relationship offered to him by Yahweh, that of being a member of the covenant family. It was this that gave the deepest significance to his life and thought. . . . In the establishment of sedaga two kinds of activity were necessary. Positively, 'right' had to be restored to those who had been deprived of it, and negatively, offenders had to be punished. Yahweh could act to restore his people's 'right' whether by 'righteous acts' . . . in history or by the defense of the weak, the oppressed, the poor, and the defenseless. Indeed, the term 'righteousness' is synonymous with 'deliverance' or 'salvation' in several passages." (Thompson, Jeremiah, p. 320)
Excursus: Knowing God  
(adapted from Sam Owen)

I. "Today, all sorts of subjects are eagerly pursued; but the knowledge of God is neglected. . . . Yet to know God is man's chief end, and justifies his existence. Even if a hundred lives were ours, this one aim would be sufficient for them all." (Calvin, Commentary on Jeremiah, p. )

II. "[True] knowledge [of God] in Scripture not only involves factual knowledge but also is (1) a gift of God's redemptive grace, (2) an obedient covenantal response to God, and (3) a loving, personal involvement." (Frame, The Doctrine, p. 49).

III. Knowledge of God involves:
   A. Knowing factually
   B. Knowing personally
      1. Interpret, predict, values, likes/dislikes, motivations [other person must choose to reveal himself in this way]
      2. "I know what pleases."
   C. Knowing committedly
      1. "I will please."
      2. Our actions and character are shaped to please that person and vise-versa.
      3. In marriage this creates something bigger than what two people add up to separately.

IV. The resulting character of theology
   A. We limit ourselves to God's revelation (Deut. 29:29). When revelation runs out we stop. The problem is there are a lot of things we want to know that God has not seen fit to reveal to us.
   B. We can use regenerated reason under the Spirit's guidance and illumination to interpret, integrate, and apply revelation. Theology is never adequate as an outline. Theology is not theology until it brings about a response in my life.
   C. The goal is engrossing knowledge of God, enhanced enjoyment of Him, and enriched service to Him.

14. Jeremiah 23:6b: This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.

    God is (Yahweh Tsidkenu; "Yahweh Our Righteousness"): "It is probably a play on the name of Zedekiah . . . My righteousness is Yahweh. The noun sedeq was firmly anchored in the concept of kingship in Israel, and it would not be surprising for a king to take such a name as Zedekiah. If the king failed to live according to the symbolism of his name, 'Yahweh is my
righteousness,' it would be appropriate for a prophet to draw the contrast to say: 'but our righteousness is Yahweh.' . . . In some cases where Yahweh, . . . sets about to establish the right, the word . . . comes to mean the justice done in favor of someone, or vindication (Isa. 41:2, 10; 58:8; 62:1, 2). . . . Hence the symbolic name could mean 'Yahweh is the vindication of our right' or 'Yahweh is our Justice.' The term must be allowed to take on its full meaning, which included the saving presence and activity of Yahweh." (Thompson, Jeremiah, pp. 490-1)

15. Jeremiah 23:23-24: "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? 24 Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.
   a. God is omnipresent in that He is both near (immanent) and far (transcendent). "The implication seems to be that being a God at hand does not preclude his being afar off as well. He fills the whole heaven and earth (v. 24). Thus, one cannot hide himself 'in secret places' so that he cannot be seen." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 273; see also p. 302)
   b. God is also omniscient--no one can hide where God cannot see him.

16. Jeremiah 32:27: "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"
   a. God is the God of all men (lit. "all flesh")--On God alone the life and death of all men depends (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, 8:2:57).
   b. Nothing is impossible for God (see also v. 17 of the same chapter and Gen. 18:14)--here, in the context of the judgment of allowing the Babylonians to capture Jerusalem.

17. Ezekiel 48:35b: And the name of the city from that time on will be: "THE LORD IS THERE."
   God is (Yahweh Shammah, "Yahweh Is There"): Ezekiel saw the LORD withdraw from the temple because of Israel's sins there. In the last words of his book, however, he is able to note God's name as "The LORD is There", showing that God's withdrawal was only temporary, and that at a future time He would return and remain forever with His people.

18. Daniel 5:21: He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes.
   a. God is sovereign (, shalit) over the kingdoms of men. The root idea of shalit is "to exercise autocratic control over", "to have one's way with" anyone (Austel, TWOT, p. 929).
   b. He sets over those kingdoms anyone He wishes; God is in complete control of political events of the nations, not just the "religious" ones.

19. Micah 6:8: He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
   God places three requirements on man. They can be split into two major categories:
Theology Proper in the OT

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a. Obedience:

i. Do justice (וְיָשָׁר, "asot mishpat; as God is just)

ii. Love mercy (וְהָבַת חַדְּד, "'ahabat heded; as God is merciful)

b. Relationship: Walk humbly (וַחֲסָנֵה, "hatsne") with God. It occurs only once in the OT. It means "to be modest, humble".

20. Nahum 1:2: The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies. 3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.

a. The LORD is:

i. A jealous God (see on Exodus 20:2-7)

ii. An avenging (נָאָגָם, "naqam) God. Smick points out:

The concept of divine vengeance must be understood in the light of OT teaching about the holiness and justice of God and its effect on man as a sinner. In terms of the presuppositions of some modern 'Christian' theologies, such a God of vengeance will be labeled unchristian and unethical. Understood in the full orb of biblical revelation, balanced as it is by the mercy of God, divine vengeance is seen to be a necessary aspect of the history of redemption. . . .

. . . God cannot be true to his character of holiness and justice if he allows sin and rebellion to go unpunished. . . .

The Bible balances the fury of God's vengeance against the sinner with greatness of his mercy on those whom he redeems from sin. God's vengeance must never be viewed apart from his purpose to show mercy. He is not only the God of wrath, but must be the God of wrath in order for his mercy to have meaning. . . .

There are two ways in which God takes vengeance with regard to his people. First he avenges his people in the sense that he becomes their champion against the common enemy (Ps. 94). Secondly, as the covenant God, he punishes those who break covenant with him. . . . (Lev. 26:24-25). (Smick, TWOT, pp. 598-99)

b. He:

i. Takes vengeance on His foes (see above)

ii. Is filled with wrath (רֵחַם, "hemah) against His enemies. Hemah is derived from (yaham), which means "be hot", and may mean "heat, hot displeasure, indignation, anger, wrath, poison". It "refers to God's reaction to his unfaithful covenant people (Deut. 9:19; Jer. 42:18). God is aroused to great heat because he, as a jealous God, sees the people he loves disobey him and appeal to, or consort with, sinners or 'no gods'. He then expresses his rage or pours out his fury (Ezk. 36:6). Other nations who violate his intentions and Word, also experience God's displeasure by the pouring out of God's fury (Jer. 10:25; Nah. 1:2, 6)." (Van Groningen, TWOT, pp. 374-5)
c. Though He is slow to anger, He will not let the guilty go unpunished. We should not consider His willingness to delay judgment as weakness or vacillation on His part--He will punish the guilty.

21. Zechariah 12:1: This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares:

a. God continues as the Creator of the material universe (the heavens and the earth)

b. He is also the one who forms the spirit of man within him.

c. Concerning the verb tenses (all Qal participles), Leupold notes:

   . . . as has been rightly pointed out by Keil, the last of the three terms [forms the spirit of man] points to an activity of God's which is continuous into the present: God still forms the spirit of man within him. If that is a form of activity which continues in the present, and since participles more naturally describe actions that continue, we do best to let the first two of this series [stretches out the heavens; lays the foundation of the earth] also be regarded as participles that are descriptive of continuous acts going on progressively in the present. God's work of stretching out the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth as well as that of forming man's spirit is in the Scriptures regarded as being performed continuously. Were He for a moment to cease this creative activity, all of the visible and the invisible creation would sink back into nonexistence . . . (Leupold, Zechariah, pp. 225-6)

THEOLOGY PROPER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

22. Matthew 3:2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

a. At the outset, we note that Matthew generally refers to the "kingdom of heaven", while Luke refers to the "kingdom of God". There is no difference in the meaning (contra Culver, A Greater Commission, p. 55). Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience, prefers to avoid the use of the word "God" out of sensitivity to his readers. This expression, "originates with the late Jewish expectation of the future in which it denoted the decisive intervention of God, ardently expected by Israel, to restore his people's fortunes and liberate them from the power of their enemies" (Ridderbos, "Kingdom of God", NBD; see Ladd, Crucial Questions, pp. 121-32 for discussion).

   Though the terms mean the same thing, there may be two other factors in mind in Matthew's choice of terminology (Carson, "Matthew", p. 100):

   i. Kingdom of heaven "may anticipate the extent of Christ's post-resurrection authority: God's sovereignty in heaven and on earth is now mediated through him (28:18)" (Ibid.)

   ii. By using Kingdom of heaven, Matthew might be leaving himself room for linguistically noting that the Kingdom can also be ascribed to Jesus.

b. "Kingdom" (Hebrew: ; Greek: ) occurs over 150 times in the NT. The essential thrust is not the realm over which God rules, but His rule itself (see Schmidt, "basileus, basileia", TDNT). G. E. Ladd notes: The primary meaning of both the Hebrew word . . . and of the Greek word . . . is the rank, authority and sovereignty exercised by a king. A basileia may indeed be a realm over which a sovereign exercises his authority; and it may be the people who
belong to that realm and over whom authority is exercised; but these are secondary and derived meanings. First of all, a kingdom is the authority to rule, the sovereignty of the king." (Ladd, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 19).

c. The basic truth here is that Jesus will reign, and that His kingdom, in contrast to all others, will be eternal. The references to David and the house of Jacob show that the concept is steeped in OT ideas. The Jews of Jesus' day did expect the kingdom of God to come, but their categories of understanding this were socio-political rather than spiritual. Further, the fact that His kingdom will be eternal places it beyond the earthly human historico-socio-political realm--only a Divine kingdom can be eternal. This is a hint that the kingdom Jesus will bring will not fit the Jewish expectations (see Morris, *Luke*, p. 73).

d. John's basic call is to repent in light of the coming kingdom. "What is meant is ... a radical transfor-mation of the entire person, a fundamental turnaround involving mind and action and including overtones of grief, which results in 'fruit in keeping with repentance.'" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 99; Hill, *Matthew*, p. 90).

e. John the Baptist and Jesus both preached the nearness of the kingdom. Two differences may be noted in their preaching (Ridderbos, *Kingdom of God*, NBD):

i. For Jesus, the saving significance of the kingdom is in the foreground--for John, the call to repentance was.

ii. Jesus announced not just that the kingdom was at hand, but that it was actually manifest in Him and His ministry.

f. Because of the Jewish expectation of God's kingdom to involve an overthrow of their oppressors (Rome), John's announcement would have caused a great deal of misdirected excitement. Thus, Jesus used veiled terms (see Carson, "Matthew", p. 101; including the parables) when speaking of the kingdom (to avoid people's misconceptions pushing Him where He was not to go).

g. In the same way that the angel announced that Jesus' mission was to save His people from their sins, so now the first announcement of God's kingdom deals with repentance from sins (see Carson, "Matthew", p. 101).

23. John 4:24: God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

a. The statement does not refer to personality but to nature (Pneuma, "spirit," is anarthrous, emphasizing the nature or quality of "spirit" rather than the personal identity of "a spirit." It is not therefore a statement to the effect that God is of that genre of beings known as spirits, but that God is spirit.

b. This is an affirmation that God is transcendent, pure person (in contrast to one who is a compound of matter and spirit or that which is only matter and therefore finite). He is unlimited by space and time and must be understood in spiritual terms. Therefore, we must worship Him personally (in spirit) and on the basis of truth.

c. Spirit is God's being or substance [essential nature, essence]. In the Greek context spirit was one of the kinds of being (ousia)
i. *(Ousia)* is the present participle of *eimi*, to be, that which is. It is sometimes used synonymously with *phusis* (nature, physics) and *upostasis* (substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality). The Latin term for this was *substantia*, from which is derived the English "substance."

ii. Attributes cannot be attributed to nothing. The substance of a thing is that in which the many different attributes inhere, the underlying reality which makes it one being.

iii. Two kinds of substance:

   (1) Material, visible
   (2) Spiritual, invisible

d. God as personal spirit is invisible

e. God as personal spirit is *simple*, uncompounded, indivisible

f. God as personal spirit is living and active

g. Avoid the:

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24. Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the *kingdom* of heaven is near."

Mark 1:14-15: After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The *kingdom* of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

a. Klappert points out, "Jesus did not preach that there was a kingdom of God to which one must confess allegiance . . . , but that the rule of God is coming." (Klappert, "King, Kingdom", NIDNTT).

b. The kingdom is *God's*: "If the Kingdom is the rule of God, then every aspect of the Kingdom must be derived from the character and action of God. The presence of the Kingdom is to be understood from the nature of God's present activity; and the future of the Kingdom is the redemptive manifestation of his kingly rule at the end of the age" (Ladd, Theology of the New Testament, p. 81; see also Lane, *Mark*, p. 65)

c. This kingdom (again, as with John), "is near". There are three ways of understanding this:

   i. **Temporally**: it is coming soon--it is imminent. Thus, it is not only a future reality, it is a present reality as well.
ii. **Spatially**: it has come in the person of Jesus (Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 68). Cranfield even states, "In fact, we may actually go so far as to say that the kingdom of God *is* Jesus and that he *is* the kingdom" (Ibid., p. 66). If this is the case, then "we must be chary of explaining the contrast between the kingdom already come with Jesus and the kingdom still to come in terms of a contrast between partial and complete. It is rather a contrast between veiled and manifest. The kingdom in its fullness came in Christ, for he came really and fully. What the Church now awaits is not something more complete than Christ himself, but rather Christ manifest and in glory." (Ibid.)

iii. **Temporally and spatially**: "The kingdom has drawn near, spatially in the person of Jesus who embodied the kingdom in a veiled way, and temporally because it is the only event which takes place prior to the end. In the person of Jesus men are confronted by the kingdom of God in its nearness." (Lane, *Mark*, p. 65; see also Marshall, *Luke*, p. 422)

d. What was Jesus' message in announcing the kingdom of God? It is "the announcement by word and deed that God is acting and manifesting dynamically his redemptive will in history. God is seeking out sinners; he is inviting them to enter into the messianic blessing; he is demanding of them a favorable response to his gracious offer" (Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 84). Cranfield relates: "It is because God's rule is at present hidden that men are in a position to decide whether they will receive it or reject it; and the fact that the day is coming when it will be made manifest makes that decision a matter of urgency." (Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 65)

e. John Bright relates: "Christ, then, has come to call men to his Kingdom. His mission was not to instruct men in a better and more spiritual ethic, . . . in short, to point men the way to be better men. All this he did, indeed, and with a vengeance. But he did it in the dazzling light of the coming Kingdom. His was a call of tremendous urgency, a call to radical decision for the Kingdom. . . . It is a call to total and radical obedience, to an utterly impossible righteousness, to be perfect as God is perfect (Matt. 5:48): in short, a call to the righteousness of the Kingdom of God to which no man can attain, yet to which he may give the answer of faith." (Bright, *The Kingdom of God*, pp. 219-20; see also Lane, *Mark*, p. 66)

f. The kingdom of God is a central theme of Jesus' teaching. Ladd notes (we present this in outline form; Ladd has it in one paragraph; Ladd, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, pp. 14-15):

i. **His teaching** was designed to show men how they might enter the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5:20; 7:21).

ii. **His mighty works** were intended to prove that the Kingdom of God had come upon them (Matt. 12:28).

iii. **His parables** illustrated to His disciples the truth about the Kingdom of God (Matt. 13:11).

iv. And when **He taught His followers to pray**, at the heart of their petition were the words, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' (Matt. 6:10).

v. On the **eve of His death**, He assured His disciples that He would yet share with them the happiness and the fellowship of the Kingdom (Luke 22:22-30).
vi. And He promised that He would appear again on the earth in glory to being the blessedness of the Kingdom to those for whom it was prepared (Matt. 25:31, 34).

g. Finally, we note with Shenk, "In his first utterances Jesus identified the kingdom of God as both the object and the content of his messiahship" and "The kingdom of God is the great unifying theme of Jesus' life and mission" (Shenk, "Kingdom", pp. 210, 211).

25. John 3:33: The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful (see also John 8:40, 17:3, and 1 John 5:20)

a. "Truth" ( ) meaning true in the sense of "real" or "genuine". Nearly half of all the occurrences of aletheia in the NT are found in John's writings.

b. God conforms to reality, intrinsically; in fact, He is the source and standard for all that is genuine and real. Furthermore, this fact about His being forms the standard for His words and ways with men.

c. Morris points out, "Elsewhere John reports that Jesus said, 'I am . . . truth' (14:6). It is something like this that is in mind here. Truth is rooted in the divine nature. But there is also an emphasis on Jesus who bears the decisive witness to God. The God who is true will not mislead men, and He has not misled them in the witness borne by Jesus." (Morris, John, p. 246)

26. Luke 4:42-44: At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. 43 But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." 44 And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

a. Luke does not mention that Jesus is praying (compare Mark 1:35-9, which parallels this passage). This is Luke's first use of the term kingdom of God. Marshall comments: "In Lk. the kingdom of God is his activity in bringing salvation to men and the sphere which is thereby created; God is active here and now in the ministry of Jesus and will consummate his rule in the future." (Marshall, Luke, p. 198).

b. Jesus' words are a "programmatic statement of Jesus' mission and also of Luke's understanding of it" (Liefeld, "Luke", p. 874). Note the thrust (the bold-faced words are all uniquely found in Luke's account): He must preach the good news of the kingdom of God--that is why he was sent.

27. Matthew 5:3-10: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
Luke 6:20-23: Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the **kingdom** of God. 21. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. 22. Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. 23. "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

a. The fact that the first and the last beatitudes (in Matthew's account) note ownership of the kingdom of God shows that all the beatitudes reflect kingdom truths and are "kingdom norms" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 132). Also note that the rewards of vv. 4-9 are future (theirs *will be*), but the reward of the kingdom is present (theirs *is*; Ibid.).

b. Matthew gives the blessing to the "poor in spirit" is to "acknowledge spiritual bankruptcy" (Ibid.) The basic thrust is that no one is able to present himself as able to earn the kingdom of God--it is impossible ("like a camel through the eye of the needle") (Carson, "Matthew", p. 132) Ridderbos points out, "Since salvation is announced and offered as a gift already available to the poor in spirit, the hungry and the mourners, the kingdom is theirs." (Ridderbos, "Kingdom of God", NBD).

c. Luke's blessing goes to the poor (without the qualifying "in spirit"). In Luke the term "implies those who are utterly dependent on God" (Liefeld, "Luke", p. 891). While literally addressed to the materially poor (compare James 2:5; see Dyrness, _Let_ pp. 130-6), "as the sequel makes clear, it is not poverty as such which qualifies a person for salvation: the beatitudes are addressed to disciples, to those who are ready to be persecuted for the sake of the Son of man" (Marshall, _Luke_, p. 249).

d. Being persecuted for righteousness is not to be confused with persecution for other reasons (especially for our sin!!).

28. Matthew 5:17-20: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the **kingdom** of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the **kingdom** of heaven. 20. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the **kingdom** of heaven.

a. The fact that there is a "least" and a "greatest" shows that there are ranks in God's kingdom. Jesus' meaning here is that "ranking in the kingdom turns on the degree of conformity to Jesus' teaching as that teaching fulfills OT revelation" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 146).

b. The basic thrust here is that we must obey the teaching of Jesus, to which the OT pointed.

29. Matthew 6:9-10: "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be
your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Luke 11:2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come."

a. We see three cardinal petitions (Carson, "Matthew", pp. 170-1): that God will act in such a way that his people will:

i. Hallow His name (let it be regarded as holy; Liefeld, "Luke", p. 947),

ii. Submit to His reign, and

iii. Do His will (missing in Luke's account).

b. "To pray 'your kingdom come' is therefore simultaneously to ask that God's saving, royal rule be extended now as people bow in submission to him and already taste the eschatological blessing of salvation and to cry for the consummation of the kingdom" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 170).

30. Matthew 6:28-33: "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! Do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Luke 12:27-34: "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Keep your treasures in heaven; then your heart will be there as well.

a. There are four major possibilities as to what it means to seek God's kingdom first (see Marshall, Luke, p. 530):

i. To seek that God's rule may come, and to advance its coming rather than to care about material things,

ii. To seek the (spiritual) blessings of the kingdom rather than the material benefits,

iii. To submit to the Lord's rule,

iv. To pray the Lord's prayer.

b. Carson's comments are appropriate: to seek the kingdom first "is to desire above all to enter into, submit to, and participate in spreading the news of the saving reign of God, ... and to live so as to store up treasures in heaven in the prospect of the kingdom's consummation. It is to pursue the things already prayed for in the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer" (Carson,
"Matthew", pp. 181-2; emphasis mine).

31. Matthew 7:11: If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!  

   a. "The fatherhood-of-God language is reserved for God's relationship with Jesus' disciples . . . . The blessings promised as a result of these prayers are not the blessings of common grace (cf. 5:45) but of the kingdom. And though we must ask for them, it is not because God must be informed (6:8) but because this is the Father's way of training his family." (Carson, "Matthew", p. 187)

   b. "What is fundamentally at stake is man's picture of God. God must not be thought of as a reluctant stranger who can be cajoled or bullied into bestowing his gifts (6:7-8), as a malicious tyrant who takes vicious glee in the tricks he plays (vv. 9-10), or even as an indulgent grandfather who provides everything requested of him. He is the heavenly Father, the God of the kingdom, who graciously and willingly bestows good gifts of the kingdom in answer to prayer." (Ibid.)

   c. Luke replaces "good gifts" with the "Holy Spirit", but in what sense?

      i. The Spirit Himself (salvation, which is not likely in view of the use of the term "children")?

      ii. Or special endowments given by the Spirit (Marshall, Luke, p. 470; see Matt. 7:11), such as:

         (1) Anointing for ministry or service (e.g., power for witness) or

         (2) Charismata (prophecy, teaching, healings, administration, tongues, etc.), or the gift(s) of righteous living (e.g., the fruit of the Spirit)?

     iii. This does not address an initial "getting" of the Spirit, but a greater fullness of Him (see Fredricks, "Rethinking", pp. 14-5).

     iv. Our problem may be that we are thinking literally (i.e., gift or Spirit as a concrete object or person) when we should be thinking metaphorically. If so, this may be a metaphor denoting "the beginning in that person of the set of revelatory activities of the Spirit promised by Joel" (Turner, "Spirit Endowment in Luke/Acts", p. 58, emphasis his)? (N.B. This would be manifested through the endowments mentioned above, and may not be separable from that idea.)

   d. However we take this, we do see that the Spirit (whether initially or in greater fullness or for special endowments) is freely available to God's children who ask for Him.

32. Matthew 11:11-15: I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law
prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke 7:28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Luke 16:14-17: The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight. 16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. 17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

a. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John because "it is greater to participate in the kingdom than to announce it" (Liefeld, "Luke", p. 901; though this certainly does not mean that John is excluded from the kingdom!). Marshall notes: "just as a place in heaven is worth more than authority over the demons (10:17-20), so possession of a place in the kingdom is more important than being the greatest of the prophets" (Marshall, Luke, p. 296).

b. In what sense has the kingdom "been forcefully advancing" (Luke changes this to "being preached [see discussion in Marshall, Luke, pp. 626-8], which is much easier to understand!!)?, and how have "forceful men laid hold of it"?

i. Negative understandings:

(1) Men have attacked it to try to plunder it (e.g., Jesus' enemies?; Carson, "Matthew", p. 267)?
(2) Men are trying to force the kingdom to come by use of arms or to force their way into it by an external religion (see Osborne, "Matthew", p. 53)?

ii. Positive understanding:

The advance of the kingdom comes in God's mighty power, and only people making a radical (forceful or violent) decision for the kingdom can enter it (Ladd, "Kingdom of God", ISBE Revised; see also Liefeld, "Luke", p. 990; Marshall, Luke, pp. 629-30).

Absolute certainty on the meaning is not possible; we will leave it for the scholars to debate!

c. Conn, noting that evangelism is the message, and not the method, of the kingdom, renders Luke 16:16 as "The law and the prophets were until John. From then the kingdom of God is evangelled" (Conn, "The Kingdom of God", p. 19).

33. Matthew 12:25-29: Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will not stand, 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?" 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 28 But
if I drive out demons by the Spirit of Mark 3:23-27: So Jesus Luke 11:17-20: Jesus knew their God, then the **kingdom** of God has called them and spoke to thoughts and said to them: "Any come upon you. 29 Or again, how they in parables: "How **kingdom** divided against itself will be can anyone enter a strong man's can Satan drive out Sa- ruined, and a house divided against house and carry off his possessions tan? 24 If a **kingdom** is itself will fall. 18 If Satan is divided unless he first ties up the strong divided against itself, against himself, how can his **kingdom** man? Then he can rob his house. 20 But if I drive he cannot stand; his end out demons by the finger of God, then has come. 27 In fact, no the **kingdom** of God has come to you. one can enter a strong man, fully armed, man's house and carry guards his own house, his possessions off his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone unless he first ties up the stronger attacks and overpowers him, strong man. Then he can he takes away the armor in which the rob his house. 19 Now if I drive out demons by that **kingdom** cannot stand? I say this because you claim stand. 25 If a house is that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. divided against itself, 19 Now if I drive out demons by that house cannot stand. Beelzebub, by whom do your fol- 26 And if Satan opposes lowers drive them out? So then, they himself and is divided, will be your judges. 20 But if I drive he cannot stand; his end out demons by the finger of God, then has come. 27 In fact, no the **kingdom** of God has come to you.

i. Ladd calls v. 29 of Matthew's account one of the most important verses in the Nt for understanding the Kingdom of God.

ii. Elsewhere Ladd notes: "From one point of view, the theology of the entire NT can be understood in terms of a titanic conflict between God and Satan, between the powers of light and the hosts of darkness. The ultimate enemies of God are not sinful people or pagan nations but evil spiritual powers." (Ladd, "Kingdom of God", ISBE Revised). In light of that, there are three stages in the conquering of Satan and ushering in of the Kingdom (here we see the first stage; Ladd, **Theology of the New Testament**, p. 66):

1. First: Initiated with the incarnation, continued with the resistance of temptation and casting out of demons, and consummated with the resurrection of Christ; it is also seen in the sending out of the seventy disciples and the subsequent statement of Jesus that Satan fell from heaven.
2. Second: The return of Christ (the binding in the millennium)
3. Third: The consummation of this age (the casting of Satan into the lake of fire).

4. Jesus cast out demons by the "finger of God" (Luke 11:20), and this was a sign that the kingdom was present.
iii. The greek construction "has come to you" "is perhaps the strongest affirmation in the Gospels of the presence of the kingdom. While (engizo, 'approach,' 'draw near') implies imminent arrival (e.g., in Mark 1:15), the verb here from (phthano), can mean not only to 'arrive' but even, in the proper context, to 'precede', as in 1 Thess 4:15. The prepositional phrase (eph' hymas) secures the meaning that the kingdom was actually there." (Liefeld, "Luke", p. 952, n. 20). This text was used by C. H. Dodd (Parables, p. 44) in building his case for "realized eschatology" (Marshall, Luke, p. 476).

iv. "The heart of Jesus' mission is to confront Satan and to crush him on all fields, and in the fulfillment of his task he is conscious of being the agent of irresistible power." (Lane, Mark, p. 143)

34. Matthew 13:10-13: The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak in parables."

Mark 4:11-12: He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables, so that, 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'"

Luke 8:9-10: His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'"

a. Note the structure of Matthew (adapted from Boice, Parables, p. 15):

i. Chapters 5-7 = the ethics of the kingdom (The Sermon on the Mount)

ii. Chapters 8-12 = the power of the kingdom (see in the miracles Jesus performs)

iii. Chapter 13 = the secrets of the kingdom (taught in parables)

For an excellent overview of the parables taught here (and in Mark 4:26-29), see Culver, A Greater Commission, pp. 54-5.

b. Lane's comments are worth noting: "Ch. 4:11-12 distinguishes two classes of people confronted with a single event, the significance of which is entirely different to each class. The one event which both experience is described as 'all things' (Ch. 4:11, 34), i.e. the whole mission of Jesus. The disciples are enabled by God to see in this mission 'the secret of the Kingdom of God,' while those whose eyes are blinded and whose ears are dulled see nothing but a disturbing enigma. The parables are, accordingly, an aspect of the mission of Jesus. Unbelief makes every phase of that mission a riddle, something wholly alien to the perspective of man." (Lane, Mark, p. 158).

c. "Secrets" is literally "mysteries". The sense is "something which has been kept secret through times eternal but is now disclosed. It is a divine purpose which God has designed from eternity
but has kept hidden from men" (Ladd, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 52; see also Liefeld, "Luke", p. 906).

d. The mystery that Jesus reveals is that the kingdom comes in stages. The first stage is not the one prophesied by Daniel and ardently longed for by the Jews--it is rather a spiritual stage that works in inward ways in the lives of men and women. Ladd explains:

The Kingdom of God is here; but instead of destroying human sovereignty, it has attacked the sovereignty of Satan. The kingdom of God is here, but instead of making changes in the external, political order of things, it is making changes in the spiritual order and in the lives of men and women. (Ibid., p. 55; see also Carson, "Matthew", p. 307; and Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 153, who adds, "The secret of the kingdom of God is the secret of the person of Jesus.")

e. Each parable in Matthew 13 illustrates the fact that the Kingdom has come, but it has not come with irresistible power--"men can reject it" (Ladd, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 56).

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**Excursus: Interpreting Parables**

I. Of critical importance is our method in interpreting the parables. Two major approaches are possible:

   A. Generally, over the course of this century, the agreement has been that parables (especially shorter ones) are to be distinguished from allegory, and there is only one central thrust that should be discerned in each parable (see, for example, Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 276-87).

   B. More recently, however, secular literary analysis and a closer look at some of the ancient rabbinic literature has suggested that the parables may be treated as allegories, albeit in a limited way. Craig Blomberg notes: "The parables of Jesus are sufficiently similar to other demonstrably allegorical works that many of them too must probably be recognized as allegories. This does not mean that every detail in the parables must stand for something; . . . Usually many details provide only local color or human interest to enhance the fictional picture constructed." (Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, p. 68).

II. Why does Jesus use parables? As Culver notes, He was communicating on two levels (also see Lane's comments above):

   On the one hand, He was presenting to the multitudes the word of God, the message of the kingdom, and Himself as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. . . . On the other hand, He was communicating truth of a higher sort to the understanding of the men who were to be founding apostles of His church, teaching them the form of the kingdom on earth between His ascension and the second advent. The parable in a unique way served as a means of doing both. (Culver, *A Greater Commission*, p. 74)

III. Rules for interpreting parables: two models

   Single-Thrust Interpretation  
   Principles of a Multiple-Thrust Approach
1. To adequately interpret the parables we need to understand them in their relationship to Christology and the kingdom of God.

2. We need not only to see them from the standpoint of the kingdom of God and Christology, but also from the cultural background.

3. Four exegetical principles may be noted:

   A. Determine the one central truth the parable is attempting to teach.

   B. Determine how much of the parable is interpreted by the Lord Himself.

   C. Determine whether there are any clues in the context concerning the parable's meaning.

   D. Compare the parable with any possible Old Testament association, and with the parable as recited in one or more other Gospels.

4. Any use of a parable for doctrinal purposes must observe historical sense. We ought not to read our theological debates back into the parables. Primary consideration should be given to what we judge to be the meaning which the immediate listeners garnered from the parable.

(Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, pp. 165-6)

1. Recognize that every parable of Jesus contains certain elements which point to a second level of meaning and others which do not.

2. To avoid the errors of past allegorizers, modern interpreters must also assign meanings to the details of parables which Jesus' original audiences could have been expected to discern.

3. The main characters of a parable will probably be the most common candidates for allegorical interpretation, and the main points of the parable will most likely be associated with these characters.

4. Limiting the allegorical possibilities: The triadic structure of most of Jesus' narrative parables suggests that most parables may make three points, though some will probably make only one or two.

14. Matthew 13:19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

   a. Options for a single-thrust interpretation:

   i. Carson feels that it is that "though the kingdom of God will now make its way amid hard hearts, competing pressures, and even failure, it will produce an abundant crop" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 315).

   ii. Boice, however, feels that "The emphasis is on the various kinds of hearts and how they reject or receive Christ's message" (Boice, *Parables*, p. 16; see also Culver, *A Greater Commission*, p. 67).

   b. Multiple-thrust interpretation (Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, p. 228):

   i. Like the sower, God spreads his word widely among all kinds of people.
ii. Like the three kinds of unfruitful soil, many will respond to his word with less than saving faith, be it

(1) complete lack of positive response due to the enticement of evil,
(2) temporary superficiality masquerading as true commitment, or
(3) genuine interest and conviction about the truth that simply falls short due to the rigorous demands of discipleship.

iii. Like the fruitful soil, the only legitimate response to God's word is the obedience and perseverance which demonstrate true regeneration.

c. No matter what the central teaching, we can note again that the kingdom is not irresistible—it can be rejected and even abandoned.

15. Mark 4:26-29: He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28 All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. 29 As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

a. Ladd notes, "As the dynamic activity of God's rule the kingdom is supernatural. It is God's deed. . . . The parable of the seed growing by itself sets forth this truth (Mark 4:26-29). Men may sow the seed by preaching the kingdom (Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:9; Acts 8:12; 28:21, 31); they can persuade men concerning the kingdom (Acts 19:8), but they cannot build it. It is God's deed. Men can receive the kingdom (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), but they are never said to establish it . . . The kingdom is altogether God's deed although it works in and through men. Men may do things for the sake for the kingdom (Matt. 19:123; Luke 18:29), work for it (Col. 4:11), suffer for it (2 Thess. 1:5), but they are not said to act upon the kingdom itself." (Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ", EDT; see also Gospel of the Kingdom, p. 64; Klappert, "King, Kingdom", NIDNTT).

b. Options for a single-thrust interpretation:

i. Lane maintains: "The stress in the parable thus falls upon the sowing of the seed as a messianic work which unleashes mysterious forces which operate of themselves in the achievement of the sovereign purposes of God. . . .

    . . . The proclamation of the gospel is the pledge of the ultimate manifestation of the Kingdom; it mysteriously, but irresistibly, brings it near. The parable thus depicts the coming of the Kingdom in comprehensive terms while emphasizing the sovereign initiative of God in the establishment of his rule." (Lane, Mark, pp. 169-70)

ii. Cranfield, while noting the possibility that Ladd takes, sees this instead primarily as a parable of contrast between sowing and harvest: "As seetim is followed by harvest, so will the present hiddenness and ambiguousness of the kingdom of God be succeeded by its glorious manifestation." (Cranfield, Mark, p. 168)

iii. Culver, however, feels: "The main spiritual lesson is patience. . . . To summarize the lessons: There are only two things that can be done to gain a harvest of souls of men. They are to sow seed and be patient" (Culver, A Greater Commission, p. 82). It seems, however, that Culver's interpretation is governed by his guiding interest in mission rather than kingdom.
c. Multiple-thrust interpretation (Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, p. 266):

i. The kingdom will continue to grow inexorable, though sometimes almost invisibly

ii. At the end of the age the kingdom will have grown into all its fullness, after which Judgment Day will immediately follow.

16. Matthew 13:24-30, 38-43: Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

... 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

a. Options for a single-thrust interpretation:

i. If the kingdom will spread despite man's rejection (see on Matt. 13:18-23), one plausible question is "Should we seek to separate the good from the bad?" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 316)

ii. Ladd notes, "The message of the parable has nothing to do with the nature of the church but teaches that the Kingdom of God has invaded history without disrupting the present structure of society. Good and evil are to live mixed in the world until the eschatological consummation, even though the Kingdom of God has come." (Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 112; see also Carson, "Matthew", pp. 316-7).

iii. Some feel that the teaching is negative--that the parables teaches of Satan's strategies (see, for example, Boice, *Parables*, pp. 22-4). While we may see some of his tricks portrayed, this misses the basic point that the parables are centrally concerned with teaching kingdom truths, not Satan's tricks.

b. Multiple-thrust interpretation (Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, p. 198)

i. God permits the righteous and the wicked to coexist in the world, sometimes superficially indistinguishable from one another, until the end of the age.

ii. The wicked will eventually be separated out, judged and destroyed.

iii. The righteous will be gathered together, rewarded and brought into God's presence.
17. Matthew 13:31-32: He told them another parable: "The **kingdom** of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.

Mark 4:30-32: Again he said, "What shall we say the **kingdom** of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. 32 Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade."

Luke 13:18-19: Then Jesus asked, "What is the **kingdom** of God like? What shall I compare it to? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches."

a. The kingdom produces results completely out of proportion to its first manifestations. While the manner of growth is not significant, the extent is (Carson, "Matthew", p. 319; Liefeld, "Luke", p. 972; and Marshall, Luke, p. 561), and the theme of this and the next parable are nicely summarized by Culver, "Do not despise the day of small things" (from Zech. 4:10; Culver, A Greater Commission, p. 102; though he mistakenly appears to equate kingdom and Christendom, see p. 98).

b. Again, some feel that the parable is teaching Satan's tactics, but (again!) this misses the central thrust of Jesus' purpose in the parable (see Boice, Parables, p. 24-7). Their primary problem seems to be that they focus on the growth rather than the outcome, and their millennial disposition leads them to reject what they feel is a post-millennial teaching on the parables (see Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, pp. 286-7).

18. Matthew 13:33 He told them still another parable: "The **kingdom** of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

Luke 13:20-21: Again he asked, "What shall I compare the **kingdom** of God to? 21 It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

a. "Instead of a world-transforming power, the kingdom is present in an almost imperceptible form like a bit of leaven hidden in a bowl of dough. However, this same kingdom will yet fill the earth as the leavened dough fills the bowl (Matt. 13:33). In neither of these two parables is the idea of slow growth or gradual permeation important, for our Lord nowhere else used either idea." (Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ", EDT; see also Cranfield, Mark, p. 170; Lane, Mark, p. 171; )

b. This parable illustrates the same basic truth as that of the mustard seed. The difference is that this focuses on transformation rather than growth--"the yeast doesn't grow, it permeates" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 319).

c. The same comments (from above) on those who take this as teaching Satan's tactics apply to this parable as well.

19. Matthew 13:44-5: "The **kingdom** of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the **kingdom** of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and
sold everything he had and bought it.

a. The basic thrust is the worth of the kingdom of heaven. Though discipleship may cost even our very lives, the treasure of the kingdom is worth the cost (Carson, "Matthew", p. 328). Therefore, "Would-be disciples must consider the commitment required to follow Christ" (Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, p. 283)

b. While we should not lose sight of the major thrust, and we should not try to focus on the details too much, Boice's observations are still worth noting. He relates that the main character in this and the following parable (Boice, Parables, p. 32):

i. Recognized the value of their discovery;
ii. Determined to have what they had found;
iii. Sold everything to acquire it;
iv. Actually acquired the treasure.

c. Culver appears to read too much into this and the previous parable by focusing on the difference in the nature of the search (one find treasure accidentally, the other a pearl after a long and diligent search). The thrust is on the value of the kingdom (as he rightly points out), and we should not try to read too much more than that (see Culver, A Greater Commission, pp. 105-8).

20. Matthew 13:47-50: "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. 48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. 49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

a. What happens at the end? The good and the bad will be gathered together, but they will next be sorted. This calls for a decision on our part—with which group will we be found?

b. Single-thrust interpretation: Boice relates, "There is a coming judgment, a separation, and the fate of the ungodly will be terrible in that day." (Boice, Parables, p. 40; emphasis his)

c. Multiple-thrust interpretation (Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, p. 201)

i. The dragnet represents God, who will come to judge his people on the last day.

ii. The good fish are those who God declares righteous, who are gathered together for further service and safekeeping.

iii. The rotten fish are the unredeemed, who are discarded as worthless.

21. Matthew 13:52: He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."
a. "The OT promises of Messiah and kingdom, as well as OT law and piety, have found their fulfillment in Jesus' person, teaching, and kingdom; and the scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom now brings out of himself deep understanding of these things and their transformed perspective affecting all life." (Carson, "Matthew", p. 333) This is not limited to the scribe, for the "disciples" in this context fit Jesus' disciples, who are the model for the church as a whole. Thus, this parable applies to all Christians (see Ibid.).

b. The wording indicates that this is as much a command as a fact--"discipled teachers of the Scriptures, . . . must themselves bring out of their storeroom the treasures now their so as to teach others" (Ibid.), which is related to three other emphases in Matthew:

i. "The disciples have a major responsibility in evangelizing and making disciples, both during Jesus' ministry (ch. 10) and after his departure (28:18-20).

ii. "In the latter instance they are told 'disciple' the nations and teach them all Jesus has commanded them: i.e., the focus of their mission is Jesus and the revelation--the new 'fulfillment' revelation--he has brought.

iii. "... what [Jesus] tells his disciples in secret they are to proclaim from the rooftops (10:27). Jesus explains the parables to his disciples in private; they are to bring out of their treasure rooms 'new things and old.'" (Ibid.)

22. John 6:37, 39: All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. . . . And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I will lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

a. Verse 37 "sums up the universalism, the individualism, and the predestinarianism of the gospel. Jesus rejects no one who comes to him, but in coming to him God's decision always precedes man's." (Barrett, John, p. 294)

b. "All" is a neuter word; "all things" is the idea, though this certainly includes people (especially in the context). It emphasizes the collective nature of God's gift to Christ.

c. Note the logical progression:

i. All that the Father gives will come (the Father must give, note how this relates to v. 36, you have not believed, i.e., the Father has not given to you).

ii. All who come will not ("certainly not") be cast out.

iii. Of all that the Father has given, Jesus will lose nothing (see 17:12).

d. Our being raised up with Christ on the last day is not dependent on our grip, but on His (v. 40). "Being raised" can be translated either as "I Myself must raise him up", or as "I Myself will raise him up".

23. John 5:26: The Father has life in Himself

a. God is the Self-existent One. This sets Him apart from every other being, all of whom are
dependent in that they have life from a source outside themselves.

b. It also gives the reason why He is the fountain of both physical and spiritual life.

24. Matthew 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

a. This statement inextricably links kingdom and church, the latter being a "manifestation of the kingdom or rule of God" (Stonehouse, Witness of Matthew, p. 235; cited by Carson, "Matthew", p. 370).

b. "By a new ekklesia Jesus was not referring to any form of organization or institution: He was designating His followers as the nucleus of the true Israel. As the people of the kingdom, they will be victorious over the powers of death. They will be the instrument of the kingdom in the world. They will be entrusted with the 'keys of the kingdom' (Mt. 16:19), for by their preaching of the kingdom of God, He will use them as His actual agents in determining who will enter the eschatological kingdom and who will be excluded," (Ladd, "Kingdom of God", ISBE Revised).

c. Carson agrees, noting "Peter accomplishes this binding and loosing by proclaiming a gospel that has already been given and by making personal application on that basis (Simon Magus). Whatever he binds or looses will have been bound or loosed, so long as he adheres to that divinely disclosed gospel. . . .

. . . But now the keys of the kingdom are confided to men. They must proclaim the Good News, forbid entrance, urge conversion. They constitute a small minority in a big world; their mission will be to function as the eschatological ekklesia, the people of God Jesus is building within this world." (Carson, "Matthew", p. 373; boldface emphasis mine)

d. We note here, also with Carson, that Peter stands as a paradigm for all believers--there is no ecclesiastical superstructure being established, and Peter's place as "keeper of the keys" is not said to be passed on to any particular future "head" of the entire church. On the discussion over "rock", see Carson, "Matthew", pp. 368-74

25. Matthew 16:27-8: Mark 8:34-9:1 Then he called the crowd to come in his kingdom with him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." 9:1 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God coming with power."
Luke 9:23-27: Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

a. Lane remarks, "The Kingdom has been brought near with Jesus' coming; his authority and power in confronting powers hostile to God signal its real, though proleptic, presence. Nevertheless, the presence of the Kingdom in Jesus' person and work remains a secret far removed from the obvious, irrefutable, unambiguous display of sovereignty man would have welcomed. This inherent tension is basic to [Mark] Chs. 8:34-9:1." (Lane, Mark, p. 312, n. 2)

b. Many options have been proposed for when some of the apostles saw the kingdom of God come with power. Three of significance are:

i. Jesus' transfiguration (Cranfield, Mark, pp. 286-8; Lane, Mark, pp. 313-4; Liefeld, "Luke", p. 924);

ii. The resurrection and Pentecost (Marshall, Luke, pp. 378-9);

iii. The experiences of the early Church ("The manifestation of Christ's kingly reign exhibited after the Resurrection in a host of ways, not the least of them being the rapid multiplication of disciples and the mission to the Gentiles"; Carson, "Matthew", p. 382).

26. Luke 9:59-61: He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 61 Still another one said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say
good-by to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

a. Jesus demands that the task of proclaiming (the verb indicates far and wide; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 412) the kingdom must be given radical priority. Refusing to bury one's father would be as much a scandal to the Jew in Jesus' day (see Ibid., p. 411) as it would be to the African today. As Marshall notes, "the urgency of the task of preaching the gospel could not be clearer" (Ibid., p. 412).

b. Looking away from the plow while plowing results in a crooked furrow, spoiling the work. Such is the result of those who look "hark back to the past way of life" (Ibid.) after committing themselves to the kingdom.

27. Matthew 18:14: In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

God's concern reaches even to the "little ones" (children; see 18:3-6). No one is too small to be overlooked by God. Should we distinguish between God's "will" and God's "plan" here? Probably so; we will discuss this again in other passages.

28. Matthew 22:34-40: Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

a. The first and greatest command is found in the *Shema* of Deut. 6:4-9. The "first and greatest" are two different things; it is first because it is greatest (Carson, "Matthew", p. 464). The demand is that we love God with our entire being. "To love God in the way defined by the great commandment is to seek God for his own sake, to have pleasure in him and to strive impulsively after him. Jesus demands a decision and readiness for God, and for God alone, in an unconditional manner." (Lane, *Mark*, p. 432)

b. The second is to love our neighbor as ourselves (see Luke 10:25-37 for an expansion on this). Cranfield rightly points out, "The command to love one's neighbour as oneself does not in any way legitimize self-love (as has sometimes been thought); but in it God addresses us as the men that we actually are, sinners who love ourselves, and claims us as such for love to our neighbours." (Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 379)
c. On these two commands hangs all the Law and the Prophets

i. These commands go together, and cannot be separated. "The first without the second is intrinsically impossible (cf. 1 John 4:20), and the second cannot stand without the first--even theoretically--because disciplined altruism is not love" (Carson, "Matthew", p. 464).

ii. "These two commandments are the greatest because all Scripture 'hangs' on them; i.e., nothing in Scripture can cohere or be truly obeyed unless these two are observed [see also Cranfield, Mark, p. 378]. The entire biblical revelation demands heart religion marked by total allegiance to God, loving Him and loving one's neighbor. Without these two commands the Bible is sterile." (Carson, "Matthew", p. 465)

d. "You are not far from the kingdom of God" (in Mark's account). The statement is deliberately ambiguous--it is designed to provoke reflection (Lane, Mark, p. 434). The scribe was actually not far from the kingdom, if he only knew it, because he "was actually in the presence of, and apparently already to some extent drawn toward, him in whose person and activity that kingdom had come near to men, the one who is himself the " (Cranfield, Mark, p. 380).


a. The context (vv. 1-2): Jesus observes the Pharisees grumbling over His association with sinners. Liefeld notes: "In OT times it was taken for granted that God's people did not consort with sinners (cf. Ps. 1), but the Pharisees extended this beyond the biblical intent. To go so far as to 'welcome' them and especially to 'eat' with them, implying table fellowship, was unthinkable to the Pharisees. The parables that follow show that the return of 'sinners' to God should be a cause for joy to the religious leaders, as it was go God." (Liefeld, "Luke", p. 981)

b. The Lost Sheep (vv. 3-7) and The Lost Coin (vv. 8-10):

i. The owner seeks for what was lost:

(1) The Lost Sheep: Jesus, as God's representative, seeks for lost sheep. God is not passively waiting for us to return--He initiates the search for us, most specifically through Christ. In the parable, the search continues until it is successful (Marshall, Luke, p. 601).

(2) The Lost Coin: The woman (i.e., God) initiates the search.

ii. There is joy when what was lost is recovered:

(1) The Lost Sheep: Once the lost sheep is recovered, there is great rejoicing. This joy is more than that found in the 99 "righteous" who do not need to repent (there is joy over them, but not as much as there is over the one who repents).

(2) The Lost Coin: Again we see the joy in recovery of what was lost. Jesus reinforces the point by noting that "in the presence of the angels of God" (a "reverential reference to God"; Liefeld, "Luke", p. 982--but see Marshall, Luke, p. 604) there is rejoicing when
one sinner repents.

iii. Options for a single-thrust interpretation:


2. God rejoices when one sinner returns to him.

iv. Multiple-thrust interpretation (applies to both the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin parables; Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, p. 181)

1. Just as the shepherd and woman go out of their way to search diligently for their lost possessions, so God takes the initiative to go to great lengths to seek and to save lost sinners.

2. Just as the discovery of the lost sheep and coin elicit great joy, so the salvation of lost men and women is a cause for celebration.

3. Just as the existence of the ninety-nine sheep and nine coins affords no excuse for not searching for what is lost, those who profess to be God's people can never be satisfied that their numbers are sufficiently great so as to stop trying to save more.

c. The Lost Son (vv. 11-32; since the main character is the father, Thielicke has entitled it "The Waiting Father"; Marshall, Luke, p. 604):

i. In this case the father (again, God, but this time as Father) anxiously awaits the son's return. Though he does not go to find him, when the son returns, the father sees him at a distance (implying that he was vigilantly watching for him). Some indicate that, in the culture, the father would not normally run out to greet the son, an indicator of his excitement that his son has returned (see Liefeld, "Luke", p. 984). Further, the father does not wait for the son's confession--he initiates forgiveness and reconciliation (running, hugging, kissing) before the son can repent (Marshall, Luke, p. 610).

ii. There is rejoicing over the recovery of that which was lost.

iii. One new twist is added--the older brother's jealousy (representing the jealousy of the Pharisees), to which the father's response is again tender (though there is an implied rebuke in "We had to celebrate"). When people come to Christ, God celebrates and so should we.

d. Multiple-thrust interpretation (Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, p. 174)

i. All sinners, no matter how wicked, may confess their sins and turn to God in contrition.

ii. God offers all people, however undeserving, lavish forgiveness of sins if they are willing to accept it.

iii. Those who claim to be God's people should be glad and not mad that he extends his grace even to the most undeserving.
30. Luke 17:20-21: Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

a. There are three possible meanings for "careful observation", none of which exclude the others (Liefeld, "Luke", p. 997):

i. It cannot be foreseen from signs;

ii. It is not an observable process (favoured by Liefeld);

iii. It does not come with or through observing rites.

b. Is this to be translated "within you" or "in your midst" ("among you")?

i. Those who favour "within you" (NIV)


While Mark 10:15 makes it clear that the Kingdom is to be received in the inner man, it is unlikely that Jesus would have said to the Pharisees, "the Kingdom of God is within you." The translation "in your midst," in Jesus' person, best fits the total context of his teaching.

iii. A third alternative is that an either/or mindset is inappropriate: "There have been endless discussions on whether Luke 17:21 declares that the kingdom of God is 'within' us or 'in the midst of us.' Grammatically, both translations are possible, and from the perspective of a theology of the kingdom both express an important truth. The historically acting God, through the Holy Spirit, is present in history and dwells in the human heart. A rigid either/or approach in these matters will inevitably lead to a truncated gospel." (Rottenberg, The Promise and the Presence, p. 82; though this overlooks the fact that the audience is Pharisees [contra Marshall, Luke, p. 655]).

31. Matthew 19:13-14: Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. 14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:13-16: People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Luke 18:15-17: People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."
a. Jesus does not say that the kingdom belongs to children, but to *ones such as these*.

b. "The reference to *again* is not to the receptiveness or humility or imaginativeness or trustfulness or unselfconsciousness of children, but to their objective littleness and helplessness. To receive the kingdom as a little child is to allow oneself to be given it, because one knows one cannot claim it as one's right or attempt to earn it." (Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 324; also Carson, *Matthew*, p. 397; Lane, *Mark*, p. 360; and Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 682-3).

32. Matthew 19:25-26: When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

The disciples are astonished that a rich person, who they thought particularly blessed of God, would have great difficulty getting eternal life. Jesus' basic idea is "With man [the salvation of anyone] is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Carson, *Matthew*, p. 425). The "anything" must be qualified--God cannot do what is logically absurd (e.g., make a rock so heavy that He cannot move it) or contrary to His nature.

33. John 10:30: I and the Father are one.

"'One' is neuter, 'one thing' and not 'one person'. Identity is not asserted, but essential unity is. These two belong together." (Morris, *John*, p. 522) John's "meaning turns on the belief that the actions and words of Jesus were veritably the actions and words of God, who thus uniquely confronted men in his incarnate Son. This unity is often expressed in moral terms: Jesus, who was sent by God, acts in such complete obedience to God's will that what he does is a complete revelation of that will (see e.g. vv. 17f.); . . . the oneness of Father and Son is a oneness of love and obedience even while it is a oneness of essence." (Barrett, *John*, p. 382)

34. Luke 22:29-30: And I confer on you a **kingdom**, just as my Father conferred one on me, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my **kingdom** and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus "conferred on" His disciples just as God had conferred one on Him--they are promised a share in Christ's dynamic rule. The specific reference to sitting on the twelve thrones limits this promise to the disciples.

35. John 18:36-7: Jesus said, "**My kingdom** is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my **kingdom** is from another place." 37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Ladd notes: "When Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36), he did not refer to his realm; he meant that his rule was not derived from earthly authority but from God and that his kingship would not manifest itself like a human kingdom but in accordance with the divine purpose." (Ladd, *Kingdom of Christ*, EDT)

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**Theology Proper During Acts**

36. Acts 1:3-8: After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that
he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the **kingdom** of God.

4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the **kingdom** to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

a. After the resurrection, Jesus continued His kingdom teaching (v. 3).

i. "The point is that this is to continue to be the theme of the witness of the church, which will thus follow on from the preaching of Jesus (8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31), although there will inevitably be new elements and a new emphasis as Jesus himself becomes part of the message (28:31). It follows that the church can take up the message of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, and make it part of its own." (Marshall, *Acts*, TNTC, pp. 57-8; see also Bruce, *Acts*, p. 32)

b. Unfortunately, it seems that the disciples still were thinking in terms of a political realm (v. 6; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 35; *contra* Marshall, *Acts*, TNTC, p. 60).

i. Jesus does not answer their question--instead, He speaks of their role prior to the final manifestation of the Kingdom, which can be summed in one word: witness (see Marshall, *Acts*, TNTC, p. 60).

ii. To accomplish the task He gives them, Jesus will endue them with power.

iii. The scope of the task: the "ends of the earth".

iv. Bruce points out: "The kingdom of God which they were commissioned to proclaim was the good news of God's grace in Christ. Their present question appears to have been the last flicker of their former burning expectation of an imminent theocracy with themselves as its chief executives. From now on they devoted themselves to the proclamation and service of God's spiritual kingdom, which men and women enter by repentance and faith, and in which chief honor belongs to those who most faithfully follow their Lord in the path of obedience, service, and suffering." (Bruce, *Acts*, p. 36)

c. Concerning the kingdom, God alone has the authority to establish it, and the time of final manifestation remains sovereignly His.

37. Acts 2:23: This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

a. Though Jesus was put to death by the Jews with the help of wicked men (the actual executors were Roman), this was all according to the "set purpose and foreknowledge" of God. Marshall notes: "Here we have the paradox of divine predestination and human freewill in its strongest form. Even in putting Jesus to death, the Jews were simply fulfilling what God had already determined must take place and indeed had foretold in the prophetic writings." (Marshall, *Acts*, p. 75) Thus, even the evil actions of evil men are seen to be under God's plan (seen especially in the betrayal,

b. Plan (*boule*):

i. We may define the plan of God as his eternal decision rendering certain all things which shall come to pass. (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 346)

ii. In the NT, ... the divine counsel is the main issue, especially in Luke's writings. David died by God's counsel in Acts 13:36. The Pharisees rejected God's counsel in opposing the Baptist (Lk. 7:30). Jesus was delivered up by God's definite plan (Acts 2:23). God's *boule* is the content of the apostolic message (Acts 20:27). Eph. 1:11ff climaxes in the statement that God does all things according to the counsel of his will, which overarches the choosing and destining of vv. 4-5, and sets in motion the whole grace present in Christ and granted to the church as the reality of salvation." (Schrenk, "Boulomai", TDNT Abridged).

c. Foreknowledge (*proginosko*) means "'to know in advance,' and in the NT it refers to God's foreknowledge as election of his people (Rom. 8:29; 11:2) or of Christ (1 Pet. 1:20), or to the advance knowledge that believers have by prophecy (2 Pet. 3:17)." (Bultmann, "Ginosko", TDNT Abridged)

38. Acts 5:1-11: But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it. And the young men arose and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of God to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out as well." And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.

a. The Spirit of God is not distinguished from God Himself (vv. 3-4; see Erickson, *Christian Theology*, pp. 326-7).

b. Ananias and Sapphira stand as a reminder to us as to how seriously God views sin. Their sin was not just an attempt to lie to the human leaders of the church. Because these men were inspired by the Spirit, and God's representatives, the lie was to God Himself (see Marshall, *Acts*, p. 112), as Bruce notes, "The Holy Spirit in the church is God himself present with his people" (Bruce, *Acts*, p. 105, n. 13).

39. Acts 8:12-13: But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.
a. Philip preached about "the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus", of which Marshall notes: "This is an interesting combination of themes showing how the early church saw the message of Jesus being continued in its own message, but at the same time increasingly spoke about the means by which God's kingly power was being manifested in their own time, namely through the mighty name of Jesus" (Marshall, Acts, TNTC, p. 156).

b. Philip's preaching was accompanied by great signs and wonders, which came as testimony to the truth of his message. We see the first broadening of the preaching of the kingdom--it is now going to the Samaritans (see Hahn, Mission in the New Testament, p. 63).

40. James 1:5-8: If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

a. What is wisdom? Moo points out that James is influenced by Proverbs (and possibly apocryphal books such as The Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach), where "wisdom is above all a practically-oriented virtue that gives direction for the life of the godly person." (Moo, James, p. 62) James is thinking of wisdom either:

i. In the immediate context of 'considering trials as all joy': "How am I to see trial in this light, and make this use of it? It needs higher wisdom" (Mayor's translation of Bede's thought, James, p. 38; see also Davids, James, pp. 71-2, who feels that James may use "wisdom" as the "fluid equivalent of the Holy Spirit"), or

ii. In a more general sense: wisdom is necessary for completion and perfection (Moo, James, p. 62), and it is available for the asking.

Both aspects, of course, may be in view by James here (see Osborne, "James", p. 5).

b. If we lack this wisdom, we only need ask of God.

i. Literally "ask from the giving God" (Osborne, "James", p. 5).

ii. He gives to all men "generously and without reproach"

(1) "Generously" can have either of two meanings:

(a) "Simply, unconditionally, without bargaining or reservation", based on the Greek concept (Mayor, James, p. 39; Moo, James, p. 63; and Davids, James, p. 72 opt for this view). The consequent meaning is "God is, then, one who gives sincerely, without hesitation or mental reservation. He does not grumble or criticize. His commitment to this people is total and unreserved: they can expect to receive." (Davids, James, p. 73)

(b) "Generously", based on the Hebrew concept (NASB; Osborne opts for this, "James", p. 6, it is commonly used this way in the NT, 2 Cor. 8:2, 9:11; Rom 7:8).
(c) "Without reproach"--we need not hesitate or fear to ask of God; He will not reproach or rebuke us for our past faults or "remind us endlessly of the value of the gifts he gives" (Moo, James, p. 63).

c. We must ask, however, in faith (the faith that God will hear; Osborne, "James", p. 6) with no doubting (see the same combination by Jesus in Matt. 21:21-2).

i. The attitude of faith, while in the context referring to prayer for wisdom, is a general attitude we are to have in all our prayer (see Moo, James, p. 64).

ii. "Doubting" indicates "not so much an intellectual doubt as a basic conflict in loyalties" (Moo, James, p. 64). The person who doubts is uncertain and undecided (Osborne, "James", p. 6).

iii. The one who does not ask in faith is like the sea--always changing from moment to moment, never presenting the same face twice.

(1) "That person" (the one who doubts; see the commentaries on the grammatical difficulty) can expect no answer from God.

(2) He is literally "two-souled" (this is the first occurrence of the word in Greek literature that we have; Mayor, James, p. 44) possibly indicating a "soul divided between faith and the world" (Ropes, cited by Osborne, "James", p. 7). This is the opposite of the "whole" or "complete" person, who has one mind on matters of faith (Moo, James, p. 66).

(3) He is unstable ("it means that the total conduct or way of life of the person in question is unstable or vacillating", Davids, James, p. 75).

41. James 1:13: When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

a. Does "tempt" here mean the same as in 1:12? Davids says yes (James, p. 81), many others say no (Moo, James, pp. 71-2). See also the extended discussion on temptation in Mayor, James, pp. 189-98.

b. When we are enticed to abandon faith in God, we cannot claim that enticement comes from Him (Davids, James, pp. 81-2).

c. What is meant by "God cannot be tempted by evil"? Davids lists three types of possibilities all of which are grammatically possible (James, p. 82):

i. God cannot be solicited to evil (the 'traditional' understanding).

(1) If this is the sense, it serves as preliminary to the main point (that God does not tempt anyone).

(2) The flow is thus, "Since God is not susceptible to any such desire for evil, he cannot
be seen as desiring that it be brought about in man" (Laws, cited in Moo, James, p. 73).

ii. God is inexperienced in evil (see the NEB, "God is untouched by evil").

iii. God ought not to be tested by evil persons (who try to challenge Him when things do not go the way they wanted; Davids opts for this understanding [James, pp. 82-3], linking this to Deut. 6:16, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test"). While this may make sense, it relies on a very poorly attested understanding of apeirastos ("cannot be tempted"; see Moo, James, p. 72, n. 2).

d. God Himself does not test anyone (in this passage James' focus is on our own responsibility in being tempted to accuse God).

42. James 1:17: Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Every good thing bestowed (i.e., every good act of giving) and every gift comes from God.

a. The poetic pattern shows that it is possibly a quotation from some Hellenistic poem (Mayor, James, p. 57).

b. The essential meaning: God does not send tests (as some were wanting to accuse Him of doing), but good things.

c. God is the Father of lights, referring to Him as creator of the stars (Davids, James, p. 87). In the context of the stars, it is difficult to understand what the "shifting of shadows" is intended to convey, though the basic concept is clear: God does not change and cannot be changed (Davids, James, pp. 87-8) in contrast to the constant changing we see in creation (Moo, James, p. 76).

d. The last phrase, due to textual variations, can be translated in two possible ways (see Davids, James, p. 87 [more technical] and Moo, James, pp. 75-6 [less technical]):

i. "Variation or shadow due to change" (RSV), or

ii. "Variation that belongs to the turning of the shadow" (supplied by Moo, James, pp. 75-6).

43. Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

There are at least four options for translating and/or understanding this verse:

a. "As many as were disposed" (Alford, cited by Bruce, Acts, p. 267, n. 111). "Appointed" is used generally in the sense of being assigned to or appointed to an office, so this is unlikely.

b. Those who were already enrolled (appointed) as Jews believed, which would mean that those gentiles who had become proselytes chose to believe (see Marshall, Acts, p. 231). The words "to eternal life" make this option more difficult.

c. "Were appointed" (a passive) should be translated "had appointed or set themselves" (a middle,
grammatically possible). This means that all who set themselves to believe did.

d. "Were appointed" in the sense of predestination, and this is the time they came to saving faith (see Bruce, Acts, p. 267). How does this bear on the possibility of resisting God's grace?

44. Acts 15:8: God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.

Bruner remarks: "The fact that God gives his Spirit not after but through the cleansing of hearts by faith is established splendidly in this text through the parallel simultaneous or coincident aorist participles (dous . . . te pistei katharisas). The gift of the Spirit and faith are not only contemporaneous, they are God's acts (or act!) as well. . . . The cleansing of the heart, faith, and gift of the Holy Spirit are then essentially all one act of God and not three moral conditions, or two moral conditions and a result." Thus we may say to the Pentecostal conditions from this important text: the 'heart-cleansing' which is so painfully pursued God achieves; the faith which is so assiduously cultivated God grants; the Holy Spirit who is so scrupulously sought God gives—and the means is simply the divine gospel which is the power of God unto salvation (cf. Rom. 1:16). (Bruner, A Theology, pp. 200-1)

45. Acts 17:24-28: The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made very nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his children.'

a. This is part of Paul's sermon on Mars Hill to pagan Greeks. He is seeking to convince them that the "unknown god" is now being made known, and that He has been in charge of men's affairs all along.

b. Paul points out that all men came from one, a blow to the Athenians, who believed themselves to have sprung from the soil of Attica (Bruce, Acts, p. 357).

c. He determined for every nation:

i. Their appointed times (either the seasons of the years or the specific times of national existence, see Dan. 2:36-45).

ii. The boundaries of their habitation (either their specific geographic locations or the general inhabitable zones of the whole earth; see Bruce, Acts, p. 358).

iii. He did these things for the express purpose of causing man to seek God (compare this to Rom. 1:20).

d. In God all mankind lives and exists, a fact that Paul says was recognized by pagan poets. As creatures, we all depend on God for our continued existence (whether we know it or not), and He is not far from us. "What is emphasized . . . is that God is active within the regular patterns of nature. He is the God of nature, of natural law." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 303)
e. We are all children of God in the sense of creation, but this does not show that we are all spiritual children (see John 8:42-47).

46. 1 Thessalonians 2:12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

a. If we claim to have submitted ourselves to God's reign, then we should live "in the good of that coming heritage" (Bruce, Thessalonians, WBC, p. 38; see also Best, Thessalonians, p. 107 and Morris, Thessalonians, NICNT, p. 86).

b. We are reminded that it is God who calls us into His kingdom--He establishes it, not us.

47. 1 Thessalonians 5:24: The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

a. God keeps all his promises. He has unlimited power and knowledge, and He would never commit himself to do something he either cannot or will not do (see also 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:18-22; 2 Tim. 2:13; and 1 Pet. 4:19; Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 291).

b. God is the Caller (present tense), "the God who habitually calls to Himself those whom He will have" (Morris, Thessalonians, NICNT, p. 183). As the Caller, He is faithful may mean either "faithful" or "trusting", the former the obvious sense here (see Bultmann, "Pisteuo", TDNT Abridged).

c. God is the Doer (comp. Phil. 1:6): He not only calls, He calls effectively.

d. The result: "Because He is the faithful One, and because He is the One who has called them, they may know that He will do perfectly all that is involved in their call." (Morris, Thessalonians, p. 183).

48. 2 Thessalonians 1:6: God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you.

a. The Greek of the first phrase is a conditional which is assumed as fact (lit. "If God is just"; see Bruce, Thessalonians, p. 149), which the NIV rightly translates as "God is just". Paul argues that, since God is just, He will recompense according to the principles of true justice.

b. This is the negative side of the righteousness of God extended to believers in v. 5. "Just as it is true that it is a righteous thing with God to bring believers to salvation and blessing in His kingdom, so it is a righteous thing with Him to bring punishment to those who persist in courses of evil." (Morris, Thessalonians, NICNT, p. 200)

c. The word "conveys the thought of a full and due requital" (Morris, Thessalonians, p. 200, n. 13). means "to repay as reward or punishment", and the addition of - here strengthens the idea of recompense (Büchsel, "Didomi", TDNT Abridged). Best notes:

"That God repays ( is a strong word) embodies a principle much wider than the present limited application to persecution. It provides an answer to the problem caused by the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the innocent, by calling in what lies behind this world to redress what has happened here. Though it is rejected as a principle of human
conduct in MT. 5:38-48 it is found in the Gospels (Lk. 16:25) and in Paul (Rom. 2:6; 12:19; 2 Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:25), and it seems an essential constituent of any teaching about God's judgement." (Best, Thessalonians, pp. 256-7)

49. 2 Thessalonians 3:3: But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

a. Again, God is faithful. The focus this time is not judgment or calling, but protection.

b. "The Lord will strengthen ("inward stabilization") and protect us ("outward stabilization", a military term; Heibert, Thessalonians, p. 333) from Satan ("the evil one"). It is His faithfulness that we depend on, not our own faith or ability to defend ourselves." (Moreau, The World of the Spirits, p. 61).

i. Strengthen is , "to fix, establish". "It presupposes an assault that threatens faith or zeal. Its aim is impregnability of faith in spite of afflictions. . . . Moral confirmation is the point in 2 Th. 3:3 . . ." (Harder, "Sterizo", TDNT Abridged).

ii. Protect is , "to protect, watch". Jesus protects (or keeps) those given Him by the Father (Jn. 17:12), and Jude notes that God is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24) (Bertram, "Phylasso", TDNT Abridged).

c. The critical factor is not Satan' strength, but God's omnipotence.

50. 1 Corinthians 1:25: For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

In context, "the foolishness of God" and the "weakness of God" both refer to the cross of Jesus (vv. 18, 21, 23). Fee expresses it,

In the cross God 'outsmarted' his human creatures and thereby nullified their wisdom. In the same cross God also 'overpowered' his enemies, with lavish grace and forgiveness, and thereby divested them of their strength.

Thus played out before human eyes is the scandalous and contradictory wisdom of God. Had God consulted us for wisdom we could have given him a more workable plan, something that would attract the sign-seeker and the lover of wisdom. As it is, in his own wisdom he left us out of the consultation. We are thus left with the awful risk: trust God and be saved by his wise folly, or keep up our pretensions and perish. (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 77).

51. 1 Corinthians 2:10-16: For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.
a. Just as our own human spirit knows our thoughts and is identified with us, so God's Spirit knows his thoughts and is God himself (Abogunrin, First Corinthians, p. 50; though Paul is not trying to make either a definitive anthropological or pneumatological statement comparing God and His Spirit with man and his spirit; Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 112).

b. We have received God's Spirit. "This is ordinary NT language for the gift of the Spirit; . . . In Paul it refers primarily to Christian conversion" (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 113, n. 64). It is this fact that allows the Spirit to serve as the link between man and God, for the Spirit (who dwells within us and who knows God's inner thoughts) is able to reveal God's wisdom (seen in the cross of Christ) to us.

c. We have received His Spirit "so that we might know the things freely given to us by God", the context clearly showing that it is understanding salvation through Jesus who died on the cross (1:23-23; 2:2) that Paul has in mind.

d. The "natural" man does not understand or accept the things of God. The wording places emphasis on the Spirit's role in revealing God's plan, not on man's ability to understand it--He is the key to understanding God's wisdom (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 110).

e. The "spiritual" man, on the other hand, understands all things because the Spirit has revealed them to him.

i. "Understands all things" in context refers to God's ways (v. 10; Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 118).

ii. He (or she) is "examined" by no man (i.e., the person with the Spirit cannot be judged by the person without the Spirit). Fee points out: "Here is another sentence that, taken out of its context, has suffered much in the church. There are always some who consider themselves full of the Spirit in such a way as to be beyond discipline or the counsel of others. Such a reading of the text is an unfortunate travesty, since these people are usually among those most needing such discipline" (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 118). In his concluding thoughts on this section, Fee writes:

"Paul's concern needs to be resurrected throughout the church. The gift of the Spirit does not lead to special status among believers; rather, it leads to special status vis-a-vis the world. But it should do so always in terms of the centrality of the message of our crucified/risen Savior. . . . Being spiritual does not lead to elitism; it leads to a deeper understanding of God's profound mystery--redemption through a crucified Messiah. (Ibid., p. 120)

52. 1 Corinthians 3:7: So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

In the growth of the church, God alone is to receive the glory, for He alone is the one who causes growth. Certainly He uses human instruments, but, even so, He alone is the one who orchestrates the growth.

53. 1 Corinthians 4:18-20 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. 20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?
a. The kingdom is not mere talk, but power (God's sovereign power). Kingdom presence and ethics are in view--persuasive or eloquent words are not the kingdom, but actual power.

b. Is "power" referring to:
   i. Signs and wonders (seen in widely in Corinth, but by a congregation that was spiritually immature), or
   ii. The "powerful, dynamic presence of the Spirit among them to save and to sanctify"--the power to give people a new birth and to change their lives (Fee, Corinthians, pp. 191-2; note especially the parallel in Romans 14:17)?

   The answer may not be either/or, but both/and (note that Fee may not be eliminating the signs and wonders aspect, though he certainly is stressing the changed life as significant in light if 5:1-13).

c. Paul typically presents the eschatological side of the kingdom, but here he focuses on the realized side (the "present" aspect).

54. 1 Corinthians 8:6: yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

a. This is one of the four expressly monotheistic texts in Paul's epistles (cf. Gal. 3:20; Rom. 3:29-30; 1 Tim. 2:5). "The formulae 'one God' and 'one Lord' stand in specific contrast to the 'many gods' and 'many lords' of the pagans. This means that the emphasis is not on the unity of the godhead, . . . but on the uniqueness of the only God. The God whom Christians worship as Father and Son stands in singular contrast to all others who might be thought to be gods but are not." (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 374)

b. We see three realities about God:
   i. "The Father": He is Father
   ii. "From whom all things came": He is the Source, the Creator of all things
   iii. "For whom we live": "God is not only the one to whom we are ultimately heading, along with the whole created order, but our very existence is for his purposes" (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 375) "God is the central Fount and the central Goal: all beings proceed from the former; only believers consciously work towards the latter." (Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 168)

c. "Paul is including both the Father and the Son in the act of creation and yet also distinguishing them from one another. The Father apparently has the more prominent part; he is the source from whom all things come. The Son is the means or the agent of the existence of all things. While creation was primarily the work of the Father, the Son is the one through whom it was carried out." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 372)

d. "Although Paul does not here call Christ God, the formula is so constructed that only the most
obdurate would deny its Trinitarian implications. In the same breath that he can assert that there is only one God, he equally asserts that the designation 'Lord,' which in the OT belongs to the one God, is the proper designation of the divine Son. One should note especially that Paul feels no tension between the affirmation of monotheism and the clear distinction between the two persons of Father and Jesus Christ." (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 375)

55. 1 Corinthians 10:13: No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

a. Again, as we saw in the Thessalonian discussion, God is faithful. This time it is in providing help through temptation.

b. Temptation ( ) can have one of two meanings (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 460, n. 49):
   i. "Seduction to sin" (= temptation)
   ii. Trial and/or test

c. This refers to trials that ordinarily come in the course of life—it does not refer to "temptations" that come when we willingly go to them (see the note in Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 460, n. 50). Godet comments, "The Corinthians must be made to understand that they run no risk of sinning and falling away from the faith, if they have only to encounter the temptations God allots to them, but that they have no pledge of victory whatever in the case of temptations into which they throw themselves with light-heartedness." (Godet, 1 Corinthians, pp. 69-70; cited by Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 461, n. 52)

d. God has promised two ways in which He can be trusted:
   i. He has pledged to not let us be tested beyond what we can bear;
   ii. He has pledged to provide an end (or "the way out"). The wording is not precise, but the idea appears to refer to ending the temptation, not necessarily an easy escape (see Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 461)

56. 1 Corinthians 14:33a: For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

We must not read into this whatever we want (e.g., the necessity of following Robert's Rules of Order as "God's way" of debate!). Disorder most likely refers to disturbance (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 696, n. 45) which is what was happening in the worship at Corinth. The theological point is "the character of one's deity is reflected in the character of ones worship" (Fee, 1 Corinthians, p. 697).

57. 1 Corinthians 15:24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

a. When the kingdom is fully manifest, Christ will hand it over to God the Father. Its full manifestation involved both positive and negative sides (Ladd, Theology, p. 410):
   i. Positively: resurrection for those who are in Christ;
ii. *Negatively:* subordination and subjection of all spiritual powers and all hostile wills to the will of God.

b. On the relationship between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of God:

i. Some feel that they are identical. Fee writes, "God's rule is presently manifest in the lordship of Christ" (Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 754, n. 42).

c. Others note that Paul distinguishes them by using "kingdom of Christ" in the realized sense, and the "kingdom of God" in the sense of the final consummation (see Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, p. 52, n. 61; Ladd *Kingdom of God*, p. 115), though this interpretation does not demand a separation into two separate kingdoms.

d. Ladd points out: "In 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, Paul pictures the triumph of Christ as being accomplished in several stages. The resurrection of Christ is the first stage (*tagma*). The second stage will occur at the parousia when those who are Christ's will share his resurrection. 'Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father . . ." (Ladd, *Theology*, p. 558).

58. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

a. Praise be to God!

b. He is (present continuous tense):

i. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (see 2 Cor. 11:31; Eph. 1:3; 17; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 1:3; Rev. 1:6; Jn. 20:17).

ii. The Father of compassion (lit. 'Father of mercies'; the inward property of God, Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 59-60): "from Him loving compassions flow to His children when they are being tested by affliction" (Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, p. 11).

iii. The God of all comfort (the word, in noun or verb form, appears 10 times in vv. 3-7; the outworking of God's attribute of mercy; Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, p. 60):

(1) Paul was speaking out of his own experiences, for God had comforted him by delivering him out of his afflictions in Asia--here he used the sense of "standing beside a person to encourage him when he is undergoing severe testing" (Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, p. 11)

(2) The God of all comfort is fully sufficient to meet our needs in any trial.

c. God comforts us not just for our sakes, but so that we in turn may comfort others who are undergoing affliction.

59. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (also 2 Cor. 5:5): Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.
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a. God establishes us in Christ: the present tense indicates that this is a constant experience; "in" that it is a progressive experience (Hughes, Second Corinthians, p. 39).

b. God anointed Paul (with the Spirit for his ministry to the gentiles; Hughes, Second Corinthians, p. 39).

c. God sealed Paul. Barrett explains the significance in Paul's time: "The seal, given and preserved intact, was a proof that a document had not been falsified, or goods tampered with in transit. It was also a mark of ownership; and the Christian, sealed . . . with the Spirit, was both visibly marked out as God's property and secured ready to meet examination at the day of judgement." (Barrett, Second Corinthians, p. 79) Hughes points out, "The sealing itself, however, is neither metaphorical nor external: as a sealing with the Holy Spirit of God, it is a stamping of the divine character upon the human personality, a fresh and indestructible communication to the believer of the image of God which was defaced through the fall (cf. 3:18). He who carries that impress of the seal of the Spirit of truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) is not faithless and insincere." (Hughes, Second Corinthians, p. 41).

d. He anoints us by giving us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge of what is to come. The "pledge" (lit. earnest) was the first installment of a total sum due (Barrett, Second Corinthians, p. 80). Grammatically the genitive may be understood in two ways:

i. The pledge consists of the Spirit (appositional genitive), or

ii. What we have is only the first installment of the Spirit (partitive genitive). This, however, does not make sense (can we receive only part of the Spirit?).

e. Finally, we should point out the Trinitarian nature of Paul's statement. "The sequence 'Christ . . . God . . . the Spirit' shows how naturally and without any trace of embarrassment the Apostle spoke of the three Persons of the Godhead, . . . because to those who have experienced the redeeming work of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the heart, the doctrine of the Trinity is one which needs no apology." (Hughes, Second Corinthians, p. 45)

60. 2 Corinthians 13:14: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

In a very Trinitarian formula, Paul blesses the Corinthians. Paul "evolves no doctrine of the Trinity, but it is perhaps more important that he so expresses himself with regard to Father, Son, and Spirit as to make Trinitarian theology, given the setting of Christianity in the following four centuries, inevitable, yet does so unconsciously" (Barrett, Second Corinthians, p. 345).

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Excursus: Trinitarianism
(adapted in part from Sam Owen)

I. Introduction

A. The early church, opposing polytheism with the OT teaching that there is only one God, was soon forced to ask, Who is Jesus Christ? Was He a mere man? Is He an angel? Or is He God? And if He is God, are there two Gods?
B. The doctrine of the trinity is the distinctive and all-comprehensive doctrine of the Christian faith. It makes three affirmations:

1. There is but one God;
2. There are three who are each God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and
3. Each of these three is a distinct person.

II. Nature of the study of the Trinity

A. The doctrine is exclusively and completely a matter of revelation.
B. The doctrine is incomprehensible and must be accepted by faith
C. There are no truly good analogies of the Trinity
D. Arguments against the doctrine come from the limitations of our minds
E. There is a tendency to err in our conceptions of the Trinity

III. Erroneous Concepts of the Trinity

A. Towards Tri-theism

1. A belief in 3 separate and distinct persons related to each other lovingly
2. Trying to preserve deity and personality of all 3 members
3. Fails to remember the unity of God

B. Towards Monarchianism ["one supreme ruler"]

1. Strives hard to maintain monotheism
2. Suffers from a lack of personal distinctions within the Godhead, or one God manifests Himself in 3 forms
3. Dynamic Monarchianism: Those stressing the fact that God the Father is God; Jesus a man; Spirit seen as an influence
   a. Arius (Arianism) [4th century]
      (1) Denied deity of Son and Spirit
      (2) Son not of same substance as the Father
      (3) Son was first created being of Father and Spirit was first created being of the Son
      (4) Refuted as a heretic by the Church, but view remains
   b. Socinus (Socinianism) [post-Reformation]
      (1) Picked up views of Arius
      (2) Jesus a man; Spirit an "influence"
      (3) Forerunner of Unitarianism & some forms of liberalism
4. Modalistic Monarchianism (held by Jesus-Only Pentecostals, such as the Branhamites, today)
   a. Sabellius (Sabelianism) [early 3rd century]
      (1) The three serve in different roles:
(a) Father is creator and lawgiver (OT);
(b) Son is same God that becomes incarnate and fills roll of redeemer;
(c) Today Son is the Spirit

(2) It is God "manifested" in three different modes:

(a) Father in OT
(b) Son in NT
(c) Spirit since Pentecost

b. Others include Swedenborg, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Barth (e.g., Barth said: Father = revealer; Son = revealed; Spirit = revealment)

IV. God's Nature and the Trinitarian Distinctions

A. God is One in Being, Substance, or Essence

1. Bible asserts God's oneness in several senses

   a. There is a single deity as against polytheism
   b. There is a divine spiritual substance, as against three Gods of the same kind
   c. Father, Son, and Spirit are one mind, purpose, and harmonious action

2. The Bible's assertions of oneness teach a multiplicity in unity

   a. "One flesh" (Gen 2:24), but two persons
   b. All the people answered with one voice (Ex 24:3)
   c. Couple the tent together that it may be one (Ex 26:11)
   d. Smite the Midianites as one man (Judges 6:16)
   e. The congregation was gathered together as one man, all the people arose as one man, so all the men of Israel were gathered against the city knit together as one man (Judges 20:1,8,11).
   f. Christ prays that all His disciples may be one. (John 17:21)
   g. We being many, are one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5).
   h. The body is one and has many members (1 Cor. 12:12).

B. The multiplicity in the divine unity is Triune: Father, Son, and Spirit

1. The Father is God.
2. The Son is God.
3. The Spirit is God.
4. There are three modes of existence within the divine unity, three substances, three centers of consciousness, three persons
5. "In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption." (The New Hampshire Confession). Note:

   a. The metaphysical oneness (in essence or being)
   b. The metaphysical threeness (in persons)
c. The functional unity and distinctness

V. Brief sketch of the evidence from Scripture and church history

A. OT anticipation of trinitarianism

1. Is. 48:16, 17: Yahweh God, His Spirit, Redeemer
2. Is. 61:1: The Spirit, the Lord God, the Messiah
3. Elohim is a plural name for God (see the discussion on Genesis 1 in the OT notes).
4. Plural pronouns (Gen. 1:26; 11:7; Is. 6:8) may simply indicate agreement with the plural of majesty, or it may also be a preparation for the revelation of trinitarian distinctions [note especially the shift from singular to plural in the first and third of these examples].

B. NT anticipations of trinitarianism

1. Three classes of passages about Christ
   a. Those passages that assert Christ's functional inferiority because He voluntarily became incarnate as a man and as a servant (e.g., John 14:28; see Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 338)
   b. Those passages that assert His distinctiveness from the Father before the foundation of the world (e.g., John 1:1; Heb. 1:3, 6; Col. 1:15).
   c. Those passages that assert Christ's essential oneness with the Father (e.g., John 1:1; 10:30; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:8).

2. The teaching that the Holy Spirit:
   a. Has a distinctive mission in redemption
   b. Is a distinct person (e.g., "another" comforter)
   c. Is one in essence with the Father and Son

3. Special epochs of trinitarian revelation
   a. The annunciation (Luke 1:35)
   b. The baptism of Christ (Luke 3:21-22)
   c. The teaching of Jesus (e.g., John 14:7, 9-10, 16-26)
   d. The commission of the Risen Lord (Matt. 28:19: Baptizing in the name (sg.) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)

4. Other NT passages of note include Acts 2:32-33; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:2; and 2 Cor. 13:14 [this trinitarian benediction is now the counterpart of the OT way of placing the name of God upon the people (see Numbers 6:24-26)]. Note also Erickson's discussion of trinitarianism in John's writings (Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 331-2).

5. Bromiley summarizes: "In the NT there is no explicit statement of the doctrine . . . but the Trinitarian evidence is overwhelming. God is still preached as one God (Gal. 3:20). Yet
Jesus proclaims his own deity (John 8:58) and evokes and accepts the faith and worship of his disciples (Matt. 16:16; John 20:28). As the Son or Word, he can thus be equated with God (John 1:1) and is associated with the Father, e.g., in the Pauline salutations (1 Cor. 1:3, etc.). But the Spirit or Comforter is also brought into the same interrelationship (cf. John 14-16).

It is not surprising, therefore, that while we have no dogmatic statement, there are clear references to the three persons of the Godhead in the NT. All three are mentioned at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:16-17). The disciples are to baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19). The developed Pauline blessing includes the grace of the Son, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost (II Cor. 13:14). Reference is made to the election of the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:2) in relation to the salvation of believers." (Bromiley, "Trinity", EDT.)

C. Formulations in the early church

1. The Greek term "triad" was used by Theophilus of Antioch about 180 A.D.

2. The Latin term "trinity" was used by Tertullian about 200 A.D.

3. 1 John 5:7 (KJV) - "... in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one..." if not in the original, inspired text (as seems likely), is evidence from the early church of belief in the Trinity.

4. The Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father almighty; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; I believe in the Holy Ghost."

5. Church Councils
   a. Council of Nicea 325-26 (dealt primarily with the Son [vs. Arius])
   b. The Athanasian Creed (a century later): "We worship one God in Trinity, and trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons, nor separating the substance."
   c. Council of Constantinople 381 (Cleared up the relationship with respect to the Holy Spirit in the trinity [work of HS done only by God])
   d. Council of Toledo 589
      (1) Tried to deal with the relationship between the members of the Godhead
      (2) Earlier doctrinal statements had said that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father." At Toledo, a clause was added which was known as the "Filioque" clause ("and the Son"). i.e., it was now stating that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John 15:26) and the Son (John 16:7; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6).
      (3) The Filioque clause was rejected by the Eastern Church

D. What was the origin of trinitarianism?

1. Not Greek philosophy
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2. Not the Roman Catholic Church 400 years after Christ

3. "By good and necessary consequence" deduced from Scripture (WCF)

"The formulation of the doctrine, although not made in Scripture, is not opposed to Scripture. When we assemble the disjecta membra into their organic unity, we are not passing from Scripture, but entering more thoroughly into the meaning of Scripture" (Warfield).

E. Conclusion

1. Trinitarianism is the most consistent explanation of all the strands of biblical data.

2. As such trinitarianism is a biblical doctrine, inspired of God and profitable for Christians.

3. The Church confesses the Trinity to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of man.

29. Romans 5:6-8: You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, thought for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us.

"God's love is an unselfish interest in us for our sake. . . . he is concerned with our good for our own sake, not for what he can get out of us. God does not need us. He is the all-powerful, all-sufficient. He can accomplish what he wishes without us, although he has chosen to work through us. Thus, his love for us and for his other creatures is completely disinterested.

God loves us on the basis of that likeness of himself which he has placed within us, or in which he has created us (Gen. 1:27). He therefore in effect loves that which participates in the greatness and goodness of himself; he loves himself in us. . . . His love is a disposition of affection toward us, a feeling of unselfish concern, and a resolve to act toward us in such a way as to promote our welfare." (Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 292-4)

30. Romans 8:28-30: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

a. In all things: there is no circumstance which is excluded from this promise. On the textual problems and options, see Cranfield, Romans, pp. 425-8.

i. He concludes: ". . . nothing can really harm--that is, harm in the deepest sense of the word--those who really love God, but that all things which may happen to them, including such grievous things as are mentioned in v. 35, must serve to help them on their way to salvation, confirming their faith and drawing them closer to their Master, Jesus Christ. But the reason why all things thus assist believers, is, of course, that God is in control of all things." (Cranfield, Romans, p. 428)

ii. Why does Paul make "all things" the subject of the sentence rather than God? "It is . . . because he wants to draw attention to the transcendent power of Him who helps us. His
power, His authority, is such that all things, even the actions of those who are disobedient and set themselves against Him, must subserve His will. To say that all things assist believers is thus—in a biblical context—a heightening of the statement that God assists them; for it is to assert not only that He assists them, but also that His help is triumphantly and utterly effective." (Ibid., pp. 428-9)

b. God works for the good of those who:
   i. Love him (actually at the beginning of the verse, placed there for emphasis)
   ii. Are called according to his purpose (which further refines "those who love him")
      (1) Note that "his" is not present in the Greek, and some have taken purpose to be the men's rather than God's ("according to their choice to God's call"). The NIV, however, is undoubtedly correct in supplying 'his' as God's purpose (Cranfield, Romans p. 429-30).
      (2) This phrase shows the basis of their love for God—He effectually called them (carried and expanded in vv. 29-30; Ibid., p. 431).

c. What does "foreknew" mean?
   i. Two primary options may be noted:
      (1) "To take note of" as a preliminary to selection. If this is the meaning, then logically God saw those who would receive Christ, and predestined them to do so.
      (2) "To choose beforehand", not purely on the basis of foreseen actions. If this is the meaning, than God simply chose from the foundation of the world those who would receive Christ.
   ii. Erickson, a moderate Calvinist, notes: "To suggest that foreknowledge here means nothing more than previous knowledge or acquaintance is to virtually deprive these verses of any real meaning. We must conclude that foreknowledge as used in Romans 8:29 carries with it the idea of favorable disposition or selection as well as advance knowledge" (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 356). He suggests a view known as "congruism" (that God works congruously with the will of the individual so that he freely chooses what God intends). How does God do this? Erickson summarized an explanation by Leibniz: "God, foreknowing the infinite possibilities, chooses to bring into existence the individual who will freely decide to respond to every situation precisely as God intends. By so doing, God renders certain, but not necessary, the free decisions and actions of the individual." (Leibniz, Theodicy, summarized in Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 358, n. 11)
   iii. This is the crux of the debate between Calvinists and Armenians, and again shows the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

d. The Golden Chain: foreknew to predestined to called to justified to glorified. The implication we get from this is that once the chain is started, it will not be broken.
Excursus: God's Role and Man's Role
(adapted from Carson, Divine Sovereignty, pp. 206-222)

I. The fact of the tension: In trying the interrelate the infinite God with the finite man we will of necessity face tensions. Scripture presents two facts that we find difficult to reconcile:

A. God is sovereignly in control of the universe (and, as an infinite being, His control can be infinite).

B. Man is fully responsible before God for all of his actions.

II. Some of the areas in which this tension manifests itself are:

A. How "free" is man's "free" will? Are there boundaries to man's will, and, if so, how far do they extend? For example, can man in any way thwart God's plan?

B. How does God "outside of time" relate to a man bounded by time? Is God's foreknowledge based on Him "seeing" the future or "determining" it? Does God "force" our free choice, or merely see that we will "freely" make it?

C. How is evil to be explained? Does God "use" secondary causes (e.g., Satan), and does this absolve Him of "responsibility" for evil, since even these secondary causes can only do His will?

D. Is there more than one "will" of God? For example, God "desires" that no one should perish, yet some do. Does 2 Pet. 3:9 express His "will" or His "want"?

E. How can God be a transcendent being (one who is above space and time, one who has all authority, and who is thus necessarily unknowable to us in the ultimate sense) and yet still a personal one who desires to interact with men? Is it possible for us to talk meaningfully about a transcendent being? (Note that some modern theologians and many philosophers have concluded that it is not possible, and have given up all hope!)

F. Can man lose his salvation? If we focus on God's sovereignty, the answer is no. If we focus on man's responsibility, the answer may be yes. Any resolution to this must take into account both God's sovereignty in all events as well as man's responsibility before God.

31. Romans 9:14-24

a. A difficult passage to wade through. We will consider a few relevant points and options.

b. It does not depend on the man who wills, or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy (v. 16).

i. Our salvation rests in God's mercy alone (He even gives us the "will", Phil. 2:13). Cranfield relates:

Paul understood Exod. 33:19b as an assertion... of the freedom of God's MERCY, and that the double thelei ["He desires", NASB] of v. 18 is to be interpreted as referring... to the merciful will of God, which... is... wholly determined in that it is the will of the merciful, righteous God.... This section as a whole... bears witness to the FREEDOM of God's mercy, but the freedom to which it bears witness is the freedom of His MERCY--and no
other freedom. (Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 472)

ii. How does this affect our understanding of the foreknowledge?

(1) Note that this is combatting a self-effort programme, and not giving explicit details of the mechanics of God's elective process.

(2) Does this rule out any responsibility on the human side (even a passive response)?

iii. Note one understanding: "God's mercy is not a matter of man's willing or activity, but on God's being merciful", i.e., man cannot force God's mercy.

c. What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? (v. 22)

i. The whole purpose of this is found in v. 23 ("IN ORDER THAT He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy"), and the clauses of v. 22 are thus subordinate to the main idea of v. 23. Note that "although" (NASB) can also be translated in a causal sense ("choosing", NIV). Thus the purpose of God is to make known His mercy, and FOR THE SAKE OF doing this, He also wills to show forth His wrath.

ii. We see an aspect of God's love here--He "endured with much patience" (makrothymia; "longsuffering"), He is "withholding judgment and continuing to offer salvation and grace over long periods of time" (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 296). "Longsuffering obviously does not mean irresolution or compliance. It is not swayed by emotion but has the end in view. The delay may allow time for repentance but is also increases the wrath. It leaves no room for a claim on God's goodness but makes God's purpose plain in its eschatological dimension. The goal, however, is not just passive, for even vessels of wrath serve to bring into relief the mercy of God displayed in vessels of mercy (9:22ff.)" (Horst, "Makrothymia", TDNT Abridged)

iii. There are four options for "prepared" in regard to the vessels of wrath (see the discussion in Piper, *The Justification of God*, pp. 192-96).

(1) They were prepared by God (passive sense, see 9:13, 18, and 21)

(2) It could be the passive in the sense that they were prepared, but not directly implying who did the preparation.

(3) The passive is a mystery that no one can understand.

(4) They prepared themselves (middle sense)

iv. The term "vessels of wrath" does not prove that they cannot be changed (see Eph. 2:3).

v. Also note that the vessels of mercy (v. 23) were definitely prepared by God.

32. Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,
a. In 1 Cor. 4:20, Paul noted that the kingdom is not a matter of words, here it is not a matter of human concerns (eating and drinking). Both deal with the present reality of the kingdom, and the parallels are worth noting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERSE</th>
<th>KINGDOM IS NOT:</th>
<th>KINGDOM IS:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor. 4:20</td>
<td>Words only</td>
<td>Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romans 14:17</td>
<td>A matter of eating and drinking</td>
<td>Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit</td>
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b. What does Paul mean by the three terms? The basic options seem to be:

i. **Righteousness:**

   (1) The status of righteousness before God which is God's gift (Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 718);

   (2) A moral quality or "righteous action"

ii. **Peace:**

   (1) The state of having been reconciled with God (Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 718); or

   (2) A peaceful state of mind

iii. **Joy:**

   (1) The joy which is the Spirit's work in the believer (Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 718), or

   (2) A subjective human feeling.

33. Ephesians 1:3-14:

a. "One infinitely long, heavy, and clumsy sentence, replete with redundant clauses, excurses, specifications, repetitions, and the like, runs in the Greek text from vs. 3 through to v. 14" (Barth, *Ephesians*, p. 77; see discussion on the structure in pp. 97-101).

b. Praise God (lit. "Blessed is God"), who has blessed us

   i. In the heavenly realms:

   (1) "Even if they live on earth in mortal bodies, they can enter into the good of their heavenly inheritance here and now through the ministry of the Spirit (vv. 13-14)." (Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, p. 254)

   (2) This is the realm of spiritual power (Osborne, *Ephesians*, p. 3).

   (3) By use of this term, "the extension, efficiency, validity, and sufficiency of God's blessing in pointed out. God himself is the source of blessing, and all real or imagined
dimensions of creation and of man's existence are permeated and changed by that blessing . . . " (Barth, Ephesians, p. 103).

ii. With every spiritual blessing: "God is not a stingy god who gives just barely what he must, and conserves the rest. There is a generosity to this grace of God. He gives abundantly." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 295)

iii. In Christ (the key to this whole paragraph): these blessings cannot be experienced outside of Christ. Barth thinks that the sense if parallel to Gen. 18:18 "In Abraham" all nations of the earth will bless themselves. Just as Abraham was, so Christ is "at the same time the beneficiary, the beginning, the model, and the instrument of the blessing in which all nations are to participate" (Barth, Ephesians, p. 78).

c. What is "every spiritual blessing" ("the full spiritual blessing; Barth, Ephesians, p. 78)? Six dimensions may be seen (following, in part, Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, p. 253):

i. Election to holiness (v. 4):

(1) God chose us, we did not choose Him! As always, He is the initiator, man the recipient. On what basis does He choose some and not others? Two approaches may be seen:

(a) Calvinistic approach: God chooses solely on the basis of His mercy, as man is depraved in all his being and has no ability to choose for Christ. God's choice, then, is not based on foreknowledge of our choice, but solely on His merciful will (see Hendriksen's discussion, Ephesians, pp. 74-77).

(b) Armenian approach: God chose on the basis of foreknowledge of the decision we would make in time. All of this is mediated "in Christ". For one understanding on why election in Christ is not to be viewed in a deterministic way, see the discussion in Barth, Ephesians, pp. 105-9.

(2) In him (Christ): "He is foundation, origin, and executor: all that is involved in election and its fruits depends on him." (Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, pp. 254-5)

(3) Before the creation of the world (in eternity)--God is not subject to the space-time limitations that we face. His election of us is not bound in time, and thus it is certain (see Osborne, "Ephesians", p. 3).

(4) Purpose of our election: to be holy and blameless in his sight (comp. Rom. 8:29)

(a) Holy is the presence of a positive virtue (see on Lev. 11:44-45).

(b) Blameless is absence of a negative virtue (i.e., without any spot)

(c) We are holy and blameless before Him: "The image suggests the position and relationship enjoyed by the cream of society at a royal court; by children to their father; by a bride to the bridegroom (see 5:27!), by the priest in the sanctuary or another elect servant of God; or by a supplicant seeking legal help from a
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righteous judge." (Barth, Ephesians, p. 80)

(5) If "in love" goes with v. 4, it adds to the holiness: "The purpose of God is that his people should be marked by holiness and blamelessness, coupled with love" Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, p. 256)

ii. Instatement as God's sons and daughters (vv. 5-6)

(1) If "in love" goes with v. 5 (NI V), then it shows God's attitude in adopting us as His children (comp. Rom. 8:28-30).

(2) Result of election: we are God's children

(a) He predestined ("pre-horizoned, pre-encircled"; Hendriksen, Ephesians, p. 79; see discussion on election above).

(b) We were predestined to be adopted: In Greek culture, the adopted children had only those rights given them by the natural son. Christ, as God's natural Son, has given us (the adopted children) full rights as the children of God!

(c) This was through Jesus Christ, a theme repeated throughout this passage.

(d) According to God's good pleasure and will, not according to wrath or judgement (links this to the "in love" at the beginning of the verse). The connotations are of a warm and personal relationship, not a cold and impersonal or arbitrary "decision" (Barth, Ephesians, p. 81)

(3) Goal of election: To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given to us in Christ

(a) Man's part: praise of God's glorious grace because of our election and adoption in Christ.

(b) God's part: grace, which He freely and abundantly gives to us in Christ

iii. Redemption and forgiveness (vv. 7-8)

(1) In Christ we have (or we possess; Barth, Ephesians, p. 83):

(a) Redemption through His blood

(b) Forgiveness of sins (which is the result of redemption)

(2) The basis of our redemption: the riches of God's grace,

(a) These He lavished on us (the language is joyful: "the 'riches' are 'bountiful' or 'infinite' and are meant for 'us', his people" (Osborne, Ephesians", p. 5).

(b) He did so with all wisdom and understanding, "both terms relate to the same
truth, insight into the true meaning of knowledge and what to do with it" (Osborne, "Ephesians", p. 5; see also Barth, Ephesians, p. 85).

iv. Making known to us the mystery of his will (vv. 9-10)

(1) The content of revelation: "the mystery [or secret] of His will". "Mystery' refers to unrevealed truth, formerly hidden, now make known to man" (Osborne, "Ephesians", p. 6; see also Robinson, Ephesians, pp. 234-40). Barth beautifully summarizes and comments:

This is the secret that is finally revealed to the saints: God loved them before the creation. he loves them despite their sins and death. he loves them notwithstanding the former division of Jews and Gentiles. He loves them with the intention that they praise his glory. Man did not know this love; the powers did not. But God did. It was God's secret because it was hidden in his heart, identified with his own being, his whole self. Now it has been laid bare. The whole, true God is no longer hidden and unknown. His very heart is opened. (Barth, Ephesians, p. 127)

(2) Basis of His will: according to the kind intention (toward us) which God purposed in Christ

(3) Purpose of His will:

(a) To be put into effect when times will have reached their fulfillment--"the fulfillment of God's salvific plan in Christ's first coming" (Osborne, "Ephesians", p. 7)

(b) To bring all things (whether in heaven or on earth) together under one head, Christ

v. We were chosen by God, you were sealed with the Spirit (vv. 11-14).

(1) How we were chosen (v. 11--repeats and expands on vv. 4-5):

(a) Chosen as God's portion

(b) Predestined according to His purpose

(c) God works all things out "in conformity with the purpose of his will".

(2) The purpose of choosing (v. 12): so that we would be to the praise of God's glory

(3) You were also included in Christ, and marked with the seal of the Spirit (v. 13)

(a) Again, we were chosen "in Christ".

(b) We are sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit

(i) "Sealing" was a legal method of protecting possessions by putting a stamp
on them that proved their ownership (in religious spheres, is "meant that the power of the deity protects the bearer and is available to him; Osborne, "Ephesians", p. 8). The Holy Spirit here either is

1) The stamp itself (see v. 14), or

2) The one who stamps us (He may be both). In either case, we are marked legally as God's possession.

(ii) There are two options for when the sealing occurs:

1) Christian baptism (for the arguments for this idea, see Barth, Ephesians, pp. 135-9)

2) When we receive or are baptized by the Holy Spirit (for the arguments for this idea, see Barth, Ephesians, pp. 139-43).

(c) He is the "Spirit of promise", which is either

(i) The fact that He is promised, seen in a number of OT promises (Isa. 32:15, 44:3; Joel 2:28; Osborne, "Ephesians", p. 8)

(ii) Or "that the Holy Spirit beings with him when he is received the promise of glory yet to come" (Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, p. 265).

(d) The Spirit is our earnest or pledge, "an installment paid at once as proof of the bona fides of the bargain" (Robinson, Ephesians, p. 36).

Excursus: the Divine Plan
(adapted from Sam Owen)

I. Where is history going, and why? What if anything is causing the pattern of history to develop as it is? When you tell someone, "God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life," on what basis can you make that claim? Christianity's answer is that God has a plan which includes everything that occurs and that He is now at work carrying out that plan.

II. The Nature of God's Plan

A. God's plan is from all eternity (Ps. 139:16; Is. 22:11; Eph. 1:4; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9).

B. The plan of God and the decisions contained therein are free on God's part (e.g., "the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5-9; Ps. 115:3; 135:5-6; see also Is. 40:13-14 [Rom. 11:34])

1. Decisions not determined by anything external to Himself

2. Decisions and actions not constrained by His nature, although they are consistent with His nature (e.g., did not have to create).
C. The plan of God is all-inconclusive (Eph. 1:11; Ps. 119:91)
   1. Includes means as well as ends:
      a. Eph. 2:10: good works in plan
      b. Acts 2:23: wicked works in plan
      c. Prov. 16:33: "accidental" events in plan
   2. God's plan encompasses the whole of reality and extends even to the minor details of life; therefore, it even includes the actions of men.

D. God's plan is efficacious; what He has purposed from eternity will surely come to pass (Is. 14:24,27; 46:10; Ps. 33:11)

E. The plan of God in terms of its specifics is unchangeable (there is no reason why His plan should ever change).

F. God's plan must be distinguished from His desires (all desires are not a part of His eternal plan (e.g., Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9)

G. The ultimate purpose of God's plan is doxological (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; the plan and everything in it is created for one purpose, to bring glory to God).

III. The logical priority of God's plan: divine or human action?

A. What is the extent of God's guidance of what occurs? Is everything what it is because God has willed it so? Or, at least in certain areas, does God foresee what man will do, and base His plan upon this foreknowledge, thereby willing because it is going to happen? I.e., Is God's plan unconditional? Or is God's plan conditional upon human decision?


IV. Suggested Definitions

A. "The decree of God is His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." Westminster Shorter Catechism

B. God's "eternal decision rendering certain all things which shall come to pass." (Erickson)

C. "His purposes or determinations respecting His creatures [may be either absolute or conditional" (Wakefield)

D. Objections to God's plan
   1. The moral problem: If God has an eternal plan, how can you have sin and evil without making God responsible for it? Suggested answers concerning the presence of sin/evil in
plan include:

a. To reveal the true character of sin

b. To demonstrate the value of redeemed beings

c. In order to recognize man's free choice

d. It serves God's purpose better to bring good out of evil than to have no sin and evil at all

NB: Responsibility for evil is never said to rest upon God; it is always placed upon man!

2. The volitional problem: How can an all-inclusive plan be consistent with man being a free agent? Suggested responses include:

a. Man does not really have a free will

b. God decrees the free acts of men

c. The plan is conditional on foreknowledge of man's actions

3. The evangelism problem: Why witness if the elect will be saved regardless of whether I witness or not?

4. The fatalism problem: If there really is a plan, am I not then just subject to fate, and whatever will be, will be? [means included in plan; God is personal]

E. Key issue # 1: definition of freedom:

1. Freedom = "The power of contrary choice"? i.e., freedom = power to choose for or against God. But note the result: there is no freedom in heaven (else no guarantee of no sin); also, does this mean that God is not free?]

2. Freedom = "The ability to choose in a way consistent with our character"? i.e., freedom = power to choose to do God's will

F. Key issue # 2: Relationship of God to facets of the plan

1. Unconditional purpose with pleasure, never broken (Decretive will; Is. 14:24, 27; Dan. 4:35; Luke 1:37)

2. Conditional purpose with pleasure, sometimes broken (Preceptive will; Luke 7:30; Exod. 20:1-17)

3. Conditional purpose with displeasure, allowing evil, sin (Permissive will; Ps. 81:12; Acts 14:16; Rom. 1:24)
36. Ephesians 4:3-6: being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

   a. Again we see a trinitarian formula (each with three elements?; see Osborne, "Ephesians", pp. 36-7), in which Paul ascribes aspects to each person of the Trinity:

      i. One Spirit: one body and one hope

         (1) Our unity comes through the Holy Spirit; from v. 3, Barth notes that is has to be "'maintained' rather than 'attained'" (Barth, Ephesians, p. 428).

         (2) "'One Spirit' was the basis of the 'hope' which gave the 'calling' meaning and a goal" (Osborne, "Ephesians", p. 37)

      ii. One Lord: one faith, one baptism. What is the significance of "one baptism"?

         (1) Bruner argues strongly that "water" and "Spirit" baptism in Acts are identified as a single redemption-event, and this refers to that baptism (see Bruner, A Theology of the Holy Spirit, p. 260; which may be called a "water-Spirit" baptism).

         (2) Barth, on the other hand, separates water and Spirit baptism(s), relating that here Paul refers to water baptism (Barth, Ephesians, pp. 469-70).

         (3) Bruce, however, writes: "As for the 'one baptism,' it is beside the point to ask whether it is baptism in water or the baptism of the Spirit: it is Christian baptism--baptism 'into the name of the Lord Jesus' . . . which indeed involved the application of water, as John's baptism had done, but (as its inauguration on the day of Pentecost indicates) was closely associated with the gift of the Spirit." (Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, pp. 336-7)

      iii. One God: who is Father of all (over all, through all, in all)

37. Ephesians 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

   a. As in Gal. 5:21 and 1 Cor. 6:9, Paul teaches that kingdom ethics are demanded of kingdom subjects.

   b. Paul notes that the kingdom is Christ's and God's (Barth translates, "God's Messiah"; Ephesians, A, p. 565). We are not to see Christ's kingdom and God's kingdom as two different kingdoms (Abbott Ephesians and Colossians, ICC, p. 151).

38. Philippians 2:12-13: Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

   a. We will not deal with the soteriological aspects of "work out your salvation" here.
b. The point for us to note is that God is at the heart of working out our salvation (v. 13). Hawthorne comments, "The Great Energizer, the one who is effectively at work, is God. And God is at work among the Christians ( ) at Philippi so as to effect a change in their wills ( ) and in turn a change in their conduct." (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, p. 100). God works in two ways:

i. Creating their desire

ii. Creating their ability to fulfill the desire ("energein, effectual action in bringing human aspiration to good effect is implied", Martin, *Philippians*, p. 104).

39. Colossians 1:12-14: giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

a. Our conversion is of the nature of a kingdom transfer--we leave Satan's dominion ("authority") and enter God's. This transfer has already been effected in us ("realized eschatology"; Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, NICNT, p. 52).

b. God's kingdom is the kingdom of the Son He loves.

40. Colossians 1:17: He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

a. Here we see Christ's role in God's continuing work called providence ("the continuing action of God by which he preserves in existence the creation which he has brought into being, and guides it to his intended purposes for it", Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 387). In this passage, we see the aspect of providence known as preservation. God, having called the world into being, continually sustains, renews, and orders it. God did not bring the universe into creation and then abandon--He actively continues to sustain it (a refutation of Deism).

b. God actively preserves:

i. Creation as a whole (Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3)

ii. Nature (Ps. 104)

iii. His chosen people

   (1) General care (Matt. 6:25ff; 10:28-32)

   (2) From physical harm [sometimes; e.g., Israel in Egypt; Dan. 3, 6]

   (3) From spiritual harm [never perish; John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:31ff]. Note that while the believer is most often not spared from danger or trial, he (or she) is none-the-less preserved within it [Matt. 24:15-31; 1 Pet. 1:6; 4:12].

*Theology Proper after Acts*
1. 1 Timothy 1:17: Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

   a. God is:
      i. "King eternal" (lit. "of the ages"; Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, p. 54): "stresses that God is the supreme king who governs all the ages from the creation of the world, including the age of the Messiah himself, until the end of time" (Kelly, Pastoral Epistles, p. 56).
      ii. "Immortal" (lit. "incorruptible, imperishable" or "immune from decay"; Kelly, Pastoral Epistles, p. 56): speaks of His unchanging nature in contrast to the beings of earth.
      iii. "Invisible": in contrast to the visible creation (see Rom. 1:20, 2 cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 11:27); except for Col. 1:16, it is used only of God in the NT (Michaelis, "Horao", TDNT Abridged).
      iv. "The only God": the sole God, for there is none other beside Him (Rom. 16:27; 1 Cor. 8:4-6).

   b. To Him be honor ( ) and glory ( ) forever. S. Aalen relates, "From classical Gk. onwards time denoted recognition of another's work by giving him the position and honours he merited. It is always something given to God or one's fellow-man (though not necessarily one's social superior). doxa is often used as a synonym, but in the Bible it is a quality belonging to God and is recognized by man only in response to him. It is more often translated glory. It suggests something which radiates from the one who has it, leaving an impression behind." (Aalen, NIDNTT, 2:44)

2. 1 Timothy 6:14b-16: . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which God will bring about in his own time--God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

   a. Effector of the Second Coming (6:15), which is both certain (God will bring it about) and resting in God's sovereign control (in his own time) (Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, p. 152).

   b. "The blessed and only Sovereign" (Potentate)
      i. Points to the character and the universal authority of God
      ii. He enjoys perfect bliss, has unique and absolute power

   c. "The King of kings and Lord of lords": descriptive of His sovereign authority and rule--He is King over all those acting as kings, and Lord over all those acting as lords over others

   d. "Who alone possesses immortality" (6:16)
      i. This is a different word from that in 1:17
      ii. Literally "deathlessness", speaking of His absolute deathless existence which precludes any decay, corruption, or degeneration in His being ("immortality" here is an essential, underived
attribute).

e. "Dwells in unapproachable light": speaks of the inaccessibility of God to human senses--He dwells in an atmosphere too glorious for mortal creatures to approach

f. "Whom no man has seen or can see": the essential nature of God as invisible--finite man never has seen God in His eternal essence, nor can he do so (see John 1:18)

g. "To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen."

3. Titus 1:2: a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,

God represents things as they really are. Whether he is speaking of himself or part of his creation, what God says is the way things really are. . . . We should note that these passages [1 Sam. 15:29; Tit. 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; John 17:17, 19] are affirming more than that God does not and will not lie. God cannot lie. Lying is contrary to his very nature." (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 290)

4. 1 Peter 1:2: who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

a. Those who are chosen (literally "elect", in Greek it is placed before "those who reside as aliens", but is grammatically linked to this section). In the OT, the term was used only of Israel--and now it is applied by Peter to the church. Peter gives a three-fold expansion on this (each part of which shows the role of a different person in the Trinity):

i. According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, who notes who He will chose (according to His grace, not our merit; Raymer, "1 Peter", p. 840).

ii. By the sanctifying work of the Spirit, the gift which brings the chosen into the experience of being part of the body of Christ.

iii. That you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood, the finished work of Christ in their obedience and pardon (for our original cleansing and the times when we fail to obey).

5. 1 Peter 1:17: Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

If the One you are privileged to invoke (see Selwyn, Peter, p. 142) as your Father is also the impartial Judge of all men, then conduct yourselves in fear.

a. He impartially judges every man according to his works.

b. The placement of the words emphasizes the marvelous fact that we can call the Judge our Father (Stibbs, Peter, p. 89)! As His children, however, we must live lives which show the world and the Judge that we partake of His nature. This is where the element of fear comes in--a healthy and holy awe for God, composed of three elements: fear, wonder, and humility (Selwyn, Peter, p. 143).
c. This fear should guide us throughout our stay (or "sojourn") here on earth. The concept is that we are not to view earth as our final home--it is just a place in which we are "passing through" (Stibbs, Peter, p. 90; see also 2:11).

6. Jude 24-25: To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

   a. God is able to keep us from stumbling (even in the midst of such false teachers). Here, Jude emphasizes God's role in keeping us.
      i. In v. 21, the word implied "watch", here it is a different word, "guard".
      ii. "From falling", used of a horse that does not stumble.

   b. He can make us stand in the presence of His glory blameless.
      i. In the presence of His glory--which mortal man cannot see and live.
      ii. "Blameless" was the word used to describe sacrificial animals--this is how we will stand before Him. We can do so only because He can enable us.
      iii. We do so with great joy!

   c. To Him be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority.
      i. Glory (a word found in almost all doxologies; Bauckham, Peter, p. 124) is the radiance of light.
      ii. Majesty (of a king; see Heb. 1:3 and 8:1).
      iii. Dominion: God's control over the world.
      iv. Power: He can do anything He wants.

   d. It comes to Him from us through Jesus Christ, because God saved the world through Him.

7. 2 Timothy 4:1-2: In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.

   a. Christ's kingdom is coming! In light of the coming of Christ and His kingdom, Timothy is given a charge by Paul. Five imperatives are included in the charge:
      i. Preach the Word "Above all else, Timothy must proclaim the message of the gospel" (Fee, Timothy, p. 284);
      ii. Be prepared in and out of season (to preach the Word)
iii. Correct
iv. Rebuke
v. Exhort

b. These are to be done "with great patience and careful instruction", because not everyone will heed him.

8. 2 Peter 1:11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal **kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

a. Those who persevere will receive "red carpet" treatment as they enter the kingdom. "If we generously put ourselves out in obedience to God and give Him what we have, He will generously put Himself out for us, so to speak, and lavishly equip us for life in the everlasting kingdom." (Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, TNTC, p. 75)

b. Three aspects of the kingdom may be noted (Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, TNTC, pp. 75-6):

i. It is eternal (this is not just heaven, but "looks forward to the cosmic reign of God in righteousness in the new heaven and new earth"; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 192).

ii. It is still seen a future, and

iii. It belongs to Christ.

9. 2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

a. God is not slow, but patient.

b. The time of fulfillment has not yet come and gone--the time is still coming.

c. He wants no one to perish (1 Tim. 2:4), and delays so that all who will receive Him will have sufficient time to do so. He delays out of mercy, not inability (see 1 Pet. 3:20). The immediate context indicates that Peter's readers are those whom God does not want to perish--they are the specific ones that Peter is encouraging to repent (from following the false teachers; Bauckham, *Peter*, p. 313).

d. One implication of the fact that this is God's time of patience--we should preach and give them a chance to come to Him.

10. Hebrews 4:12-13: For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

a. God's word is alive and active--as God's word, it must be so.
b. It is sharper than any two-edged sword--it can cut through anything we devise, and has no blunt side.

c. It pierces to the division of soul and spirit and joints and marrow--it separates materially and immaterially; it penetrates to the innermost being. This does not necessarily teach a separation of soul and spirit, as the thrust is on the fact that God's word cuts into our deepest parts and reveals our innermost secrets.

d. It is able to judge the innermost parts of man.

e. Nothing is hidden from the word of God, all is laid bare before Him. Thus, we are powerless, guilty, and fully exposed before God. We must have His grace if we are to enter His rest. On the difficulty of translating "laid bare", see Morris, Hebrews, p. 45.

11. Hebrews 6:16-18: Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

   a. The oath was a legal binding of a promise, but, in the case of God, it was unnecessary. He did it only for our benefit, to give us a second source for patience. This reminds us of how far we have sunk, since God knew that we needed more assurance than His promise.

   b. This strong encouragement was intended for us!

      i. The two things in which God cannot lie are:

         (1) His promise

         (2) His oath, which confirms the promise

      ii. Our resulting hope is an anchor, carrying us within the veil (of the temple).

12. Hebrews 11:6: And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

   a. Without faith it is impossible to please God. What does that mean? The author explains:

   b. We must believe that He exists (our faith must have the true God as its object).

   c. We must believe that He rewards those who seek Him (that God is personal and responds to our cry).

13. Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

   a. The kingdom of God is unshakable "because it is a purified kingdom from which every shakable
thing, or, in other words, everything stained by defilement and corruption, has been excluded, and in which there is a perfect and unfailing unison of goodness and justice and joy" (Hughes, Hebrews, p. 559).

b. We are to be grateful that this is the kingdom we are receiving.

14. 1 John 1:5: This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

a. The emphasis is upon God's essential nature or being (Phos is anarthrous). He is not a light or even the light, but "God is light." God is such a one who is light.

i. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is identified as the light of the world (8:12, 9:5).

ii. Light reveals all hidden things and shows us how to avoid pitfalls.

b. To what does "light" refer?

i. "Holy love" (Stevens, based on 1 John 2:10)

ii. "Self-revealed" (Law, based on a passage like John 1:9)

iii. "Redeemer" (Westcott, based on John 8:12)

iv. "Holy" (Weidner) [context favors this interpretation]

c. Holiness, purity, absolute moral perfection, revealedness (no shadows in the light), infinitude (light not bound by darkness).

d. "And in Him is no darkness at all" is a simple negative contrast meant to drive home the positive side that God is light.

15. 1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

a. God is faithful to His covenant promise to forgive.

b. He is just--He forgives us on the basis of Christ's death (a judicial act).

16. 1 John 4:8: Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

a. "God is love" [His personal nature]

b. John again is not speaking of personality but of essential nature or being (agape is anarthrous). God is in His essential nature love. His love is not occasioned by anything--He is love apart from any opportunity to express it. Love in God is that which moves Him to self-communication both within and outside the Godhead.

17. Revelation 1:8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

a. "Alpha and Omega" (1:8): absolute source of all creation and history; nothing lies outside of him.
For extended discussion on this, see Beasley-Murray, Revelation, pp. 60-3.

b. "Who is and who was and who is to come" (1:8; 4:8): the same God is eternally present to his covenant people to sustain and encourage them through all the experiences of their lives.

i. A paraphrase having its root in the name YHWH of Exodus 3:14-15; it serves as a reminder of God's complete eternity.

ii. Note the last phrase "is to come" (see Isa. 41:4); God is ready to interpose in history, a major theme of Revelation.

c. "The Almighty" (1:8; 4:8): pantokrator, lit., "the one who has his hand on everything"; God is universally supreme (Michaelis, "Kratos, TDNT Abridged). This term is used nine times in Revelation (1:8, 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; and 21:22).

18. Revelation 4:1-11: selected aspects

a. The throne room (1-4). Immediately, John was in the Spirit (see 1:10) and he saw the throne (used 47 times in Revelation!) and One sitting on it.

i. The One sitting on the throne (there are some resemblances to Ezek. 1:26ff).

(1) Like a jasper stone and sardius. We are not completely certain as to identity of these; though it should be noticed that they were the first and last stones in the high priest's breast plate (Ex. 28:17-21).

(a) The "jasper" may be jade, green quartz, diamond, or, of course, jasper (21:11 says it is "clear as crystal"). Does it signify majesty, holiness, and purity?

(b) It is generally agreed that the sardius was a blood-red stone found near Sardis. Does it signify wrath and judgement?

(2) The scene around the throne.

(a) There was a rainbow, "like an emerald" (a green halo?).

(i) The rainbow may be a reminder of God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:6, and note that "emerald" usually signifies mercy).

(ii) It may be best to see the stones as part of the overall description. They together show that God is majestic and clothed in light. We probably should not carry the idea of their significance further than that.

(b) There were twenty-four other thrones, with an elder on each (see also 5:14, 11:16, 19:4). Who are they? Many suggestions have been offered. The two major ones are:

(i) An order of angels (the earthly pattern is seen in the 24 courses of the Aaronic priesthood) who worship God perfectly and are the reality of the

(ii) The total church, composed of the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles. This seems unlikely in view of 5:9-10, which separates the 24 from those purchased by blood (the church). They may, however, be angels who are the heavenly representatives of the whole church.

b. Worship of the Creator around the throne (5-11). This whole scene is a vividly powerful reminder that God is above and beyond all the evil we see around us, and was especially relevant to a church facing persecution from a powerful Roman government.

i. The throne further described (5-6a).

(1) Flashes of lightening and peals of thunder came from it.

(a) God's power is awesome and majestic (see Ex. 19:16 ff, Rev. 8:5, 11:9, and 16:18).

(b) These may have come from God Himself, not the throne (Morris, p. 88).

(2) The seven Spirits of God are around the throne (see comments on 1:4). They are portrayed as seven lamps of fire that burn continuously (present tense).

(3) Something like sea of glass like crystal was before the throne.

(a) Glass at that time was dark and murky because it was impure; this was as clear as crystal. Glass that clear would have been incredibly expensive.

(b) Some see it as a reference to the "waters above the firmament" in Gen. 1:7, but that was more likely clouds than the sea in front of the throne.

(c) It is probably meant to show nothing other than the fact that God is separate from His creatures.

ii. The four creatures and twenty-four elders worship God (9-10). Whenever the creatures sing their chorus, the twenty-four elders fall down and worship, casting their crowns before Him.

(1) In casting their crowns, they acknowledge that their authority comes from God, not from themselves.

(2) Their statement is addressed directly to God: "You are worthy of all because you created all."

iii. "Thou art worthy", (v. 11) comes from a greeting given during an emperor's procession. God reminds us that true glory belongs to Him alone!

19. Revelation 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."
a. Here we see the final manifestation that Israel awaited: the Kingdom of God will be fully established on earth, so that the Lord's prayer ("Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven") will be answered.

b. The kingdom of the world is Satan's kingdom (see Matt. 4:8-9).

c. It is the "Kingdom of our Lord and his Christ", showing again that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ are identical.

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Excursus: the Kingdom of God

I. We summarize here several aspects of the Kingdom of God as seen in the NT:

A. It is **dynamic**—God's ruling over creation.

B. It is **present** uniquely in the person of Jesus and, in a limited sense, in believer's lives and in the church (see below in the relationship between the kingdom and the church). It is for now only partially manifest, but will eventually be fully manifest.

C. It is **future** and will be fully manifest only in the consummation of this age. This will happen after the gospel of the kingdom has been preached in the whole world. However, when it comes it will catch many unawares, and we must always be prepared for its arrival.

D. It is **eternal** in contrast to all other kingdoms.

E. It is **God's**, and He alone brings it to pass, and it will spread despite man's rejection, and it is universal in scope.

F. Its **value cannot be measured**—it is worth all we have and are, and its rewards are determined by God's sovereign grace.

G. It is **entered by repentance and a new birth** which is offered as a gift, but cannot be earned. This is in some way put in the hands of the Church, God's reign on earth (Matt. 16:19).

H. It **demands a radical decision from us**—we are to seek it above all else.

I. It **demands a radical adherence to kingdom ethics**, which exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

J. It **belongs to the little ones of the world** (e.g., the poor in spirit and those who are as children)

K. The **least in the kingdom is greater than the greatest on earth**.

L. It **grows and works in hidden ways** (which are not to be mistaken for inactivity).

M. We are to **pray for its full manifestation**.

N. It is **manifest through the power of God**, see specifically in the signs and wonders of Christ,
especially in the exercise of kingdom authority over demons, diseases, death, and "nature" (see Williams, Signs and Wonders, p. 112)

O. It secrets are "given" (understood) to those who enter, but not to those outside.

P. It is to be preached by its citizens.

II. Interesting "paradoxes" of the kingdom:

A. It is in the world, but not of it.
B. It belongs to the little ones, but those in it are greater than the greatest ones.
C. It comes free, but demands all we have.
D. It is available to all men, but it is humanly impossible to enter.
E. It is God's very reign, but works in hidden ways.
F. It is present and future.
G. It does not consist of talk, but it must be proclaimed (Rottenberg, Toward a Theology, p. 18).

III. What is the relationship between kingdom and church (see the Additional Handout: A Summary Chart)?
Several views have been proposed. Here are three of the main themes ones (each with several proponents and specific views; adapted from Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 705; for an extremely concise overview of contemporary thought on the Kingdom of God, see Kirk, "The Kingdom of God". N.B. This overview does not deal with the more radical view of a non-temporal nature, called "permanent eschatology"; see Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables, pp. 299-300):

A. Views that focus exclusively on the present aspects of the kingdom:

1. The kingdom is subjective, and consists of the rule of God in the individual (Adolf von Harnack), an "inward power which enters into the human soul and lays hold of it. It consists of a few basic religious truths of universal application." (Ladd, Gospel of the Kingdom, p. 15; and Ladd, Crucial Questions, p. 27)

2. The kingdom is primarily ethical, and seen in moral terms as an ideal moral order (e.g., a human utopia; Jesus was seen as the "an inculcator of neo-Kantian ethics"; Gaffin, Kingdom of God, NDT; see also Ridderbos, "Kingdom of God", NBD), and was intended to inaugurate a new social order. The church is merged into society as a whole, providing the catalyst (or leaven) for societal reformation (Walter Rauschenbusch).

a. Ladd summarized Albrecht Ritschl's thoughts: "The kingdom is 'the organization of humanity through action inspired by love,' 'the moral unification of the human race, through action prompted by universal love to our neighbour,' 'the association of men for reciprocal and common action from the motive of love.'" (Ritschl, The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, pp. 12, 280, and 290; cited by Ladd, Crucial Questions, p. 25).

b. Ladd points out that, for those who hold this position.

The Kingdom is not primarily concerned with individual salvation or with the future but with the social problems of the present. Men build the Kingdom of God as they work for the ideal social order and endeavour to solve the problems of poverty, sickness, labour
relations, social inequalities and race relationships. The primary task of the Church is to build the Kingdom of God. (Ladd, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 16).

3. The kingdom is **already realized in the present** (or it is in the process of being realized). This virtually identifies the kingdom with the church. (‘realized eschatology’, the early thinking of C. H. Dodd, see *The Parables of the Kingdom* and Ladd, *Crucial Questions*, pp. 34-5; also general Roman Catholic theology, though the RCs do not deny the future aspects the way Dodd did).

   a. The framework for this interpretation came from Augustine, who "came to identify the church with the kingdom of God and to explain the millennium in Revelation 20 as representing Christian experience when Christ raised the believing soul from a state of spiritual death to share his spiritual life and so to reign with him" (Ladd, *Crucial Questions*, p. 24).

   b. Ladd points out, "An optimistic version of holds that it is the mission of the Church to win the entire world to Christ and thus transform the world into the Kingdom of God. . . The Gospel must not only offer a personal salvation in the future life to those who believe; it must also transform all of the relationships of life here and now and thus cause the Kingdom of God to prevail in all the world. The Gospel of redeeming grace has the power to save the social, economic and political orders as well as the souls of individual believers. The Kingdom of God is like a bit of leaven placed in a bowl of dough which slowly but steadily permeates the dough until the entire lump is leavened. So is the Kingdom of God to transform the world by slow and gradual permeation." (Ladd, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 15).

B. Views that focus exclusively on the future aspects of the kingdom:

1. The kingdom is **future and wholly the work of God**. It has nothing to do with the church and is present only in the consciousness of Jesus.

2. The kingdom is **wholly future and was not even present in the experience of Jesus**, in which case the church finds no basis in His experience or teachings because they serve as only an emergency or interim ethic (‘consistent eschatology’; Johannes Weiss, Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, pp. 328-95, noted in Klappert, "King, Kingdom", NIDNTT; see also Ladd, *Crucial Questions*, pp. 29-32). Bultmann had some basic agreement with this, but sought to demythologize Jesus' words into present existential categories. He focused on the **decision** demands of the kingdom. Because the kingdom forces on man a decision, it is a "power which, although it is entirely future, wholly determines the present" (*History and Eschatology*, p. 51; cited by Klappert, "King, Kingdom", NIDNTT; see also Ladd, "Kingdom of God", ISBE Revised).

C. View that seeks to balance the present and future aspects of the kingdom:

   The kingdom really **belongs to the future, but has over-spilled into the present in the experience of the Christian community** ("inaugurated eschatology"; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom*). Beyerhaus, for example, calls the manifestation of the kingdom today the "Kingdom of Grace", and the final consummation the "Kingdom of Glory" (Beyerhaus, *World Evangelization*, p. 297).
D. "The kingdom is the whole of God's redeeming activity in Christ in the world, the church is the assembly of those who belong to Jesus Christ. Perhaps one could speak in terms of two concentric circles, of which the church is the smaller and the kingdom the larger, while Christ is the centre of both... The church, as the organ of the kingdom, is called to confess Jesus as the Christ, to the missionary task of preaching the gospel in the world; she is also the community of those who wait for the coming of the kingdom in glory, the servants who have received their Lord's talents in prospect of his return." (Ridderbos, "Kingdom of God", NBD).

1. "Is it not better to refer to the church in even more modest terms and call it a sign of the kingdom? In a very special way the power of the new age is manifested in the Church, and it can rightly be said that the Church is at the center of God's redemptive dealings with the world. Such a perception, however, should not lead to a church-centered theology, but rather should become part of a kingdom-oriented theology." (Rotterbeerg, The Promise and the Presence, p. 67).

2. "In summary, while there is an inseparable relationship between the Kingdom and the church, they are not to be identified. The Kingdom takes its point of departure from God, the church from men. The Kingdom is God's reign and the realm in which the blessings of his reign are experienced; the church is the fellowship of those who have experienced God's reign and entered into the enjoyment of its blessings. The Kingdom creates the church, works through the church, and is proclaimed in the world by the church. There can be no Kingdom without a church--those who have acknowledged God's rule--and there can be no church without God's Kingdom; but they remain two distinguishable concepts: the rule of God and the fellowship of men." (Ladd, Theology of the New Testament, p. 119).

3. Williams makes a point worth consideration:

   . . . we will insist that God's kingdom has now been established in his Son overcoming all that transpired in the Fall. Rather than being satisfied with the Word of God alone, we will expect to see the work of God. Faith will not be left dangling and disembodied in an upper story of idealism or mythological thinking. Since God has restored his rightful, direct reign among his people, we will receive the evidence of that reign. At the same time, we will also experience the tension of living in a kingdom both come and coming, which lies at the heart of the New Testament. (Williams, Signs, Wonders, p. 135)

4. We also note four aspects of the relationship between the kingdom and the church (Shenk, "Kingdom", pp. 211-2):

   a. The kingdom creates the church.
   b. The church witnesses to the kingdom.
   c. The church is the instrument of the kingdom.
   d. The church acts under the authority of the kingdom.

IV. Finally, we may ask "What should be the relations between the Kingdom community and the world between Christ's comings?"

A. Several suggestions may be noted (Evangelism and Social Responsibility, p. 34):

   1. First, the new community should constitute a challenge to the old. Its values and ideals, its
moral standards and relationships, its sacrificial life-style, its love, joy and peace--these are the signs of the Kingdom, . . . and present the world with a radically alternative society.

2. Secondly, as the world lives alongside the Kingdom community, some of the values of the Kingdom spill over into society as a whole, so that its industry, commerce, legislation and institutions become to some degree imbued with Kingdom values.

3. Based on the kingdom theology seen in the parables, Blomberg gives four propositions on personal transformation vs. social reform (Interpreting the Parables, pp. 305-8):
   a. God's kingdom is not fully at work unless people are first of all in right relation to him, but true discipleship goes beyond private poverty, seeking to combat evil in all forms in which it appears in this world--personal, social, and institutional.
   b. On the one hand, there is no support in Jesus' parables, and little if any in his teaching overall, for violent, revolutionary attacks on injustice, which at best replace one type of evil with another.
   c. On the other hand, the importunate widow persists in her pleas with an assertiveness which eventually leads a corrupt judge to grant her justice. To the extent that all human authorities are ordained by God (Rom. 13:1), it is appropriate for God's people to use nonviolent means which do not involve them in some sinful compromise to try to right the inequities of society.
   d. Perhaps the most specific lesson which emerges from the parables concerning the type of social justice for which Christians must struggle is that problems of financial and economic inequity are preeminent on God's agenda. While it is clear that the rich fool and the rich man who fails to help Lazarus are not condemned for their riches per se, it is equally evident that it is their refusal to use their abundant resources to help others which most directly demonstrates their lack of right relationship with God (Lk. 12:16-21; 16:19-31).

B. Finally, we note Blomberg's summary of the teaching on the Kingdom of God from Jesus' parables (Interpreting the Parables, p. 304):

The kingdom is therefore neither just God's rule in the lives of Christians today nor simply his coming millennial reign on earth, but his dynamic activity in history, powerfully displayed in the ministry of Jesus, then present in the church which he founded, and ultimately climaxed by Christ's coming earthly kingship.

17. Revelation 15:3-4: and sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. 4 Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

16:7: And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

19:1-2: After this, I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting, "Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, 2 for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

a. All of these are passages of praising God for his mighty deliverance and judgment on enemies

b. "Reigns" or "has begun to reign" (ingressive aorist; 19:6)

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY PROPER IN THE WEST: SELECTED SAMPLE OUTLINES

J. O. Buswell, A Systematic Theology

I. The nature and attributes of God

A. Can God's attributes be known?
B. God is a Spirit
C. Infinite in His being
D. Eternal in His being
E. Unchangeable in His being
F. Infinite, eternal and unchangeable in wisdom
G. Infinite, eternal and unchangeable in power
H. Infinite, eternal and unchangeable in holiness, justice and goodness
I. Infinite, eternal and unchangeable in truth

II. Evidences for the existence of God

A. Purpose of the arguments
B. Restatement of the inductive arguments
   1. The cosmological argument
   2. The teleological argument
   3. The anthropological argument
   4. The moral argument
   5. The ontological argument
C. Concluding inductive arguments

III. The doctrine of the Trinity

A. God is one
B. Jesus is God
C. The Holy Spirit is God
D. The "I"."Thou" Relationship
E. Value of the doctrine of the Trinity

IV. The works of God: (decrees), Creation

A. The angels
B. The material universe and man, ex nihilo
C. The creation of man, summary view
V. The decrees of God, providence, miracle

A. God's eternal decrees
B. Providence
C. Miracles

L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*

I. The being of God

A. The existence of God
B. The knowability of God
C. Relation of the being and attributes of God
D. The names of God
E. The attributes of God in general
F. The incommunicable attributes:
   1. The self-existence of God
   2. The immutability of God
   3. The infinity of God
   4. The unity of God
G. The communicable attributes:
   1. The spirituality of God
   2. Intellectual attributes
   3. Moral attributes
   4. Attributes of sovereignty
H. The Holy Trinity

II. The works of God

A. The divine decrees in general
B. Predestination
C. Creation in general
D. Creation of the spiritual world
E. Creation of the material world
F. Providence
Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*

I. The Nature God and His Attributes

A. The name of God
B. God, the Lord
C. The Holy
D. God is love
E. The Triune God
F. The problem of the "divine attributes"
G. God, the Almighty
H. The omnipresence and the omniscience of God
I. The eternity, unchangingness, faithfulness, and righteousness of God
J. The wisdom and the glory of God

II. The will of God

A. The eternal divine decrees and the doctrine of election
B. The problem of "double predestination"

Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*

I. The knowability of God
II. On the being of God
III. On the nature of God
IV. The holy Trinity
V. God's eternal counsel

Hermann Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*

I. God's incomprehensibility
II. God's knowability
III. God's names
IV. God's incommunicable attributes
V. God's communicable attributes
VI. The holy Trinity
VII. God's counsel

A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*

I. The existence of God

A. Origin of our idea of God's existence
B. Corroborative evidences of God's existence
C. Erroneous explanations, and conclusion

II. The nature, decrees, and works of God

A. The attributes of God
B. The doctrine of the trinity
C. The decrees of God
D. The works of God, or the execution of the decrees
   1. Creation
   2. Preservation
   3. Providence
   4. Good and evil angels

Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma

I. The unity of God: His existence and nature
   A. The existence of God
   B. The nature of God
   C. The attributes or qualities of God

II. The doctrine of the triune God
   A. Dogmatic formulation and positive foundation of the dogma of the Trinity
   B. Speculative explanation of the dogma of the Trinity

III. God the creator
   A. The divine act of creation
   B. The divine work of creation

Toward an African Theology Proper

"African traditional belief in God is both its great strength and its major weakness."
(Gehman, African Traditional Religions, p. 189)

I. Four main comprehensive attributes of God found in ATRs (from Idowu, African Traditional Religion, pp. 149-65):
   A. God is real to Africans.
   B. God is unique (implying God's transcendence)
   C. God is absolute controller of the universe
   D. God is One, the only God of the whole universe

II. Lessons from the doctrine of God in ATR (from Nyamiti, "The Doctrine", pp. 58-68). Nyamiti notes that we can learn valuable lessons for theology proper from both the false ideas and the positive truths concerning of God found in ATRs.
   A. False ideas of God from ATRs
      1. Superstition and the deformation of the idea of God
         a. God's unique role among people has been usurped by the medicine-man, spirits and superstitious objects. Instead of having confidence in God's power, the African often puts his trust in the diviner, in amulets, and in other inefficacious objects. Hence, recourse to God is rather rare, and in most cases the general attitude is almost "practical atheism".
         b. Superstition and the consequent lack of critical spirit lead to a false notion of God. He is sometimes believed to be the Lord of magic, and Himself subject to its influence. His true image is blurred by exaggerated anthropomorphism. Good and bad qualities are equally ascribed to Him. This has in turn led to confusion, pessimism, mistrust and a feeling of insecurity. Innocent people were killed for superstitious purposes. Immoral practices appeared as virtues, and even crystallized in secret societies under the guise of brotherhood, celebration of life, fecundity and human dignity.
2. One-sided anthropocentrism and this-worldliness
   a. African religious behavior is centered mainly on man's life in this world, with the consequence that
      religion is chiefly functional, or a means to serve people to acquire earthly goods (life, health, fecundity, wealth, power and the like) and to maintain social cohesion and order. Their is a lack of a clear distinction between the natural and the supernatural. The next world is believed to be similar to this one. Religious ritual is centered chiefly on human ancestors and other realities such as animals, the earth, elements of vegetation and fecundity, etc. Ritual activity is manifested especially in times of life crisis, natural misfortunes, or at points of the agricultural cycle. Religious cult is, moreover, confined mainly to "natural" groups, the family, clan, or tribe.
   b. The African concept of God is determined by this attitude. The image of God has often been vitiated by excessive anthropomorphism. Natural objects are sometimes revered as divinities (although rarely "adored"). African "this-worldliness" has also produced a strong sense of God's transcendence, but this has led to the weakening of the cult worship due to Him, for He is so far removed as to have no interest in men--the "distant" or "unconcerned" God. Hence, the cult of ancestors and other cosmic realities tends to overshadow divine worship. Except in rare cases, God has neither temples or official ministers.

B. Positive Factors in ATR
   1. African divine names and attributes (e.g., friend, life-giver, protector-fatherhood, fecundity)
      NB: These need to be understood in the light of the cultural elements central to African cultures: dynamism, solidarity, participation, the sacred, and anthropocentrism. In other words, when the African calls God "Father", His fatherhood has to be understood as being dynamic, living and sacred--a mystical vital power that leads to living and mystical solidarity and participation in human community (of the living and the dead), for the benefit (life, power, well-being, protection, liberation, etc.) of the individual as a member of the community in living contact and solidarity with the whole cosmos.
   2. A rich symbolism, including names such as "One Who Clears the Forest", "One Who Makes Things Rot", "Central Roof-Pole", "Insatiable", "Days", and "Mother Chicken". Many of these names could serve in Christian theology, even though not explicitly found in the Bible.
   3. God is seen as the Source of all good things--the fact that He supplies daily bread is not forgotten in African eyes as it tends to be in the West.
   4. The Fatherhood and Motherhood of God: ATR's applies not only male characteristics to God, but female as well. We can benefit from incorporating these important concepts in to our theological reflections.

III. Theology Proper and ATR: thinking from Tokunboh Adeyemo
   A. Most African cultures recognize a supreme God (Adeyemo, Salvation, p. 19).
   B. Providence testifies to God's existence and love (Ibid., p. 23). Sometimes in ATR providence is personified into a divinity. Providence includes "good" and "bad"; rain, fertility, sickness, health, in African cultures generally.
   C. In ATR, God is spirit, but is associated with natural phenomenon; thunder, etc., is God's voice, anger, walking (Ibid., pp. 21-22). He is personal and owner of the universe (Ibid., p. 21). Generally He is One, not "poly"; but the divinities who represent God are often worshipped (Ex. 20:3) in some cultures.
   D. All of God's attributes are upheld in ATR.
   E. ATR and Ex. 20:4: Many traditional concepts of worship involve the use of images or intermediaries.
   F. There is considerable agreement between the biblical and ATR view of God. The most serious shortcoming is that God is isolated (Ibid., p. 28). There is no Immanuel. Also, the tendencies toward polytheism and image worship.

IV. Issues facing ATR regarding theology proper (the following general categories are from McVeigh, God in Africa)
A. Personality: Is God a Person?

B. Monotheism: Is God One?

We must note here the spectrum "Theism" in ATRs (from Shorter, *African Christian Theology*, pp. 98-109):
## Toward an African Theology Proper

### Approach | Description | Examples
--- | --- | ---
**Pure or Strict Monotheism** | God has an effective and direct influence on man's daily life | Pygmies (Gabon and Zaire), Boran (Kenya), Kikuyu (Kenya), Meru (Kenya)
**Modes of Existence of Supreme Being** | The spirits that have a direct effect on life are not conceived as independent of the supreme being, but are refractions, modes, or qualities of that being. | Nuer (Sudan), Dinka (Sudan), Bushmen (South Africa)
**Symmetrical Mediation** | Spirits act as mediators between man and supreme being, though mediator is more than just a "messenger"--they are essential channels of communication. They are separate from the supreme being, but share a mystical identity with him. | Bemba (Zambia), Kimbu (Tanzania), Tumbuka (Malawi)
**Asymmetrical Mediation** | Spirits (separate from the supreme being) act as mediators between man and supreme being, in this case essentially as channels of prayer. They are not the exclusive link with him on all human matters--he may be directly addressed in certain matters. | Luguru (Tanzania), Mende (Sierra Leone)
**Relative Deism** | A concept of God which has little practical religious reality. The supreme being is generally not experienced directly, and has a "tense and equivocal relationship with other divinities or spirits" (seen in rebellion stories, etc.) | Yoruba (Nigeria), Ibo (Nigeria), Nupe (Nigeria), Ganda (Uganda), Akan (Ghana), Ga (Ghana), Ewe (Ghana)
**Pure or Strict Deism** | A concept of God which has no practical religious reality. | Acholi (Uganda)?

### C. Disposition: Does God Love man?

Mbiti notes: In their daily lives, Africans do not talk much about love, and this is something perhaps too deep to be discussed in words. A person shows his love for another more through action than words. In the same way, it is rare to hear or find people talking about the love of God. They, however, assume that God loves them and shows his love through concrete acts and blessings. We do not have many examples in which people talk about the love of God. (Mbiti, Concepts of God, p. 33)

### D. Revelation: Does God reveal Himself? If so, how?

### E. Ethics: Does God Require Righteousness?

1. **How are the requirements known? Where does righteousness come from?**

2. Again, we quote Mbiti: It is customary, among some African peoples, to invoke the name of God when taking oaths or making solemn affirmations. . . Since the concept of God's righteousness is rarely expressed, as far as recorded evidence has shown, I find it hard to imagine that it would dominate the thinking of the peoples concerned, to such a degree as to evolve a personal name out of it. (Mbiti, Concepts of God, p. 40)

The concept of God as judge includes associations with justice, punishment, and retribution (Ibid., p. 76). In many societies, it is believed that God punishes individuals through illness, misfortune, barrenness, or death. (Ibid., p. 77) Some societies consider God to judge and punish them in form of calamities on a national scale. . . According to one Nuer myth, the "white" people have pink skins as God's punishment for incest committed by their first ancestor with his mother. (Ibid., p. 78)


   a. Apart from one or two exceptions, African peoples do not expect any form of judgement in the hereafter. If judgement has to come, it comes in the course of one's earthly life. As far as the sources available to me are concerned, we have two examples where it is expected that the departed undergo a form of judgement in the next world. The Yoruba believe that, following death, a person appears before God to render account of his earthly life. The Lodagaa say that when the spirit of the departed arrives in the next world, older spirits pass judgement upon it, according to the person's earthly life. God does not seem to take a direct part in this judgement, though he steps into the picture when the wicked plead for mercy and he then puts an end to their suffering.
b. The majority of peoples do not expect the next life to reward the departed in any way. In a few cases, the life after death is pictured as being better than this.

c. Concerning retribution and punishment, nearly all the evidence points to the fact that African peoples consider punishment to come in this life and not in the next. There are only a few examples where the concept of punishment in the next life is mentioned.

4. Heaven, Paradise, and Hell: A few societies hold the notion that after death a person goes to heaven. This need not be understood in a technical sense, as it probably means "sky". Our sources do not mention any concepts of what would be the equivalent of either paradise or hell in the hereafter.


a. General: I employ the word "worship" broadly to mean man's act or acts of turning to God. These acts may be formal or informal, regular or extempore, communal or individual, ritual or unceremonial, through word or deed. For the sake of description, I draw a distinction between "sacrifices" and "offerings". "Sacrifices" is used where animal life is destroyed in order to present the animal or part of it, to God, supernatural beings, spirits, or the departed. "Offerings" is used to refer to all the other cases in which animals are not killed, and in which items like foodstuffs, utensils, etc., are used for presenting to God or other recipients. There are many African peoples whose worship of God is reported to be neither formal nor regular.

b. Sacrifices and Offerings: These constitute one of the commonest acts of worship among African peoples. The examples are overwhelmingly many. In some cases, the sacrifice or offering is made to God alone; in others it is to both God, the spirits, and the departed; in others it is only to the spirits and the departed, who are considered intermediaries between God and men.

2. Worship: Prayers, and Other Appeals to God (Mbiti, Concepts of God, pp. 194-212):

a. Prayers: As a rule, there are no sacrifices without prayers. But praying is not always associated with, or accompanied by, sacrifices, and many African peoples pray without making sacrifices and offerings. Prayers are the commonest acts of worship, some of which may be long and formal, but most of them are short, extempore, and to the point. Most of the prayers are addressed to God, and some to the living-dead, divinities, or other beings, many of whom serve as intermediaries. Praying is reported among at least half of the peoples studied in this book and no doubt the number would be greater if more information were available.

b. Invocations and Appeals: Invocations and appeals are shortened and common versions of prayers, some being spontaneous and others being regular formulae of addressing God. Practically all African peoples use invocations and appeals of this kind, and a few examples here will suffice to indicate their nature and the concepts contained in them.

c. Blessings: The pronouncing or requesting of blessings is another form of prayers. As a rule, the person who pronounces the blessing is older or of a higher status than the one who receives it. The rite is generally simple, but in some societies it may be accompanied with spitting or sprinkling water (or other substance) upon those who are being blessed. Public blessings are requested directly from God. Blessings upon individuals are pronounced by those qualified to do so, but it is normally understood that God is the executor who confers the articulate blessing.

d. Greetings, Salutations, and Farewells: It is customary among a number of peoples to include the name of God in their greetings and farewells. When so used, the name serves as an unuttered pronouncement of a blessing and as a symbol of friendliness, good will, and peaceful relationship.

e. Thanksgiving: A number of African peoples offer individual, family, or communal thanksgiving to God. This may, in some cases, be done indirectly through intermediaries. The main events prompting
thanksgiving are harvest, birth of children, cure from illness or barrenness, success in hunting or raid, and the supply of rain, especially after a drought.


a. The use of God's Name: There are many ways in which African peoples use the name of God. These include incorporating it in names of individuals, using it in proverbs, blessings, oaths and curses, greetings, songs and hymns, congratulations, praises, thanksgiving, prayers, rituals and ceremonies, and ejaculations. The use of God's name in proverbs seems relatively common.

b. Veneration, Fear, and Praise:

(1) On the concept of veneration, awe and reverence to God, there is no information in our sources. We are not equipped therefore, to judge or indicate what sort of feeling African peoples have when they worship God. In some cases, they definitely show a sense of reverence or fear.

(2) It is difficult to define "the fear of God", since "fear" can mean both "horror" and "respect, honor, or esteem". That Africans fear God in the sense of esteeming him, is obvious, though they fear him more in attitude and action than in words. He is, for them, in the category of the Creator, the Father, the Sustainer, and Giver of providence, all of which entitle him to be feared, esteemed, and respected. This can be judged from the many examples of their concepts which we have already cited here.

(3) On the concept of praising God, we have only a few oral examples. Again it would seem that Africans express their praise in deeds and attitudes more than in words. The term "praise-names" is used in some of our sources. These names describe mainly the nature and activities of God, rather than literally "praising" him as such. There are many examples of them from all over Africa. We may say that "praise-names" are summaries of people's concepts of the nature and activities of God. They are not liturgical praises of God. This is another of the terms that need redefinition by theologians and anthropologists, and may have to be abandoned for a better term, in order to avoid confusion and misleading implications.

c. Music, Singing, and Dancing in Worship: Written information on the place and use of music, singing, and dancing in worship is disappointingly little. Religious ceremonies and rites are often accompanied by one or more of these activities which are a very popular part of African life in general.

Examples of music, singing, and dancing in worship are certainly more plentiful, and one hopes that research will make these activities and their study available for readers. Some rites do not involve either singing or dancing, but for most religious ceremonies, it is impossible to imagine that African peoples could assemble and part solemnly without singing and dancing in honor to God, or as an expression of their feelings. As the drum is the commonest musical instrument, we can safely assume that it is used in most cases, though other instruments like whistles, bells, horns, guitars (modern), etc. are also used.


a. General: The concept of intermediaries is widespread in African societies. Man feels that he cannot or should not approach God alone or directly, and must do so through the mediation of special persons or other beings. The reason for this feeling and practice derives mainly from the social and political life of different African peoples. It is the custom, for example, among some societies, for the children to speak to their fathers through their mothers or older brothers and sisters. In others, the subjects approach their king or chief only indirectly through the intermediary of those who are closer to him. Certainly these examples do not apply in many societies, but they illustrate the social and political background which has fostered the birth and development of the concept of intermediaries in religious life. There are, however, occasions when people approach God directly without the use of intermediaries.


a. Times of Worship: These may be grouped as follows: every day; at the observation of the rites of passage; at the harvest ceremony; at planting time; in time of war or raid; in time of drought or when rain
is needed; at the time of distress, illness, calamity, or other disaster; before or during an undertaking; annually or monthly; and on special days and occasions.

These then are the "official" times when African peoples turn to God in acts of worship. There are many other occasions when different needs call for turning to God. Priests, rainmakers, and other "special persons" who function as intermediaries, no doubt turn to God on many more occasions, whether the common people are present or not. As far as "chronological" (or mathematical) time is concerned, there is no set hour as such: African peoples turn to God at any time and whenever the need arises.

b. Places of Worship: As for the places of worship, people do not feel bound to any "official spots", for they turn to God at any place just as they do so at any time. There are, however, shrines, temples, altars, groves, and other sacred places which are used particularly for public sacrifices and prayers.

(1) Shrines: A shrine is generally a grove at the centre of which is a large tree, such as the fig tree, or the baobab or just a rock. It is considered a place of safety, and no person, animal, or bird may be killed there. Each community makes sacrifices and offerings at one such shrine.

(2) Temples: We may here regard a temple as a sizeable building or house used for religious purposes and generally cared for by a priest.

(3) Altars: These are the sacred spots where sacrifices and offerings are made. Generally they are found inside the shrines or temples, but they may also be erected in the open.

Such then are the main "official" places of worship among African peoples. They are used mainly for important occasions. Families or individuals turn to God in acts of worship anywhere, without being bound to the feeling that God should be worshipped at a particular place. He is omnipresent, and for that reason they worship him at any place, at any time, where and when the need arises.

G. To McVeigh's categories, we add the concept of God's transcendence and immanence (Mbiti, Concepts of God, pp. 12-18):

1. The transcendence of God: Many foreign writers constantly harp on the note that for African peoples God is "too remote" and virtually excluded from human affairs. This assertion is false, and the many facts contained in this book show clearly that people consider God to be both "far" and "near". God's transcendence is conceived of in various ways.

a. In terms of time: These peoples' concept of God's transcendence would clearly indicate that for them there is no terminus of time when God was not, since from the most ancient time of which man can think, God was in existence.

b. In terms of Space, Distance, and Outreach: Space is a concrete form from which it is relatively easy to draw parallels and comparisons, and spatial language is the commonest medium through which African peoples express their conception of God's transcendence.

c. By some peoples, the transcendence of God is conceived of in terms of worship and exaltation.

d. For some, the transcendence of God means limitlessness.

From all these appellations and sayings about God, it emerges clearly that as spirit God has no limit and transcends all boundaries. There cannot be and there is no "beyond" God, for he is omnipresent and there is no vacuum of existence which he does not fill up. He is or has the most abundant reality of being lacking no completeness and possessing all fullness of being. He is the ultimate, the final and the absolute Supreme Being, beyond the aspiration and imagination of man.

e. God's transcendence is considered in terms of man's explanation or understanding of God. God evades or defies human comprehension; he cannot be grasped within the confines of the human mind. His beginning is unknown; his dwelling place is unknown; what he looks like is unknown; how he carries out his work is unknown; and in every aspect of his nature or being, he is utterly "the Unexplainable". It is perhaps for this reason, that many African peoples have only a few phrases and words that describe
the fact of God's existence, and beyond that they readily admit that they do not know much about him.

f. Other peoples consider God's transcendence in terms of his supreme status in relation to other beings, divinities, objects, and human institutions. We have already seen that God is supremely omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. In these attributes he transcends all other beings.

2. The immanence of God: As we have already mentioned in the previous section, in his transcendent aspect God is thought to be creative and "good". But in his immanent aspect he is considered "bad" and "dangerous"... . God is involved in his creation, and is immanent and close to everything.

The commonest acknowledgement of God's immanence comes out in the various acts of worship, such as sacrifices, offerings, prayers and invocations. In this way, people affirm their belief that the transcendent God who is above all, is also the immanent God who is close to all and to whom they can turn through these acts of worship. For most of their life, many African peoples place God in the transcendental plane, making him seem remote from their daily affairs. But they know that he is immanent, being manifested in natural objects and phenomena, and they turn to him in acts of worship at any place and any time. Thus for them, God is in theory transcendent, but in practice immanent.

V. Toward an African formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity

A. Essential elements in any formulation

1. The oneness, unity of God [possession of one essence or nature]

2. The fact of three persons

3. The deity of the three persons

4. The eternality of the persons

5. The equality of the persons

6. Must draw distinctions between the persons [don't mix them up!]

7. May want to add something regarding the unique functions of each person

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A Bibliography of Cited Sources


