

“God Is ...”



“And this is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” —*Jesus in John 17:3.*

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“God Is ...”

Hebrews 11:6

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Road to Salvation Begins with the Proposition, “God Is ...”*

1. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).
2. “For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:19–30).

B. There Is Ample Proof for the Existence of God—

1. The Argument from Creation (Romans 1:20; Hebrews 3:4)
2. The Argument from Beauty (Psalms 19:1–6)
3. The Argument from Life, Intelligence and Will (Genesis 1:26; Psalms 94:9–11)
4. The Argument from Morality (Genesis 20:9)
5. The Argument from Man’s Spiritual Nature (Acts 17:23, 27–29)

C. Our Conviction Determines Our Conduct—

1. The unbeliever, the atheist or agnostic, does not order his conduct to please God (Psalms 10:3–11).
2. It is possible for the believer to become an unbeliever (Hebrews 3:12, 19).
3. The fallen Christian may deny that “God is” by his conduct (Ezekiel 9:9; cf., Jude 12, “without fear;” *see also*: 2 Peter 2:10, 21, 22; 2 Timothy 3:1–8).
4. Let us consider how we are affected by a strong conviction that God is and what effect that has upon our behavior.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Believing “God Is” Gives Me an Elevated View of Mankind—

1. Unlike the lower creatures man is “in the image” and “after the likeness” of God (Genesis 1:26).
2. I am not a dumb animal driven by instinct and appetite. No, I am a rational, reasoning, moral and spiritual being “a little lower” than the angels and not “far from God”.
3. This knowledge causes me to stand in awe of God who created me making me wonder why He has loved me so (Psalms 8:1–9).
4. Furthermore, this knowledge causes me to treat my fellowman differently than I might otherwise do. Why?
 - a. His life and soul are equally precious (1 Corinthians 11:7).
 - b. Not only are we all of one blood, but we are “his offspring” (Hebrews 12:9).
 - c. He is worthy of what I desire and deserve (Philippians 2:3, Matthew 7:12).

B. Believing “God Is” Gives a Sense of Purpose to My Existence—

1. The great question men ask is: “What is the meaning of life, why am I here?”
2. Knowing there is a God makes me understand that I am accountable and beholden to Someone far greater than myself (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).
3. Life is not a finite journey to be filled with as much pleasure and as little pain as possible (Luke 12:19; 1 Corinthians 15:32). Rather, it is a pilgrimage toward an eternal reunion with Our Maker (Hebrews 11:24–27).
4. I now move on to a higher plane. Desiring to be with God I recognize the imperative of walking with God (Genesis 5:24).
 - a. Faith that “God is” naturally leads to conviction that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).
 - b. The diligent search results in the obedient life (11:8; cf. Galatians 5:6, 7).
 - c. We truly fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; 1 John 5:3) and in this we achieve the sum of that for which God brought us into existence (John 15:8–11).

C. Believing “God Is” Puts the Joy into Living—

1. Life is filled with many unpleasant tasks and experiences; there are hardships of every kind and description.
2. Without the hope of heaven and eternal fellowship with God, life would be dismal, utterly meaningless and frankly not worth living.
3. However, joy is ours in the midst of these trials (James 1:12).
 - a. We rejoice because through trials we are perfected for our ultimate goal of heaven and our Father (1 Peter 1:6, 7).
 - b. We rejoice because our efforts in the kingdom in redeeming souls are not wasted (Philippians 2:14–18).
 - c. We rejoice because we are able to share somewhat in Christ’s sufferings for us (1 Peter 4:13).
 - d. We rejoice because we have a great reward in heaven (Matthew 5:12).

D. Believing “God Is” Takes the Fear Out of Dieing—

1. If there is no God death is the senseless end to a senseless life. We are like the animals in the end, but more miserable.
 - a. The animals have no desires, yearnings or aspirations.
 - b. They do not dream, neither do they purpose.
 - c. Their lives are fully what they ought to be in sleeping, eating, breeding and even in dieing.
2. Yet, if “God is” we know that death is the door through which we must pass to attain all that we hope for. Death is no longer a miserable end to fear, but the first step on the last leg of a wonderful journey to God.
3. The man in Christ is prepared for death (Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8).
4. There is no “sting,” its pangs cannot hold us just as they could not hold Christ Jesus our Lord (1 Corinthians 15:55, 56; Acts 2:24). When the Lord returns for us we will break forth from the grave incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, immortal (1 Corinthians 15:42–44; Romans 2:7, 10).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Salvation Begins with the Proposition: “God Is”—

1. Do you believe that “God is”?
2. Does your conduct indicate that you truly believe “God is”?
 - a. Are you seeking God and His will?
 - b. Are you obeying His commandments?
 - c. Is your life in rebellion?
 - d. Like the fool, do you live without fear of God?

B. Belief that “God Is” Will...

1. Elevate your view of mankind
2. Give purpose to your existence
3. Put joy into living
4. Take fear out of dieing

“God Hath Spoken”

Hebrews 1:1, 2

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *There Is No Faith in God or Salvation from Sin Apart from His Word—*

1. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
2. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).
3. Therefore, without the Word of God we cannot please God.

B. *That God Hath Spoken Is Evident—*

1. It is reasonable to believe that the God who created would communicate with His creation (Psalms 94:9–11).
 - a. The God that made us rational thinking beings is Himself a Rational Thinking Being, necessarily of superior thought guided by infinite wisdom.
 - b. He made speech, hearing and thought. He made us in His image (Genesis 1:26). He must have intended to communicate with us and give us instruction (Psalms 67:1, 2).
2. Just as a parent is able to communicate with an infant child, so God has made himself known unto us.
 - a. He is not beyond our comprehension provided He makes the revelation of Himself (comment on significance of Romans 1:19–22; Acts 17:27).
 - b. Any revelation that God would make would be so conceived and designed as to make it possible for His creation to gradually come to know and understand (Him Psalms 119:111).

C. *The Bible Is the Means by which God Has Spoken—*

1. *The Holy Scriptures* make the claim to be the only revelation of the one true God (Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2 Timothy 3:15–17).
2. The evidence supporting this claim is overwhelming.

- a. *The unity of the Book exemplifies its claim.* The Bible is a collection of 66 books written by about 40 men over a 1500 year span, with a harmonious thread and essential agreement characteristic of a single Mind (1 Corinthians 2:6–13; 2 Peter 1:19–21).
- b. *The character of the Book verifies its origin.* It is not the kind of book a man would write if he could, or could write if he would. It reveals the weaknesses of its heroes and condemns their sins and shortcomings. It presents a morality that none, but one, have lived up to, but which all have admitted is excellent.
- c. *The knowledge revealed in the Book certifies its supernatural character.*
 - (1) Undeniable accuracy in matters of history, geography and contemporaneous culture (e.g. the Hittites, Pilate, writing).
 - (2) No statements of fact that can be demonstrated to be out of harmony with established and knowable principles of physics, earth science and mathematics (e.g., the ark properly proportioned for sailing, *circle of the earth* in Isaiah 40:22, *one blood* in Acts 17:26).
 - (3) Biblical prophecy obviously revealed and written years, and in some cases centuries, before the events transpired establish the supernatural superintendence given to its authors (Daniel’s visions, Isaiah’s reference to *Cyrus*, the prophecies concerning Christ).

D. As Noted Before, Conviction Determines Conduct—

- 1. The unbeliever, the atheist or agnostic, does not order his conduct to please God (Psalms 10:3–11). Neither does the fallen Christian (Hebrews 3:12, 19).
- 2. All unbelief and apostasy begins with doubting the Word of God.
 - a. “I’ll take the words of Christ, but I’m not so sure about those Apostles.”
 - b. “There are many things the Bible which just cannot be true, like that fish story and the tale of making a man out of dust.”
 - c. “When science, reason and experience contradict the Bible we cannot ignore the preponderance of evidence that necessitates we conclude differently.”

- d. "We do many things for which we have no Bible authority."
- 3. Let us consider how we are affected by a strong conviction that "God hath spoken" and what effect that has upon our behavior.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Since "God Hath Spoken" I Must Not Neglect What He Said—

- 1. Hebrews 2:1–4
- 2. "Dust on the Bible is indicative of a drought in the soul."
 - a. The Bible is still the best selling book of all time. More copies of it sold in more languages than any other book.
 - b. However, it is probably the least read book that is owned. Most know very little of what it actually says, and less of what requires for salvation.
- 3. If I truly believe the Bible to be the Word of the One True God...
 - a. I will read and study it with a willing enthusiasm (Psalms 119:97, 131).
 - b. I will make time for the consideration of it (Psalms 63:6; 119:147–148).
 - c. I will make opportunity to be instructed therein by those who know it best (Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2).
 - d. It is an unconvincing affirmation that leads to so little real study and inquiry into the pages of what is "the mind of Christ."
- 4. There should be in all of us an insatiable yearning to commune with our God; a yearning that can only be satisfied by hearing Him speak to us.

B. Since "God Hath Spoken," I Should Expect to Understand Him—

- 1. Acts 17:11
 - a. The nobility of the Bereans lay in their unwillingness to accept anything without proving it by the Scriptures.
 - b. Their confidence was in God, His word and their ability to understand it for themselves (1 John 4:1).
- 2. There are so many that rely upon a preacher, family member or close friend to "tell" them what the Bible says or what they should believe.

- a. Numerous times in the Scriptures we are warned that men can and will lead us astray if we are not diligent to test the things we are taught.
 - b. Our confidence is in the word not men (1 Corinthians 4:6; Titus 1:11; 2 Timothy 2:15–17).
3. God has not placed His word in the keeping of special handlers, a clergy, who have a supernatural gift of understanding (Ephesians 3:1–4).
- a. We are commanded to understand (Ephesians 5:17).
 - b. We are told that we can know and do the truth (John 8:32).
 - c. We can not only know, but also do the will of the Father in Heaven (Matthew 7:21, 24).

C. Since “God Hath Spoken” I Must Tell Others—

1. What if...
 - a. I knew how to cure cancer?
 - b. I had discovered a map that led to riches beyond belief?
 - c. I found the way to feed the whole world?
 - d. You would expect me to share this good news with you and everyone we met, even strangers and enemies.
2. Once God has spoken to you the greatest news that has ever been heard is now in your possession.
3. Examples of those to whom God had spoken:
 - a. The Samaritan woman (John 4)
 - b. The demoniac (Mark 5:18–20)
 - c. Witnesses to the healing of the deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:31–36)
 - d. Andrew and Philip (John 1)
4. If we truly believe God has spoken, we cannot be silent with those around us.

D. Since “God Hath Spoken” I Expect Him to Enforce His Word—

1. It is unbelievable that one should believe the Bible is God’s Word and then live a life contrary to its principles.
 - a. “I believe the Bible, but...”

- b. "I know the Bible says this, but I think..."
 - c. "I know it's not in the Bible, but I feel..."
 - d. "The Bible might not allow this, but we like..."
2. The God whom we serve is the God revealed in the Bible.
- a. He is the God who took Adam out of the Garden of Eden for one sin.
 - b. He is the God who rejected Cain's offering.
 - c. He is the God who destroyed the world with a flood.
 - d. He is the God who destroyed Egypt with the plagues.
 - e. He is the God who left Israel strewn in heaps in the wilderness.
 - f. He is the God that consumed Nadab and Abihu with fire.
 - g. He is the God who opened the earth to swallow Dathan and Abiram.
 - h. He is the God who struck Uzza dead.
 - i. He is the God that smote Uzziah with leprosy.
 - j. He is the God that drove Nebuchadnezzar like a mad man into the fields.
3. Judgment is according to the Word of God:
- a. John 12:48
 - b. Romans 2:6, 16
 - c. Revelation 20:12

III. CONCLUSION:

A There Is No Salvation Apart from God's Word—

- 1. Do you believe that God has spoken and the Bible is His Word?
- 2. If so how has that transformed your life? How does that truth direct your conduct?

B. Belief that "God Hath Spoken" Will—

- 1. Motivate genuine interest for study and meditation.
- 2. Cause you to seek your own understanding and not to rely upon others.
- 3. Lead you to tell others what you have learned.
- 4. Give rise to an expectation of judgment according to His word.

“God Is the Rewarder”

Hebrews 11:6

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *As We Have Before Observed, Conviction Determines Conduct—*

1. Whether or not we believe God exists determines our conduct before Him (Psalms 10:3–11).
 - a. The man who denies the existence of Deity is not concerned with pleasing Him, neither does he fear displeasing Him.
 - b. Since there is no God, he says, man is a law unto himself. Every man does that which is right in his own eyes (Proverbs 30:11–14).
 - c. This principle exemplified daily by those around us (Psalms 14:1; 53:1).
2. Similarly, what we believe *about* God, viz., regarding His character, determines our conduct before Him (Hebrews 11:26).
 - a. The man who doubts either God’s ability or His willingness to bring into judgment will undoubtedly behave without regard to His laws (Isaiah 5:19-21; 29:15; Job 22:12–14; Ezekiel 9:9; see: Numbers 15:38–41).
 - b. The man who is ignorant of God, either by neglect or default, will learn to be a law unto himself (Judges 2:10, 11). He will make for himself a god after his own image and likeness (Galatians 4:8; Romans 1:21–31).

B. *Therefore, It’s not Enough to Believe “God Is”—*

1. To be saved requires more than an acknowledgement of God’s existence. It necessitates the acceptance of the Divine character (Exodus 20:5, 6; 34:6, 7; Numbers 4:18; Deuteronomy 4:31, 32; Psalms 86:15).
2. Paul sums up the character of God in this one word, “rewarder.”
 - a. The word designates a “remunerator,” one who pays for goods provided, services rendered or losses incurred (see: *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*).

- b. Thus, Paul indicates that God is one who will make a fair, just and equitable remuneration or reward to all that seek Him.

C. *There Is Ample Evidence to Persuade that God Is Indeed a Rewarder—*

1. There is the evidence found in creation (Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:15–17).
2. There is the evidence found in the relationship of the Old Testament saints:
 - a. Adam & Eve (Genesis 1 and 2)
 - b. Enoch (Genesis 5:24)
 - c. Noah (Genesis 6 through 9)
 - d. Abraham (Genesis 12ff)
 - e. Job
 - f. Jacob (Genesis 27ff)
 - g. Joseph (Genesis 37ff)
 - h. Moses (Exodus)
 - i. David (2 Samuel 7:8, 9)
 - j. Solomon (2 Chronicles 9:22, 23)
3. There is the evidence found in the mission of Christ:
 - a. It was a mission of mercy and compassion (Matthew 8:16, 17; 20:34).
 - b. It was a mission of reconciliation and restoration (John 3:17).
 - c. It was a mission of service (John 13:4–17).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. *Persuaded that God Is a Rewarder, I Will Diligently Seek Him—*

1. *“He that cometh to God”* must do so by Jesus Christ (John 14:6).
2. *“He that cometh to God”* must be taught of God (John 6:44, 45).
3. *“He that cometh to God”* must believe and obey the Gospel (Matthew 11:28–30).
 - a. Believe unto righteousness (Romans 10:10, 17)
 - b. Repent unto life (Acts 11:18)
 - c. Confess unto salvation (Romans 10:10)
 - d. Be baptized unto remission of sins (Acts 2:38)

4. A diligent search for God will yield favorable results (Acts 17:27; cf., v. 11).
5. The man who will not search the Scriptures and obey the Gospel will not be rewarded of God.

B. Persuaded that God Is a Rewarder, My Faith Will Endure—

1. There is a temporal benefit, blessing or reward in seeking after God.
 - a. This was evidence in the lives of some of the Old Testament saints.
 - b. This is affirmed in the New Testament (1 Timothy 4:7, 8):
 - (1) There is peace (Philippians 4:6, 7)
 - (2) There is comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:13)
 - (3) There is joy (Philippians 3:3)
 - (4) There is freedom (Galatians 5:1)
 - (5) There is success (Revelation 5:9, 10)
2. However, Paul does not have in view any present reward in Hebrews 11:6.
 - a. The one that comes to God “must *believe*...that He is a rewarder.”
 - b. Therefore, the reward is a matter of *faith*. It is a thing *unseen* and *hoped for* (Hebrews 11:1).
 - c. That for which we hope, we have not *seen* (Romans 8:24).
3. Now, if we are truly convicted of both God’s ability and His desire to reward (Romans 8:31, 32), then we will endure and wait for it (8:25).
 - a. We will suffer hardship and endure suffering to complete victory (Romans 8:35–37).
 - b. We will remain loyal to the doctrine of Christ (cf. 2 Timothy 1:12, 13).

C. Persuaded that God Is a Rewarder, I Will Look to Things Above—

1. The saint fully persuaded of the eternal reward will not be sidetracked into the pursuit of the mundane (Colossians 3:1, 2; cf., Luke 8:14; 22:34; Mark 4:19).
 - a. This is an ever present danger. Perhaps, it is the thing that troubles us most (1 Timothy 6:6–10; Hebrews 13:5, 6).
 - b. We cheat God out of more and more of our time and talent by being entangled in the cumbersome burdens that worldlings bear—job, school,

- family, friends, and community. God must come first (Matthew 6:31–33).
2. In order to avoid the pitfalls of covetousness, we must be confident of the value of the treasure we are saving:
 - a. Its value seen in its durability (Matthew 6:19–20; Romans 2:6, 7; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 1 Corinthians 9:25).
 - b. Its value suggested by what will *not* be there (Revelation 21:1-4).
 - c. Its value implied in lesser-to-greater comparison with the stresses of life (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Are You Fully Persuaded that God Is a Rewarder?

1. A candid evaluation of your spiritual affairs will lead you to the answer.
 - a. Have you obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - b. Are you enduring the hardships and trials that come to all believers with grace and gratitude?
 - c. Do you care more for things and pleasures than you do for the Church of Christ?
2. Having answered truthfully, what should you do right now?

B. God Also Rewards Those that Do not Seek Him!

1. God will render to all according to His works (Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6–11).
 - a. The believer will receive eternal life.
 - b. The unbeliever will receive (Romans 6:22, 23; Matthew 25:41, 44).
2. There is no escaping this reward (Hebrews 2:2, 3).
 - a. It is a fearful thing to fall into His hands (Hebrews 10:30, 31).
 - b. God will reward him (2 Timothy 4:14).

“God Is Love”

I John 4:7, 8

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *Partakers of the Divine Nature*—

1. The process by which the believer is transformed into the likeness of his God and the Savior Jesus Christ is by adding to faith all that the Word of God, “the present truth,” is able to supply (2 Peter 1:2–12).
2. By obedience to the Gospel we escaped the corruption that was in the world through lust, that is, we were freed from the damning constraints of sin (Romans 6:7, 14–17) and we were made “new” in Christ (Romans 6:4).
 - a. It is a spiritual “do over”, “all things are made new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).
 - b. Our slate is wiped clean; we are given a new page upon which to write.
The past is forgotten never to be found or remembered again (Micah 7:19; Isaiah 1:18; Psalms 103:12)
 - c. We are set free in our acquisition of those qualities and attributes which reflect God and His Christ in our lives (Galatians 5:22–25).
3. Therefore, as we walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh we acquire a “spiritual mind” which pleases God, puts to death the deeds of the body and leads to eternal life (Romans 8:4–14),

B. *In Order to Know God We Must Know Love*—

1. Among the things of the “divine nature,” love is paramount (1 John 4:7).
 - a. It is a defining attribute of God (1 John 4:8).
 - b. We cannot know God and not learn to love (*ibid*; 1 Corinthians 13:13)
 - c. Love is that quality which defines discipleship to the world (John 13:34, 35).
2. In order to achieve this goal, we start at God and His infinite love (1 John 4:19), learning from Him what it means to love.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. True Love Is Revealed by God—

1. "Love" is commonly and mistakenly viewed as affection, emotion, strong or intense liking, etc.
 - a. The dictionary indicates that these feelings which are called "love" may be based upon:
 - (1) "personal or familial ties"
 - (2) "regard or shared experiences or interests"
 - (3) "sexual desire"
 - (4) "emotional attachment, as for a pet or treasured object"
 - (5) "enthusiasm" (e.g. "loves sports")
 - (6) "brotherhood"
 - (7) "need"
 - b. This misconception makes God's commandments respecting love difficult to understand and even harder to keep (Matthew 5:43-44; Romans 12:14-21; Luke 6:27-35).
 - c. However, love, as it characterizes God, is not based upon feelings of affection or the admiration of superior qualities, but rather it is rooted only in the desire to do what is best for the object of God's love.
 - (1) God's love for man (Acts 14:16; Matthew 5:45; Psalms 8:3-9)
 - (2) God's love for Israel (Deuteronomy 7:7, 8)
 - (3) God's love for the church (Ephesians 2:4-6; Titus 3:4-6; 1 John 4:9, 10; Romans 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 8:9, 10; John 3:16)
2. God is love (1 John 4:8)
 - a. He is the source of all that truly is love.
 - (1) Having created us with the capacity for and the yearning after love He himself must be capable of love.
 - (2) His selfless acts in creation, providence and redemption are an eternal manifestation of His loving nature (1 John 4:10).

- (3) His love for us is the impetus to loving Him (1 John 4:19).
- b. His love is the pattern for loving.
 - (1) Discerning His love for us teaches us how to love others (1 John 4:11).
 - (2) We learn that love is not an abstract concept, it is a determination of the heart (1 John 3:16–18).
 - (3) When we love, His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:12). It is in putting His example to work that we acquire the divine nature which we seek.
- c. He is the judge of love.
 - (a) Loving is not a subjective activity critiqued by an ambiguous standard (Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:18–21).
 - (b) Love is ... (1 Corinthians 13).
 - (c) Love can be perfected and ready to enter judgment (1 John 4:17–21).

B. *Since God Is Love, I Will...*

1. Make every effort to perfect myself as the Father in Heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:45–48).
 - a. Free myself of respect of persons (Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:1; 1 Peter 1:17).
 - b. Learn to love my enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27).
 - c. Live by the golden rule (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31).
2. Learn compassion for the lost (Matthew 9:36–38; 18:27; Mark 6:34; Luke 15:20; Jude 22, 23).
 - a. We need to be moved with pity and a real desire to save those whom we know to be lost (Romans 9:3; 10:1).
 - b. Compassion begins with remembering where I was in sin (1 Timothy 1:11–16; cf., Galatians 6:1).
 - c. When I have gained compassion for the lost then I will start trying to reach them with the Gospel (Acts 17:16).
3. Open my heart and hands to my brethren (1 John 3:16, 17).
 - a. Sometimes we are harder on the brethren than we are on the world.

- b. We can open up the wallet, volunteer or both for those in the world and do nothing for the saints who are equally in need (John 13:35).
 - c. When we have truly learned the love of God we are ready to serve the brethren (Galatians 5:13; Acts 9:36; Titus 3:8, 14).
4. Sincerely seek the interests of others ahead of myself (Philippians 2:3–4).
- a. There is little room in the heart for real love when we are primarily concerned about ourselves.
 - b. Jesus was not thinking about Himself when He went to the cross (Matthew 26:39; Matthew 20:28).
 - c. If every action of kindness or service is scrutinized through the filter of “how is this going to affect me?” little to nothing will be accomplished in the Kingdom of Jesus.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. God Is Love—

1. He is the source of all love.
2. He is the pattern for loving.
3. He is the final arbiter of what real love is.

B. Do You Love God?

1. Not if you have not obeyed the Gospel (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2)
2. Not if you do not show proper love for the saints of God (1 John 3:16–19; 5:1, 2)
3. What will you do about coming to love God today?
 - a. Obey His Gospel (Romans 10:10; Acts 11:14; Acts 2:38)
 - b. Love the brotherhood (1 Peter 1:22, 23).

God Is Just

Isaiah 45:21

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. “How Should Man Be Just with God?”

1. This was the question that troubled Job (9:2).
 - a. He knew men could be reconciled to God.
 - b. But just how it was possible—knowing God was holy and just—was beyond his comprehension.
 - c. Job knew that he was not without sin; he also knew that there were none among men who could make the claim and effect reconciliation (9:33).
2. In our studies we are seeking out the “divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) in order to be partakers thereof. From Job’s query we learn the importance and the difficulty of the task.

B. What Do We Mean by “Just”?

1. The Lexicons—
 - a. **DIKAIOS**, was first used of persons observant of **DIKE**, “custom, rule, right,” especially in the fulfillment of duties towards gods and men, and of things that were in accordance with right. The English word “righteous” was formerly spelt “rightwise,” i.e., (in a) straight way. In the NT it denotes “righteous,” a state of being right, or right conduct, judged whether by the divine standard, or according to human standards, of what is right. Said of God, it designates the perfect agreement between His nature and His acts [in which He is the standard for all men], (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*).
 - b. **DIKAION, DIKAIA, DIKAION** (from **DIKE** right), properly, the Hebrew צַדִּיק , “observant of hJ di kh, “righteous, observing divine and human

laws; one who is such as he ought to be" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*).

2. The Justice of God According to the Theological Dictionaries—

- a. *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, "JUSTICE OF GOD that perfection of his nature whereby he is infinitely righteous in himself and in all he does, the righteousness of the divine nature exercised in his moral government."
- b. *McClintock & Strong's Cyclopaedia*, "(צִדְקָה, di ki >a , the quality of *being right* morally). The righteousness of God is the essential perfection of his nature, and is frequently used to designate his holiness, justice, and faithfulness (Genesis 18:25; Deuteronomy 6:25; Psalm 31:1; 119:137, 142; Isaiah 45:23; 46:13; 51:5-8; 56:1). The righteousness of Christ denotes not only his absolute perfection (Isaiah 51:11; 1 John 2:1; Acts 3:14), but is taken for his perfect obedience unto death as the sacrifice for the sin of the world (Daniel 9:24; Romans 3:25, 26; 5:18, 19; Jeremiah 23:6; John 1:29). The righteousness of the law is that obedience which the law requires (Romans 3:10, 20; 8:4). The righteousness of faith is the justification which is received by faith (Romans 3:21-28; 4:3-25; 5:1-11; 10:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:21). Righteousness is sometimes used for uprightness and just dealing between man and man (Isaiah 60:17), also for holiness of life and conversation (Daniel 4:27; Luke 1:6; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 5:9).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. *Justice Demonstrated from the Scriptures—*

1. In Man...

- a. To be just is to be blameless, without fault, beyond condemnation under the law. In this sense many saints are said to be just or righteous:
 - (1) Joseph (Matthew 1:19)
 - (2) Zachariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6)
 - (3) John the Baptist (Mark 6:20)
 - (4) Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50)

(5) Cornelius (Acts 10:22)

b. Justice reflected in our actions (1 Thessalonians 2:10).

(1) Just Words (Matthew 12:36, 37)

(a) Truth Speaking (1 Timothy 1:9, 10; Romans 3:4)

(b) Truth Teaching (Luke 20:21; Romans 7:12; Matthew 23:23)

(c) Truth Confessing (Luke 23:3; Matthew 26:74; Romans 10:9; Matthew 10:32, 33; John 12:42, 43)

(2) Just Deeds (Micah 6:8)

(a) Fair Trading (Leviticus 19:36; Proverbs 11:1)

(b) Fair Treatment (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31)

(3) Just Judgment (John 7:24)

(a) Not according to appearance (John 7:24)

(b) Not according to suspicion (1 Timothy 6:4)

(c) Not by misrepresentation (Luke 20:20)

(d) Not by subversion (Deuteronomy 16:18–19)

(e) Not with respect of persons (Proverbs 24:23, 24)

2. In God...

a. God's justice confessed by men:

(1) Bildad (Job 8:3)

(2) Abraham (Genesis 18:25)

(3) Moses (Deuteronomy 10:17, 18)

(4) David (Psalms 7:9–11; 89: 14)

(5) Nehemiah (9:33)

b. God's justice confessed by angels and demons:

(1) Demon in the synagogue (Luke 4:34)

(2) Gabriel of Christ (Luke 1:35)

(3) The Cherubim of the Father (Rev 4:8)

(4) The Seraphim of the Father (Isaiah 6:2, 3)

- c. God professes Himself to be just (Isaiah 45:21)
 - (1) Just words (Psalms 119:172; Hebrews 6:16–18)
 - (2) Just deeds (1 John 1:9; Romans 3:26)
 - (3) Just judgments (Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:5–11)

B. God’s Justice Found in the Forgiveness of Sins—

1. The problem stated: the resolution between the facts that
 - a. God “would have all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:3, 4; 2 Peter 3:9).
 - b. But “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23); the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Thus, JUSTICE demands propitiation, and it must be genuine (Hebrews 9:22, 10:4)
2. The problem resolved: “Christ died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3, John 1:29, 1 John 2:2).
 - a. We were redeemed through his blood (Ephesians 1:7)
 - b. He bare our sins (1 Peter 2:24)
3. Thus, in the death of Christ justice and mercy blend together (Hebrews 9:15, Romans 3:25ff).

C. Because God Is Just ...

1. *I Will Seek Him Out for the Forgiveness of Sins (1 John 1:9)*
 - a. God’s justice is tempered by His mercy (Psalms 85:10; 89:14).
 - b. While we serve a just God, He is not merciless (2 Samuel 22:26–28).
 - c. God wants to save us and will save us, if we will yield to Him (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4).
2. *I Will Keep His Commandments (1 John 3:7).*
 - a. God’s commandments are righteousness (Psalms 119:172).
 - b. They that do His commandments are just and righteous before Him (1 Thessalonians 2:10).
 - c. Having sought God’s mercy and found out, I want to know and keep his commandments (1 John 2:29).

3. *I Will Trust Him (Psalms 4:5).*
 - a. He will never lie (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2).
 - b. He will always do right (Genesis 18:25; Nehemiah 9:33).
 - c. He keeps his promises (Hebrews 6:18).
4. *I Will Be a Just & Merciful Person in My Relations with Others (Proverbs 21:21)*
 - a. I must remember how God has dealt with me in my dealings with my brethren (Ephesians 4:32).
 - b. I do not want to be the “unmerciful servant” (Matthew 18:31–35).
 - c. Mercy is to the merciful, forgiveness to the forgiving (Matthew 5:7; Galatians 3:11, 12).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. No Man Is Just Before God—

1. All have sinned and fallen short (Romans 3:23).
2. Job was right, we cannot stand before God on our own and there is none to stand there for us.
3. But God, “a just God and a Savior,” sent Jesus, “the Just One,” to be our Redeemer, giving the “just for the unjust” (1 Peter 3:18).

B. Do You Want to Be Right Before God?

1. Believe (Romans 10:10)
2. Repent (Acts 11:18)
3. Confess (Romans 10:10)
4. Be immersed, baptized, into Christ (Acts 2:38)

God Is Good

Matthew 19:17

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Text in Context*—

1. The Rich Young Ruler came to Jesus seeking eternal life (v. 16; Mark 10:17).
 - a. Sometimes, I think we are too hard on this man (cf. Luke 10:25).
 - b. He apparently was sincere (Mark 10:17, 21).
 - c. His response to Jesus' answer indicates that he understood more than most regarding justification (v. 20; cf. Romans 7:10).
2. He approaches Jesus with the common address for a respected Rabbi intending no disrespect (Matthew 23:7–10).
 - a. Jesus, as He often did, used this as an opportunity to subtly teach the truth concerning His divinity (cf., Matthew 22:42–45). He was gently bringing this young man to a better understanding of Himself.
 - (1) God alone is good (Psalms 107:1; 1 Chronicles 16:34; et. al.).
 - (2) You say that I am good.
 - (3) Therefore, you say that I am God (cf., John 18:33, 34).
 - b. Jesus turns to his question about eternal life:
 - (1) Keep the commandments. Not sinless perfection, but blamelessness before God (Luke 1:6).
 - (a) This young ruler sensed more was needed: "What lack I yet?"
 - (b) Any perceptive Jew would (Romans 7:22–24).
 - (2) "One thing thou lackest..."
 - (a) Jesus did not want the money; He wanted the man.
 - (b) The love of money stood between him and the Word of Life.

B. The Text in Explanation—

1. “Goodness” according to the Lexicons:

- a. **AGATHOS**, describes that which, being “good” in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect...in a moral sense, frequently of persons and things. God is essentially, absolutely and consummately “good,” (Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19).
- b. **CHRESTOS**, of things, “that which is pleasant,” of persons, “kindly, gracious,” ... “good” in 1 Corinthians 15:33, “goodness” in Romans 2:4.
- c. **CHRESTOTES**, denotes “goodness” (a) in the sense of what is upright, righteous, Romans 3:12 (translated “good”); (b) in the sense of kindness of heart or act, said of God, Romans 2:4; 11:22 (thrice); Ephesians 2:7 (“kindness”); Titus 3:4 (“kindness”); said of believers and rendered “kindness,” 2 Corinthians 6:6; Colossians 3:12; Galatians 5:22 (RV; KJV, “gentleness”). It signifies “not merely goodness as a quality, rather it is goodness in action, goodness expressing itself in deeds; yet not goodness expressing itself in indignation against sin, for it is contrasted with severity in Romans 11:22, but in grace and tenderness and compassion.”
- d. **AGATHOSUNE**, “goodness,” signifies that moral quality which is described by the adjective **AGATHOS**. It is used, in the NT, of regenerate persons, Romans 15:14; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11.
- e. Trench, following Jerome, distinguishes between **CHRESTOTES** and **AGATHOSUNE** in that the former describes the kindlier aspects of “goodness,” the latter includes also the sterner qualities by which doing “good” to others is not necessarily by gentle means...Lightfoot regards **CHRESTOTES** as a kindly disposition towards others; **AGATHOSUNE** as a kindly activity on their behalf.” (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*)

2. What is God’s “goodness” in Matthew 19:17?

- a. Summarizing the lexical definitions and remembering what Jesus said concerning God’s unique position relative to goodness, we learn:

- (1) There is no one who is as God is, wholly good (cf. 1 John 1:5).
 - (2) This goodness is not in appearance only, but also in effect and affect.
 God's "goodness" extends from His character to include all His thoughts, words and actions.
 - (3) All that God does is good, and the affect it has upon us is good.
- b. God's essential goodness is not to be confused with His kindness or gentleness (Romans 11:22). Neither should we conclude that one excludes the other. On the contrary, "goodness" necessitates both in a righteous and merciful God.
- (1) God's goodness includes His tender acts of mercy, chastening reproofs and punitive judgments
 - (2) Consider Psalms 107:1ff
 - (a) Vv. 8, 9, [After extolling God for His mercy in delivering Israel from Egypt and leading them into Canaan.]
 - (b) V. 15, [After praising God's retribution against Israel's rebellion in idolatry that resulted in their captivity to save a remnant.]
 - (c) V. 21, [After praising God for the healing power of His Word to the obedient, penitent believer.]
 - (d) V. 31, [After thanking God for His mercy in delivering the believer from testing and trial in life.]
 - (e) V. 32, [In anticipation of praising God for His providence in physical blessing, prospering the helpless and overthrowing the oppressor.]
 - (f) V. 43, [Observe these and understand the "goodness" of God.]

C. The Text in Application—

- 1. We have been approaching our study of God with the knowledge that conviction determines behavior (Psalms 10:4, 5; cf. Ezekiel 9:9; 2 Peter 2:10–12; Jude 12; 2 Timothy 3:1–8, et. al.).
- 2. What we believe about God shapes our responses to Him and His Word.
 - (a) If we are convicted of the existence of God (Hebrews 11:6), we will seek

Him and find Him through His Word (Acts 17:27; Hebrews 1:2).

(b) If we are assured of the loving character of God (1 John 4:8) and His desire that we should draw near (Hebrews 11:6), then we will surely come to God.

(c) By the same token, if we deny His existence, diminish His power or corrupt His character we do so in order to promote our own lusts and desires which are contrary to His will. Thus, we deceive ourselves, resist the truth, make the Creator into the image of the creature and are reprobate concerning the truth.

3. What we believe about the goodness of God will surely shape our relationship to Him and be reflected in what we believe, teach and practice in His name.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. God's Goodness Demonstrated—

1. God's Goodness is demonstrated in the creation order (Psalms 8:1–9).
 - a. "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits..." (Psalms 68:19).
 - b. "*He sends the sunshine and the rain...*" (Matthew 5:43, 44; Acts 14:17).
 - c. Indeed, "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).
 - d. How is it that we cannot be awed by the beneficence of God and humbled by the exalted place in which He has set us? Rather, such abundant blessing ought to drive us straight into His arms.
2. God's goodness is demonstrated in His Laws (Romans 7:12).
 - a. God's commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3; cf. Matthew 11:28).
 - b. His statutes promote happiness and health:
 - (1) The OT Sabbath (cf., Mark 2:27)
 - (2) God's marriage law/ biblical pattern for the family
 - (3) Concepts of a just judiciary, standards of evidence, capital punishment
 - (4) The Golden Rule (Luke 6:31; Leviticus 19:18)
 - c. These demonstrations in God's laws surely indicate that the deity is genuinely concerned about even the least of men ("do not oppress the poor, the widow or the orphan") while maintaining a fair and equitable

system of just without respect of persons (“do not pervert the justice of the rich in favor of the poor”). Surely, no just man would fear appearing before such a judge as that!

3. His goodness demonstrated in righteous acts and judgments (Genesis 18:25).
 - a. The Flood (2 Peter 2:5; Genesis 6)
 - b. Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7; Genesis 19)
 - c. The Amorites (Genesis 15:16–21; 1 Kings 21:26; cf. Daniel 8:23)
 - d. The Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:1-3; Exodus 17:8–16; Deuteronomy 25:17–19)
 - e. In all these judgments no trace of malignity or capricious vindictiveness can be found. God’s judgments came after much pleading and warning through prophets and demonstrations of mercy. The wickedness condemned is obvious and worthy of the result.
4. His goodness seen in overt acts of kindness and mercy (Isaiah 63:7).
 - a. Hagar in the wilderness (Genesis 21:14–19)
 - b. Abimelech (Genesis 20:6)
 - c. The Jews in Sinai (Deuteronomy 8:4; Nehemiah 9:21)
 - d. The three Hebrew children in Babylon (Daniel 3)
 - e. Any miracle of Jesus (Matthew 14:14)
 - f. How can any doubt the goodness of God when he sees the tender feelings that God has toward His creatures? Such a goodness as this ought to drive away fear and dread. It ought to melt the heart to see it demonstrated over and over again in the many compassionate acts of the loving Savior.
5. God’s goodness revealed in the message of salvation (Psalms 25:8–10).
 - a. God is “seeking” worshippers through the Gospel (John 4:24).
 - b. He is not far from any one of us (Acts 17:27).

- c. God's goodness is realized in obedience to the Gospel which reveals and explains His plan of righteousness (2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12; Romans 11:22).
 - (1) We experience the grace and mercy of God in the Gospel (Titus 3:5).
 - (2) When this glorious message is preached we are led to repentance (Romans 2:4).
- d. In the Gospel we see God's goodness displayed in His...
 - (1) Love (John 3:16)
 - (2) Mercy (Luke 7:42)
 - (3) Universal desire for the salvation of man (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:10)
 - (4) Longsuffering (2 Peter 3:15)
 - (5) Continued intercession (Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 1:6–9)

B. What Does God's Goodness Mean to Me?

1. Since God is truly good, I will diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).
2. Since God is truly good I will obey His laws confident they are for my good.
3. Since God is manifestly good I will be confident in His judgments and know that He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked and wants all men to repent—even me.
4. Since God is absolutely good I will meditate upon His acts in such a way as to behold both "the goodness and severity of God," knowing that His goodness is for those that diligently seek Him.
5. Since God is without doubt good I will hear the Gospel and obey endeavoring daily to walk in the light as He is in the light knowing He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Will You Let God's Goodness Lead You to Repentance?

B. Obey and Be Saved Today!

God Is Your Father

Luke 11:1-13

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Almighty Maker and Judge of all the Earth Is Your Father.*

1. The text in context:
 - a. The Disciples came to Jesus while He was praying for instruction in how to pray. They desired to know this because John had taught his Disciples to pray. Obviously, they felt the need to pray and, knowing Jesus was a man of prayer, were confident that He would guide them.
 - b. Jesus answered their request not only teaching them “how” but also for “what” and “why” they should pray.
 - (1) Verses 2-4 teach the disciple for what to pray.
 - (2) Verses 5-8 teach the disciple how to pray.
 - (3) Verses 9-13 teach the disciple why to pray.
2. Exploring the text:
 - a. It is a beautiful thought to contemplate that the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Creator is a Father to His creatures (Hebrews 12:9).
 - b. It is a comfort to know that the Judge of All the Earth to whom vengeance belongs is the Father of unregenerate mankind (1 John 4:14).
 - c. It brings a special joy and peace to the heart to believe that I am a son of the God that dwells in light unapproachable Whom no man has seen or can see but Whom I shall see in glory (1 John 3:1, 2).
3. Applying the text:
 - a. Jesus said pray, “Our Father, Who art in Heaven...”
 - b. We need to consider the implications of this wonderful truth.

B. What Does It Mean to Have God as Our Father?

1. The text suggests one aspect of “fatherhood” that implies others:
 - a. Giving “good gifts” is something inherent in the qualities of a father.
 - b. Thus, we ought to consider other comparisons the Scriptures make between a father and the Father.
2. There are at least three qualities that all fathers possess that are possessed by Our Father, which make Him the Father:
 - a. The desire to give gifts (Luke 11:9-13)
 - b. The capacity to forgive erring children (Luke 15:11-32)
 - c. The ability to train and discipline offspring (Hebrews 12:4-11).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. God Is the Giver of Every Good and Perfect Gift—

1. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: *how much more* shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”
 - a. This is a case of arguing from the *lesser* to the certainty of the *greater*.
 - b. Numerous examples of this in Scripture:
 - (1) In Matthew 10:25 if the Master is called Beelzebub *how much more* the Disciples.
 - (2) In Luke 12:24-28 if God feeds the birds and clothes the fields *how much more* will he feed and clothe the Disciples.
 - (3) In 1 Corinthians 6:3 if saints will judge angels *how much more* should they judge matters between the saints.
 - (4) In Hebrews 9:13, 14 if the blood of bulls and goats sanctifies the pattern *how much more* must the blood of the Son of God cleanse you.
 - c. God being of infinitely perfect character will never fail in giving good gifts to His children (James 1:17).
2. To whom does God give gifts?

- a. Obviously, only to those of whom He is Father (Luke 11:13).
 - b. God is Father to all men by Creation (Hebrews 12:9; Acts 17:29; Luke 3:38; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6).
 - c. However, God is Father to a special class by re-creation or regeneration (2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 2:13-19).
3. What should I expect as a gift from my Father in Heaven?
- a. God does not withhold His providence from any that are His children by Creation (Matthew 5:44, 45; Genesis 1:29, 30; Psalm 8:4-9; Psalm 104; Acts 14:17).
 - b. However, as a Christian, a child of God by re-creation, I have the promise of special blessings that God does not bestow upon others:
 - (1) I am the object of His love and never forgotten (Romans 8:31-39).
 - (2) He will never forsake me or leave me (Hebrews 13:5, 6).
 - (3) He hears and answers my prayers (1 Peter 3:12, 13).
 - (4) He protects me from Satan (1 Corinthians 10:12, 13).
 - (5) He sends forth His angels to minister on my behalf (Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:13, 14).
 - (6) He provides me with the necessities of life and more (Matthew 6:26-33; 2 Corinthians 9:8-10).
 - (7) He has given me a loving family of believers to fulfill His intentions (Mark 10:28-31; Matthew 12:49, 50; Philippians 1:19).
 - c. As an aside, sometimes wicked and evil things happen to good people. Folks want to cast the blame for that upon God. Our text does not allow for such an interpretation. God is good; He gives only good gifts to His children (James 1:17).
4. Have you thanked your Father for your gifts today?

B. For Whom the Lord Loveth He Chasteneth—

- 1. “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye [illegitimate] bastards, and not sons” (Hebrews 12:8).

- a. One of the things that none of us have enjoyed is the discipline which our fathers used to correct us (cf. 12:11).
 - b. However, we all know that such measures were necessary to recover us from rebellion and wickedness (Proverbs 22:15; 3:11, 12).
 - c. One of the saddest sights I have seen is a child with “parents” that will not restrain him. It reveals something about both the character of the child and the parents.
2. Every child of God experiences chastisement (Hebrews 12:7, 8).
- a. What is this chastisement?
 - (1) “*When thou art rebuked of Him*” (Hebrews 12:5; cf. Revelation 3:19).
 - (2) Rebuke in the Scriptures is directed toward sin, error and apathy (2 Peter 2:16; Luke 17:3; 1 Timothy 5:20).
 - (3) It is through the preaching and teaching of God’s Word that these rebukes are issued (Mark 8:33; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; Titus 2:15).
 - b. What occasions this chastisement?
 - (1) Running our race (12:1)
 - (2) Experiencing the contradiction of sinners (12:3)
 - (3) Striving against sin (12:4)
 - (4) However, it is a lack of endurance, *growing weary and faint*, in the struggle against sin that occasions the rebuke of God (12:1-3).
 - c. What is the result of this divine “chastening”?
 - (1) “Our profit” (12:10)
 - (2) “That we might be partakers of His holiness”
 - (3) “Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (12:11)
 - d. Why does God allow the struggle, if it results in discipline that may end in the spiritual demise of some?
 - (1) First, because we are creatures of choice. Eliminating trials requires the elimination of choice. No choice, no sin, but no glory to God.

(2) The struggle perfects the participants (James 1:2, 3, 12; 1 Peter 1:3-9).

(3) The trials separate the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats and the good fish from the bad (Matthew 3:12; 25:33; 13:48).

3. How are you reacting to the chastening of the Lord?

C. Your Heavenly Father Will Also Forgive You—

1. “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

a. One of the most beautiful images in the Bible is that of the man with two sons peering intently toward the horizon looking for his wayward boy (Luke 15:20).

b. That loving father of that wayward boy represents Our Father in Heaven (Psalm 103:13; Ephesians 2:4-7; 2 Corinthians 1:3).

c. We serve a God who is rich in mercy and always ready to forgive His penitent children (James 5:11).

(1) Those of His children who have gone into the world like Adam may come home to Him and enter His spiritual family the Church (2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 8:12).

(2) Even those of His spiritual family that sin God will forgive as a father does a child (Hebrews 4:16; James 4:8; 5:15).

2. What must you do to obtain God’s forgiveness?

a. The prodigal had to go home (Luke 15:17-20).

(1) He knew the blessings were in his father’s house.

(2) He knew that he had sinned.

(3) He knew he would have to submit to his father to be restored.

(4) He made up his mind to go and went.

b. Repentance is the road that leads home to your Father.

(1) It is not enough to believe only (James 2:17).

(2) One must cease his rebellion against the Father. Just as a child must obey his parents (Ephesians 6:1-4), so must a man submit to God his Father (Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:14).

(3) The alien must repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38).

(4) The erring Christian must repent and pray (Acts 8:22; James 5:16;
1 John 1:9).

c. Will you come home to your Father today?

III. CONCLUSION:

A. *God Is Your Father—*

1. He will give you good gifts.
2. He will discipline when you need it.
3. He will always forgive you when you sin.

B. *What Will You Do Today?*

1. Be thankful.
2. Endure the chastening.
3. Come home to My Father's house where I belong.

“God Is Spirit”

John 4:24

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Text in Context*—

1. Jesus while passing through Samaria engages a local woman in conversation at Jacob’s well.
 - a. Jesus asks the woman for a drink of water from the well since He is without utensils for drawing water.
 - b. This arouses her curiosity since he is a Jew and she a Samaritan. (v. 9)
 - c. Jesus seizes the opportunity and suggests to her that He is truly someone important possessing that which she desperately needs—living water.
2. *Living Water*—
 - a. Jesus identifies Himself as the source of all spiritual life.
 - b. The woman misunderstands, thinking he refers to actual water. (v. 11)
 - c. Jesus offers the woman eternal life, and she accepts the offer. (v. 15)
3. That which follows is both a sign and a convicting revelation. (vv. 16–19)
 - a. A sign, because Jesus could not know this information except by revelation.
 - b. Convicting revelation, because this woman knew what Jesus said was true--she was an adulteress, a sinner needing forgiveness, the water of life.
4. The woman convinced of Jesus’ prophetic office turns the dialogue to the most important religious question she could think of—*How should we worship God?*
 - a. The Jews and the Samaritans since the days of Zerubbabel had been in conflict over the right manner and place at which to worship Jehovah. (See: Ezra 4:1–3; Nehemiah 2:17–20). By asking this question this woman is seeking to know what she should do in order to please Him.
 - b. Jesus clearly takes up the truth—Salvation is of the Jews, God’s covenant is

with us and not the Samaritans and the perverted calf worship of this hill in Samaria.

(1) However, Jesus instructs her in the greater truth that while salvation is *of*, that is, “out of,” “from” or “through” the Jews, it is intended to reach even her.

(2) Salvation is not dependent upon race or geography which was bound up in the shadows and types of Judaism; rather, it is grounded in the boundless God of Heaven and the truth of His New Covenant in Christ.

5. Upon hearing this news the woman says she knows that Messiah is coming who will reveal all of God’s will for all of mankind (see: Deuteronomy 18:15). Jesus says, “I am He.”

B. The Text Examined:

1. What does the word “spirit” mean?

- a. **PNEUMA** (pnyoo'-mah); **a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze**; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit (*Strong's Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*).
- b. **PNEUMA** primarily **denotes “the wind”** (akin to pneo, “to breathe, blow”); also **“breath”**; then, especially “the spirit,” which, like the wind, is invisible, immaterial and powerful (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*).

2. How is the word “spirit” used in the New Testament?

- a. The primary sense of the term is *wind*. “The *wind* bloweth where it listeth” (John 3:8; 6:18; Acts 2:2; 20:40; Rev 7:1 and Matthew 7:25, 27).
- b. *Breath*, as of the mouth. “The Lord shall consume that wicked one with the *breath* of his mouth” (2 Thessalonians 2:8; cf., Isaiah 11:4).
- c. The *vital* principle which resides in and animates the body. “Jesus yielded up the *ghost*” (Matthew 27:50). “And her *spirit* came again,” (Luke 8:55).
- d. It has the sense of *apparition* or *specter*. “They supposed that they had seen a

spirit" (Luke 24:37). "A *spirit* hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (verse 39; cf., Matthew 14:26; Mark 6:49, [the word **PHANTASMA** appears in the parallel texts]).

- e. The *soul*—the rational, immortal principle by which man is distinguished from the brute creation. In this class may be included that use of the word *spirit* in which the various emotions and dispositions of the soul are spoken of by metonymy (e.g., Luke 9:55; 1 John 4:2). "Into thy hands I commend my *spirit*" (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59; Hebrews 12:9).
 - f. The angels and demons are called spirits. "Christ gave to his disciples power over unclean *spirits*," that is, demons (Matthew 10:1; Mark 1:23; Luke 4:36; Acts 5:16). The holy angels are termed spirits: "Are they not all ministering *spirits*?" (Hebrews 1:14).
 - g. The term is applied to the Deity, as the sole, absolute, and uncreated Spirit. "God is *Spirit*." This, as a predicate, belongs to the divine nature, irrespective of the distinction of persons in that nature.
3. What properties or characteristics are possessed by the Divine Spirit?
- a. *Immateriality* (Acts 17:29)
 - (1) Unapproachable glory (John 5:37; Acts 7:55; 1 Timothy 6:16)
 - (2) Invisibility (Romans 1:20)
 - (3) Incorruptibility (Romans 1:23 and 1 Timothy 1:17)
 - (a) **APTHARTOS**, "not liable to corruption or decay, incorruptible," is used of God, Romans 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:17; KJV, *immortal*" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*)
 - (b) **PHTHEIRO** (fthi'-ro); "probably strengthened from **PHTHIO** (to pine or waste); properly, to spoil (by any process) or (generally) to ruin (especially figuratively, by moral influences, to deprave)."
 - (c) **APHTHARTOS** (af'-thar-tos); "undecaying (in essence or continuance): KJV-- not (in-, un-) corruptible, immortal" (*Strong's Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*).

b. *Living (Jeremiah 10:10)*

- (1) He is God of the living (Exodus 3:11–14; Mark 2:27; Psalms 115:4–8)
- (2) Source of all life (Genesis 1:26; 2:7; Hebrews 12:9; Acts 14:15)
- (3) Self-sufficient (Acts 17:25; Deuteronomy 4:28; Judges 6:31; Isaiah 46:5–7)
- (4) Ability (Deuteronomy 32:37, 38; Judges 10:14; Psalms 96:5)

c. *Personality (Isaiah 42:8)*

- (1) Intellect (Job 12:13–25; Isaiah 40:13, 14; 1 Samuel 2:3)
- (2) Will (Isaiah 40:26–31; 45:18; Ephesians 1:5)
- (3) Emotions (Isaiah 37:16; Genesis 6:6–7; Exodus 2:24–25; Psalms 78:38)

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Truth that God Is Spirit Affects Our Worship—

1. There are two possible meanings for the phrase “in spirit” in this text.
 - a. To worship “in spirit” could mean “with the spirit,” that is, from the heart and not in the externals of tradition and hypocrisy.
 - (1) In support of that view are those passages which affirm that we must indeed worship from the heart (Romans 1:9; Ephesians 5:19; Luke 1:47; 1 Corinthians 7:34; 14:14)
 - (2) Jesus clearly indicated that true worship was that which proceeded out of the heart of the man and not from the scrupulous observance of human tradition (Matthew 15:6-9; Mark 7:14–23; 12:28–33).
 - (3) The hypocrite that “goes through the motions” does not worship God (Matthew 6:1ff).
 - b. To worship “in spirit” could mean “spiritual” as opposed to that which is “carnal,” specifically the Law of Moses (see: Galatians 3:2 ,3).
 - (1) The worship of the Law was after a carnal ordinance (Hebrews 7:16; 9:10; cf., Acts 3:21; 2 Corinthians 10:4). It rested in externals which appealed to the senses and affected primarily the flesh (Colossians 2:16; Galatians 4:9–10).

(2) The ordinances of the law are shadow and fleeting whereas the things of the Kingdom are spiritual and real (Hebrews 7:16–19; 8:2; Colossians 2:17).

2. Therefore, the worship which God accepts is one which comes from the heart; it requires the *worshipper* be a participant and not a spectator. It is God-centered as opposed to man-centered.

a. Since God is a *living God* He is not worshipped or served in temples of stone (Acts 17:24, 25); rather, He is worshipped in a house of *living stones* (1 Peter 2:5; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15).

b. By the same token, this worship does not appeal to the flesh (Hebrews 7:16), but rather it appeals to the *heart, the inward man* (Ephesians 5:19; 3:14–17; Romans 8:12–14).

c. Finally, this worship is not concerned with pleasing, entertaining or otherwise satisfying the worshipper on a carnal plane (Colossians 2:23; 1 Corinthians 11:34; 14:15).

B. The Fact that God Is Spirit Should Determine Our Daily Conduct—

1. Conviction concerning God’s Spirit nature would transform our awareness about His presence?

a. For many of us “seeing is believing.” However, 2 Corinthians 5:7.

b. While God is invisible, evidence of His existence abounds (Romans 1:20).

c. Job addressed this reality concerning God’s nearness to us (Job 9:11; 23:8, 9).

d. Because we cannot see God we mistakenly conclude that He does not see us (Job 22:13; Psalm 10:11; 94:4–11).

e. It has been said that character is how we behave when we know no one is watching.

(1) The reality is that someone is always watching—God.

(2) Once upon a time a man decided to sneak into his neighbor’s fields and steal some wheat. “If I take just a little from each field, no one will notice,” he told himself, “but it will all add up to a nice pile of wheat for

me.” So he waited for the darkest night, when thick clouds lay over the moon, and he crept out of his house. He took his youngest daughter with him.

“Daughter,” he whispered, “you must stand guard, and call out if anyone sees me.”

The man stole into the first field to begin reaping, and before long the child called out, “Father, someone sees you!”

The man looked all around, but he saw no one, so he gathered his stolen wheat and moved on to a second field.

“Father, someone sees you!” The child cried again.

The man stopped and looked all around, but once again he saw no one. He gathered more wheat, and moved to a third field.

A little while passed, and the daughter cried out. “Father, someone sees you!”

Once more the man stopped his work and looked in every direction, but he *saw* no one at all, so he bundled his wheat and crept into the last field.

“Father, someone sees you!” the child called again.

The man stopped his reaping, looked all around, and once again saw no one. “Why in the world do you keep saying someone sees me?” he angrily asked his daughter. “I’ve looked everywhere, and I don’t see anyone.”

“Father,” murmured the child, “Someone sees you from above.

(A folktale from *The Book of Virtues* by William J. Bennett)

2. If we were confident of God’s invisibility we might endure suffering better.
 - a. Job mused on this thought as well (Job 23:10).
 - b. God is with us every step of the way through life. He is in control of all that whirls about me (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 1:5–7; Hebrews 13:5).
 - c. Grounded in the reality of God and His presence we can make the bold

decisions necessary to serve Him (Hebrews 11:27; 13:6).

3. Greater confidence in God's Spirit nature would help us find the pleasure in doing our good deeds in secret and refrain from hypocrisy.
 - a. The Pharisee did his good works to be seen of men and receive a reward of praise and approval (Matthew 6:1ff)
 - b. However, the disciple takes pleasure in knowing that God sees in secret (6:4, 6, 18).
 - c. Our reward is in the same place as our God; both are invisible and the latter as real as the Former.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. God Is Spirit—

1. The attributes of Spirit are:
 - a. Immateriality
 - b. Life
 - c. Personality
2. The implications of God's Spirit nature are:
 - a. He must be worshipped with a spiritual worship
 - b. He cannot be seen or felt in the material realm; however, immateriality does not preclude reality.

B. Will You Submit Your Spirit to God, the Spirit Today?

1. New Birth into the Kingdom
2. Spiritual service in the Temple

God Knows ...

Proverbs 15:3

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *Wicked Men Wax Bold in Mischief Thinking They Are Unseen*—

1. Men do not believe that God both sees and knows the character of their actions (Job 22:13–14; Psalm 10:11; 73:11; 94:7; Proverbs 16:2; 21:2; Isaiah 29:15, 16; Ezekiel 9:9).
2. Because they are not immediately overthrown in their wickedness, they judge God does not see and will not punish their wicked deeds (2 Timothy 3:13; Ecclesiastes 8:11–13; Psalms 94:9–11; Psalms 73:15–22).

B. *The Believer Should Be Confident “That Thou God Seest Me”*—

1. Believers should be confident that God not only is, but that He sees our circumstances and that He knows our needs (Genesis 16:13; cf. Matthew 6:8; Proverbs 5:21; Psalms 38:9; 121:3, 4; Job 31:4).
2. We must trust that His knowledge is sufficient to stir Him to action on our behalf and render whatever aid is suitable to our deliverance (Psalms 38:9; 121:3, 4; Jeremiah 11:20; Matthew 6:32).
3. We should also be ever mindful that what God sees He judges and will reward or punish accordingly (1 Samuel 2:3; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:17; Job 42:2; Psalms 119:68; Proverbs 5:21; 15:3, 11).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. *“The Ways of Man Are Before the Eyes of the Lord”*—

1. God is *omniscient* and *omnipresent*.
 - a. He is not *omni-form*. God is in Heaven (Matthew 6:9; 10:32; et. al.)
 - b. From thence God hears and sees all that men do (Job 28:24; Psalms 11:4; 33:13–15; Amos 9:2–4).

- c. There is no thing or no place that is not before His constant gaze (Proverbs 15:3, 11; Job 26:6; Jeremiah 23:24; Matthew 6:4, 18; Hebrews 4:13).
- 2. The very thoughts of the human heart are known to Him (Psalms 38:9; 44:21; 139:1–4; Proverbs 5:21; 21:2; Isaiah 29:15–16; Jeremiah 17:10; Ezekiel 11:5; Romans 8:27; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 John 3:20).
- 3. Therefore, there is nothing that is secret from God:
 - a. Relative to *time* God knows ... (Job 24:1)
 - (1) The past (Genesis 1:1)
 - (2) The present (Job 28:24)
 - (3) The future (Isaiah 46:10; Acts 15:18)
 - b. Relative to *creation* God knows ... (Jeremiah 10:12)
 - (1) The dimensions thereof (Isaiah 40:12)
 - (2) The name and number of the stars (Psalms 147:4, 5)
 - (3) The sparrow's fall and the number of our hairs (Matthew 10:29, 30)
 - c. Relative to *men* God knows ... (Hebrews 12:9)
 - (1) Our weaknesses (Psalms 103:4)
 - (2) Our ways (Psalms 1:6)
 - (3) Our works (Psalms 33:13–15)
 - (4) Our wickedness (Psalms 7:9)

B. “Wisdom and Might Are His”—

- 1. God has declared the end from the beginning (Isaiah 42:9; 46:10; 48:3, 5–6; Daniel 2:20, 22, 28).
- 2. God's knowledge and *foreknowledge* considered.
 - a. What God knows is a matter of what He chooses to know.
 - (1) Molech worship (Jeremiah 19:5; 32:35; Ezekiel 11:5)
 - (2) Abraham (Genesis 22:11–12)
 - (3) Sodom (Genesis 18:20–21)
 - (4) Any nation (Jeremiah 18:1–4; e.g., Nineveh)
 - (5) Any man (Ezekiel 18:20–24)

- b. The fact that God is *able* to do a thing does not necessitate that He do it.
- (1) God is able to create worlds and inhabit them with men or other creatures of His own design; however, He does not and will not do so (Hebrews 4:4). The fact that He does not does not necessitate the conclusion that He is *unable* to do so.
 - (2) God is able to empower men through the Holy Spirit to prophesy, speak in tongues and heal the sick; however, He does not and will not do so (1 Corinthians 13:8–11). The fact that He does not does not necessitate the conclusion that He is *unable* to do so.
 - (3) Those who argue that God is not free to act or not act in any way chooses actually place themselves in the position of limiting God. There are only two things which God cannot do: (1) act contrary to His righteous nature (e.g., Hebrews 6:17, 18), or (2) act contrary to rationality (“Can God make a rock bigger than He can move?”). Otherwise God can do whatever He pleases including nothing (Job 23:13; 42:2).
- c. What God knows does not pre-determine the actions of men in violation of their free-will choices neither does it arbitrarily save or damn.
- (1) God’s arbitrary choice of men or nations was for service and *not* salvation (Romans 9:9–13; cf. Malachi 1:2, 3; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1–13).
 - (2) God’s revelations about men’s actions were based upon His infallible perception of their hearts and His willingness to allow men to do to themselves what they truly wanted to do [e.g. Pharaoh: Romans 9: 17, 18 (cf., Exodus 4:21; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 34–35; 10:1; 11:10; 14:8)].
 - (3) Predictive prophecy (Isaiah 46:10) is rooted in these attributes of an infallible God Who wills that all men be saved (1 Timothy 2:3, 4; Titus 2:11), but who also draws men unto Himself through the power of His Word through repentance and faith (John 6:44, 45).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. There Is an All Seeing Eye Watching You!

1. A genuine appreciation of God's omnipresence and omniscience would lead to deeper and greater trust in Him.
 - a. "I will never leave thee..."
 - b. "Thy Father which seeth in secret..."
 - c. "Your Father knoweth what things you have need of..."
 - d. "For Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me..."
2. Conviction concerning the omnipresence and omniscience of Jesus would prevent the "secret sin".
 - a. "Character is how what we are when no one is watching."
 - b. If that is the case, our "character" is what we reveal to God alone.
3. Full persuasion respecting the omniscience and omnipresence of God would drive us to repentance quickly and often.
 - a. "Though they dig into hell, thence shall my hand take them..."
 - b. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?"
 - c. "Shall not God search this out? For He knoweth the secrets of the heart."
 - d. We can run, but we cannot hide. We can flee, but we will not escape?
4. Knowledge of God's omniscience and omnipresence must effect a ready obedience to the Gospel.
 - a. "The very hairs of your head are numbered..."
 - b. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men..."
 - c. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."
 - d. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God..."

B. God Knows & You Know, Will You Obey Jesus Today?

God Cares

I Peter 5:7 & Psalm 55:22

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Text in Context:*

1. The Christians that received this letter were experiencing “manifold temptations” (1:6-7; 4:19).
 - a. They were falsely accused as “evil doers” (2:12; 3:16-17; 4:4).
 - b. Some Christians were maltreated at the hands of their masters (2:19).
 - c. There is an indication of yet future persecutions (3:12-14; 4:12-16).
 - d. These sufferings were widespread (5:9, 10).
2. In the midst of these trials and being without any expectation that they would cease Peter writes the words of the text.
 - a. He expected them to endure these trials (5:6).
 - b. God would perfect their faith through these trials (5:10; cf. 1:7).
 - c. Overcoming their trials constituted a victory over the Devil (5:8).
 - d. In order to succeed they must cast their care upon Christ (5:4, 7).
 - e. The incentive to do so was the fact that “He careth for you.”

B. *The Christian Life Is a Struggle*

1. Christianity does not eliminate the temptations and trials of living (Hebrews 12:4; Matthew 10:34; John 15:18; 1 John 3:13).
2. Some people give their burdens to the Lord and expect Him to do everything.
3. It is important that we let God work in and through us as well as for us.
4. Many, because they are “wiser than God, give up in their trials not having expected any.

C. *Question: Does God Care?*

1. Peter does not take in hand to prove the contention that Jesus cares.

2. This does not prove that there is no evidence.
3. Rather, it is a striking admission that the evidence is so abundant and compelling that Peter feels the need only to remind them of the truth.
4. It is parallel to the fact that the Scriptures make no formal effort to prove the existence of God (Genesis 1:1).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. What evidence is there that God cares?

1. The fact that you and I exist is proof that God cares (Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9).
 - a. Unless one is willing to accept the dismal consequences of Atheism as advanced by evolution, our existence is proof of God and a purpose which implies His active interest in our affairs (Hebrews 3:4; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11).
 - b. While I cannot learn the specifics of God's purpose from my own existence, I can learn that He has a purpose and seek Him in order to know it (Acts 17:23-28).
2. The testimony of Jesus and His promise to care are proof (Matthew 6:25-33; 10:28-31; Psalms 55:22; 1 Peter 5:6,7; Psalms 121:1-8; 23; Hebrews 13:5, 6).
 - a. The promise to care is at least worthy of a consideration of the man and his actions for consistency.
 - b. Granted, that men are often long on promise and short on action; however, is this the case with God?
3. The record of God's care for man in general, and His people in particular certainly proves that He cares (Matthew 5:45; Genesis 8:21, 22; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; Isaiah 41:10-13).
 - a. The Old & New Testament record is replete with examples of God's help and care for His people (e.g., Red Sea, fiery furnace, lions' den).
 - b. Unless we can successfully show that the Bible is false these demonstrations of God's care must stand!

4. The scheme of redemption proves God's care for us (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10; 1 John 3:16; 4:9; John 15:13; Philippians 2:1-8).
 - a. What else would God have to do to prove to man that He cared?
 - b. He cared for us before we existed (Ephesians 1:3-7)!
5. God's longsuffering proves His care (2 Peter 3:9, 15; Romans 2:3-6; 1 Peter 3:20).
 - a. God is giving us time in which to repent and be saved. Each day that passes is an expression of His care for mankind.
 - b. Had Jesus not cared, this world would have ended long ago!

B. How Does God Care?

1. We have trouble understanding how God is caring for us right now.
 - a. There are no miracles today (e.g. lions' den, fiery furnace, a tempest).
 - b. We say, "He took care of them then, but He isn't taking care of any now!"
 - c. To this I reply, "O ye of little faith!"
 - d. Explain place and purpose of miraculous (Hebrews 2:1-4).
 - e. Compare with Daniel 3:16-18; Hebrews 11:32-39.
2. Some of the ways in which God cares for His saints today:
 - a. God listens to and answers our prayers made for... (Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 5:14, 15; Mark 11:24; Colossians 1:17; Ephesians 3:13-21).
 1. The nation (1 Timothy 2:2)
 2. The lost (Luke 23:34)
 3. The sick (James 5:14)
 4. The church (James 5:16)
 - b. God cares for us through the word (Psalms 119:49, 50, 52, 76; Romans 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; Colossians 2:2; 1 Corinthians 14:3, 31).
 1. The hope of the resurrection
 2. The promise of justice
 3. The forgiveness of sins
 4. The answers to life's questions

- c. God cares for us through the brethren (Psalm 107:41; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Romans 1:12; 2 Corinthians 2:7; 7:6,7,13; 8:16; Ephesians 6:22; Philippians 2:1-4, 9; Colossians 4:7-9,11; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; Acts 16:40).
 - 1. The daily ministrations (Acts 6, etc.)
 - 2. The assemblies of the saints (Hebrews 10:24, 25)
 - 3. The discipline of the church (1 Timothy 3:5; 2 Corinthians 7:12; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15)
 - 4. The friendship of the righteous (Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:6)
 - 5. Someone may cynically say, "Well if that's all He is going to do then I am sunk!" To which I reply: (1) "Think back and see if you really want to stick with that condemnation of your brethren; and (2) are you confident that that you have demonstrated the kind of faith that
- d. God cares for us by exercising His authority over Satan & evil in the world (1 Corinthians 10:13; Luke 22:31, 32; Matthew 6:13; 1 John 4:4).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Does God Care?

- 1. Review the proofs of His care
- 2. Review how Jesus cares

B. I Know He Cares!

- 1. Invitation to the alien
- 2. Invitation to the saint

“God Is Able”

Jeremiah 32:17, 27

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. “Ability” Defined—

1. The word “able” is such an everyday word that we may not give it as much attention as we should; but it refers to *power, strength, effective might*; frequently used in compounds, e.g., *suitable, capable, serviceable*.
 - a. The word in the New Testament is from the same root as the word translated “power” in Romans 1:16 (*dunamis*).
 - b. The assertion that “God is able” is an affirmation of *omnipotence*, i.e., infinite power.
2. Understanding “God is able” brings a greater respect for and appreciation of the provisions He has made for us (Psalm 8:1-4).

B. God Is Able, Beyond All Comparison—

1. There is nothing impossible or too hard for our God (Luke 1:37; Matthew 19:26; Luke 18:27; Mark 10:27; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Genesis 18:14; Job 42:2).
 - a. He is Creator (Hebrews 11:3)
 - b. He is Sustainer (Acts 17:28)
 - c. He will be the Destroyer (2 Peter 3:5–7)
2. The problem of the skeptic’s conundrum:
 - a. “Can God make a rock bigger than He can move?”
 - b. That’s like asking, “Which came first the chicken or the egg?”
 - (1) If you believe the Bible, you know it’s the chicken.
 - (2) Omnipotence, by definition, means all powerful. Therefore, the obvious answer is “Of course not!”
3. God is limited only by Himself. His character and judgment govern His will.

C. The Disposition of Those Who Believe God Is Able—

1. Thoughtful and trusting (Hebrews 11:17-19)
2. Confident and trusting (2 Timothy 1:12)
3. Patient and trusting (Daniel 3:13-18; cf., 1 John 5:14-ff)

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Amazing Things God Is Able to Do—

1. God is able to speak the world into existence from nothing (Hebrews 11:3; Romans 1:19, 20; Hebrews 3:4).
2. The same Word that spoke them into existence released the waters in the foundations of the deep and opened the windows of Heaven and covered the planet with water (2 Peter 3:4–6). The same Word gathered them together again and holds them in store (Genesis 9:11; Isaiah 54:9).
3. God can cause a very old barren woman to conceive and have a child (Genesis 18:12, 13; Luke 1:7–14); He can cause a virgin to have a son (Luke 1:37).
4. God can raise up children unto Abraham from the stones (Matthew 3:9).
5. God is able to do marvelous miracles (Romans 4:21; Matthew 9:28)
6. God is able to perform mighty works and wonders upon the nations (Deuteronomy 3:24).
7. God is able to reveal the future through dreams and visions (Daniel 2:26–28; Genesis 41:15, 16).

B. Even Greater Works than These (John 14:12)—

1. When Jesus made this promise to the disciples He was not referring to miraculous deeds (14:11). Jesus had in mind a class of work that would surpass in significance and difficulty what Jesus had done through the miracles. I believe He had in view the full revelation of the Gospel of Christ and justification by grace through faith to all that believe (14:12; 16:7, 16, 17).
 - a. I believe Christians have more difficulty accepting God's ability to work in these areas and overcome what for men would be impossible than they do

accepting God's supernatural powers.

- b. We must have confidence in God to make the crooked straight and the darkness light (Isaiah 42:16).
2. "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26, 27; Luke 18:27; Mark 10:27).
- a. God is able to take the man that it would seem impossible to save and save him (above and 1 Timothy 1:12–16; James 1:21).
 - b. God is able to take a poor insignificant people and make them a power for good throughout the world (2 Corinthians 9:8–12). He can provide whatever resources or means they need in order to accomplish His work (Matthew 7:7ff; Ephesians 3:20; Genesis 45:4–8; 50:20).
 - c. God is able to make the weak brother stand (Romans 14:4; James 4:12).
 - d. God is able to graft back in that which was cut off (Romans 11:23).
 - e. God is able to save man entirely, that is, to the end (Hebrews 7:25). He is able to keep him from falling and to present him faultless at the judgment (Jude 24; John 10:29).
 - f. God is able to deliver men from tremendous peril and trial (Daniel 3:17; 6:20; 2 Chronicles 32:14; 2 Peter 2:4–9), and He is able to succor and comfort them in the midst of these trials (Hebrews 2:18).

C. A Mysterious Thing (1 Corinthians 15:51)—

1. Among all the things that God is able to do, the most marvelous and significant for us is the *resurrection from the dead* (Acts 26:8; John 5:28, 29).
 - a. The life of the believer is molded and directed by the conviction that God is able to raise the dead (Hebrews 11:19; 1 John 3:1–3; Phil 3:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 15:34).
 - b. Only the rankest unbeliever lives without any regard for the resurrection from the dead (Matthew 10:28, 29; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15).
2. God will call forth the dead from the graves and they will be raised and changed into immortal, incorruptible beings (1 Corinthians 15:42–44; 51–54).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. *There Is Nothing Impossible for God—*

1. He created you.
2. He will save you.
3. He will keep you saved.
4. He will raise you to endless glory and bliss.

B. *Will You Trust the God Who Is Able?*

“God Is Faithful”

Deuteronomy 7:9

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Text in Context*—

1. The children of Israel before the Jordan River on the Plains of Moab.
 - a. Moses is instructing the nation regarding their duties in taking the land of Canaan (7:1–5).
 - (1) Utterly destroy
 - (2) No marriages
 - (3) Destroy every altar, image and grove
 - (4) Burn them with fire
 - b. Moses explains why they must destroy the Canaanites in this fashion (7:6).
 - (1) You are holy.
 - (2) You are chosen.
 - (3) You are special.
 - (4) You are above all the people of the earth.
 - c. Moses affirms their special relationship is a matter of grace not merit (7:7–8).
 - (1) You were few and weak.
 - (2) God had sworn an oath to Abraham.
 - d. Concerning God’s choice of Israel, Moses assures them that their weakness and small numbers will not deter God in the fulfillment of His oath.
 - (1) God is the “faithful God.”
 - (2) He keeps His covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments.
2. *The Faithful God*—
 - a. According to *Strong’s Lexicon*, “aman (aw-man’); properly, to build up or

support; to foster as a parent or nurse; figuratively to render (or be) firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet; morally to be true or certain.”

b. Jehovah cannot lie (Hebrews 6:10–18; Titus 1:2; Genesis 22:16, 17).

(1) He will surely keep all promises that He makes (Psalms 105:5–12).

(2) His faithfulness is inexhaustible (Psalms 36:5; 89:1–8, 33).

B. Applications of the Text—

1. Since God is faithful, what does that mean to us?

a. The answer is given by Paul in Hebrews 6:18, “That we might have *strong consolation*.”

(1) According to *Strong’s Lexicon*, “ischuros (is-khoo-ros’); forcible (literally or figuratively): boisterous, mighty, powerful, strong, valiant.”

(2) Also from *Strong*, “paraklesis (par-ak'-lay-sis); imploration, hortation, solace: comfort, consolation, exhortation, intreaty.”

b. There is “powerful comfort” in the promise of the faithful God which “anchors the soul” keeping us in the safe water of the harbor far from the treacherous rocks of the dangerous reef (Hebrews 6:19).

2. Conviction that God is faithful directs our actions and motivates us to work tirelessly in the Kingdom of Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:58).

C. Some Promises of God Which Give Us Strong Consolation—

1. God is faithful to Himself (2 Timothy 2:3).

2. God is faithful to forgive the obedient penitent believer (Hebrews 10:23).

3. God is faithful to bind Satan in temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).

4. God is faithful to succor men when I am tempted (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

5. God is faithful to protect us from evil (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

6. God is faithful to forgive the penitent confessing Christian (1 John 1:7–9).

7. God is faithful to keep us blameless for Christ’s return (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

8. God is faithful to preserve the soul unto the resurrection (1 Peter 4:19).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. God Is Faithful to Himself (2 Timothy 2:3)

1. This may seem curious or odd at first to affirm “faithfulness to self.”
 - a. However, put the statement in context.
 - b. Paul enumerates several “faithful sayings:”
 - (1) If dead with Christ (Romans 6:3, 4), then we will be alive with Him (1 Corinthians 15:22).
 - (2) If we suffer with Christ (2 Timothy 3:12) then we will reign with Him (Romans 5:17).
 - (3) If we deny Him (Matthew 10:33), then He will deny us (Matthew 10:33).
 - (4) If we believe not (John 3:17), He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself.
 - (a) First, to do so would be a lie (Titus 1:2).
 - (b) Furthermore, unbelief does not change the truth of the Gospel or nullify justification by grace through faith (Galatians 2:16–19).
 - (c) Paul is affirming that a rejection by some men of the Gospel will not cause God to abandon His plan or forsake the means to salvation He offered, to do so would be a denial of Himself (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).
2. Such a statement of God’s fidelity encourages and reassures me that God will never abandon His commitment to save mankind. For millennia men have been in rebellion and unbelief; however, God remains faithful; He will not abandon man or withdraw His offer of salvation—“He cannot deny Himself.”

B. God Is Faithful to Bind Satan (1 Corinthians 10:13)

1. We have the promise that Satan will never be able to overpower the Christian.
 - a. If we will resist, he must flee (James 4:7).
 - b. The power in us is greater than his power (1 John 4:4).
 - c. We know how he operates (2 Corinthians 2:11).
 - d. He is beaten and vanquished (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8)).
 - e. He does not possess divine power (1 Peter 5:8, 9).

- f. He cannot touch the faithful Christian (1 John 5:18).
 - g. The only way to be taken of him is to turn aside after him (1 John 1:5–7; 1 Timothy 5:15; 2 Timothy 2:26).
2. Such a promise as this ought to motivate me to be humbly cautious (Ephesians 5:13–15), but reassured of God’s concern for and protection of me. I can face Satan and all his agents with the confidence that I need not fall (2 Peter 1:10).

C. God Is Faithful to Forgive the Penitent Christian (1 John 1:7–9)

1. However, we all know that there are times when we do not rely upon the strength that we possess. Like Samson, we listen to the soothing words of Delilah. On those occasions we sin. Thanks be to God He is faithful!
2. The Christian who sins has the continued promise of remission if:
 - a. He will repent (Acts 8:22).
 - b. He will confess (1 John 1:9).
 - c. Bear fruit (2 Corinthians 7:10–12; Matthew 3:8).
3. The believer knows that God’s grace cannot be cheapened (Romans 6:1). Sin cannot reign in us (6:12). The believer cannot return to the habit of sin (1 John 3:6–9).
4. In these disappointing times of failure we are also reassured by the comfort and the compassion of our “faithful high priest” Jesus (Hebrews 2:17, 18).
 - a. Jesus is able to “succour,” that is, help or relieve those that call for help.
 - b. The “succour” of Jesus is not the “there, there, you’re only human” of the backslider. His comfort comes from the strong counsel of an Advocate and Pleader who understands the struggle (Romans 8:3), but makes no excuses for the crimes.
 - c. Jesus is there to show us the way and exhort us to do what is right while pleading for mercy from our God. Like the ancient high priest Jesus confesses our guilt and covers it with blood.

D. God Is Faithful to Keep Us Blameless (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

1. Knowing that we make many mistakes, sinning when it is our desire to do

- righteousness we are troubled about whether we will complete the journey.
2. We serve a faithful God, One that desires to preserve us blameless unto the coming of Christ in body, soul and spirit. He will do it.
 - a. God is not finished with us when we make a mistake. He does not cast us aside in disgust. It was not His intention to save from past sin in order to let us be undone by future sins (Mark 16:16).
 - (1) Jude 24, "to Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory..."
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9, "Who also shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless...God is faithful by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son..."
 - (3) 2 Peter 1:10, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall..."
 - (4) Romans 5:9, 10, "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him...being reconciled we shall be saved by His life..."
 - b. God is continually working through the Word (1 Thessalonians 2:13), the brethren (Romans 15:13, 14) and through providence (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15) to correct and chasten us (Hebrews 12:9–15).
 3. Knowing that God wants us to be saved and is working on our behalf we are able to endure the chastening and continue faithful.

E. God Is Faithful to Preserve Us unto the Resurrection (1 Peter 4:19)

1. Peter urges suffering saints to trust God to keep their souls as a faithful Creator. Where is the message of comfort or hope in a Creator when I am facing death?
2. Well, the God who created us is the same God that will resurrect us from the dead.
 - a. The power to create man out of nothing and breathe into him the breath of life (Genesis 1, 2) implies the power to preserve that spirit and resurrect

that body.

- b. When we contemplate the power of God we with Paul should ask, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”
3. Certainty of God’s promise to raise us from the dead should give us a fearless faith that will stand undaunted before wicked men and risk even death. We can boldly say, “I will not fear what man shall do to me” (Psalms 56:4; 118:6; Hebrews 13:6).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. God Is Faithful!

1. We have abundant proof and His eternal word on it.
2. Will you serve the faithful God?

B. Will You Be Faithful?

1. Galatians 3:19
2. Acts 16:15
3. Revelation 17:14
4. Ephesians 1:1

“God Is a Consuming Fire”

Hebrews 12:29

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *As We Have Before Observed, Conviction Determines Conduct—*

1. Whether or not we believe God exists determines our conduct before Him (Psalms 10:3–11).
 - a. The man who denies the existence of Deity is not concerned with pleasing Him, neither does he fear displeasing Him.
 - b. Since there is no God, he says, man is a law unto himself. Every man does that which is right in his own eyes (Proverbs 30:11–14).
 - c. This principle exemplified daily by those around us (Psalms 14:1; 53:1).
2. Similarly, what we believe *about* God, viz., regarding His character, determines our conduct before Him (Hebrews 11:26).
 - a. The man who doubts either God’s ability or His willingness to bring into judgment will undoubtedly behave without regard to His laws (Isaiah 5:19-21; 29:15; Job 22:12–14; Ezekiel 9:9; see: Numbers 15:38–41).
 - b. The man who is ignorant of God, either by neglect or default, will learn to be a law unto himself (Judges 2:10, 11). He will make for himself a god after his own image and likeness (Galatians 4:8; Romans 1:21–31).

B. *It’s not enough to Believe “God Is”—*

1. To be saved requires more than an acknowledgement of God’s existence. It necessitates the acceptance of the Divine character (Exodus 20:5, 6; 34:6, 7; Numbers 4:18; Deuteronomy 4:31, 32; Psalms 86:15).
2. In Hebrews 11:6, Paul sums up the character of God in one word, “rewarder.”
 - a. The word designates a “remunerator,” one who pays for goods provided, services rendered or losses incurred (see: *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*).

- b. Thus, Paul indicates that God is one who will make a fair, just and equitable remuneration or reward to all that seek Him (cf. Hebrews 6:10).
 - c. Many are content to know just this about God. Thus, their view of Him is skewed. They tend to think of Him only as a loving and doting “grandfather” who gives gifts to His children without any regard for their character or behavior.
3. Paul also characterizes Jehovah as “a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29).
- a. Our picture of the Deity must be balanced. He rewards, gives good gifts to men, loves all men and desires that they be saved; however, He is also a jealous God who will judge the wicked and spare not.
 - b. To view God only in terms of His mercy is to not know God. It is demeaning to Him and cheapens His grace (Romans 6:1, 2; Jude 4). Similarly, to think of God only in terms of His wrath is to not know God. Such a view hardens the heart in unbelief against Him (Romans 2:4; 11:22).

C. The Text in Context—

1. The twelfth chapter of Hebrews deals with “chastening”.
- a. The writer explains that every “child” is chastened and disciplined or else he is illegitimate (12:8).
 - b. Believers must endure the chastening themselves and help their brethren endure it in order to inherit the blessings of the eternal kingdom (12:15).
 - c. We are encouraged to endure this chastening by a view of the exalted character of the kingdom of Heaven that is contrasted with the inferior quality of Judaism. In Christ’s kingdom we have:
 - (1) A better covenant
 - (2) A better citizenship
 - (3) A better worship
 - (4) A better fellowship with a better hope
 - (5) A better system of justice
 - (6) A better promise

(7) A better Mediator

(8) A better sacrifice

d. Having been presented with the better aspects of Christ's kingdom, we are exhorted not to refuse God who spoke from Heaven and shook the earth because next time He will shake both Heaven and earth leaving only those persons that are indeed citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

e. Paul's conclusion, in view of the character of God's impending judgment against all that is unredeemed, is that we should serve God with reverence and fear—"for our God is a consuming fire."

2. This phrase comes from Deuteronomy 4:24—

a. Moses told Israel that Jehovah was "a consuming fire" in order to exhort them to be faithful to the covenant into which they had entered before at Mt. Sinai and then again in the plains of Moab (4:1–2).

b. He reminds them of the unfaithfulness of their forbears and a few of their peers (4:3–13).

c. He warns against idolatry to which has tempted them from the beginning (4:14–20), and he warns them by his own example of stumbling which necessitated his dying in Moab and not crossing over Jordan (4:21–22).

d. They must take heed and keep God's word without addition or subtraction because their God is a consuming fire.

3. Unto whom is God a consuming fire and why?

a. God consumes in His wrath those that alter and pervert the word of God.

b. God consumes in His wrath the stubbornly disobedient.

c. God consumes in His wrath those that turn aside from His grace and return to a dead system of justification by works.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. When and Where Did God Consume Israel With Fire?

1. God threatened them with this consumption from the beginning (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27, 28).

2. God kindled the fire during the captivity (Jeremiah 17:27; 21:14; Ezekiel 20:47); however, He did not make a full end at that time (Jeremiah 4:27; 5:10, 18; 30:11; 46:28; Ezekiel 11:13).
3. However, the time did come when God would and did destroy the Jews (Daniel 9:26, 27; Matthew 24:15–34; Luke 19:41–48; 21:5–33; Mark 13:1–37).
4. The Jewish economy vanished away with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70 (Colossians 2:11–23; Hebrews 8:7–13; 2 Corinthians 3:1–17).
5. Both the religion and the people have been consumed by God’s wrath (Matthew 3:7–12; Luke 3:9).

B. When and Where Will God Consume Disobedient Believers with Fire?

1. Some are mistaken in their view that the believer will never come into judgment (reply to the error presented on Romans 8:1; cf. 8:31–39).
2. Every believer will appear before God in judgment (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; Romans 14:12; 2:6, 16; 2 Corinthians 5:1–11).
3. The impenitent disobedient believer will be cast into hell fire (Matthew 7:15–27; 13:47–50; 18:23–35; 24:45–51; 25:14–30; 25:31–46).
4. Jesus clearly taught that the believer will be judged and if found to be wicked will be cast into hell (Mark 9:39–50; Luke 13:24–30).

C. What Manner of Persons Should We Be?

1. Peter put this very question to the saints of Asia Minor in 2 Peter 3:1–15.
 - a. Peter affirms the same truth to these Gentile converts concerning God that Paul affirmed to Jews—our God is a consuming fire.
 - b. Peter’s method of proof was to call their mind to remember the flood by which God destroyed the world of the wicked (vv. 4–6; cf. Genesis 6–9).
 - (1) Ararat is held as being in Eastern Turkey on the borders of Iraq in the region of the old Kurdish nation.
 - (2) To mention the flood to these folk would be to awaken not only memory of the biblical narrative but the traditions and legends of their races. They have known well that God judged the world with water.

- (c) Only the most ignorant and hardened of men would deny that God has exercised tremendous power in His just wrath against wicked men.
2. Peter urges these saints to be assured of certain truths and conclusions in view of the fact that God is a consuming fire (2 Peter 3:11).
- (a) God is not slack concerning His promises (v. 9)—He will come again in judgment taking vengeance; therefore, we must be vigilant and watchful not indifferent and overcome with the cares of the present age (v. 12).
- (b) We should be diligent in walking righteously before our God (v. 14). We should be at peace with God blameless and holy.
- (c) We should view “time” as opportunity to repent (v. 15, cf. v. 9). It is God’s desire that all repent. The “delay” of His coming is further opportunity to be saved. Such an opportunity should not be squandered but used. But, “time” is limited and will run out, only God knows when, those that fail now may be overcome as one robbed of a thief in the night (cf. v. 10).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Our God Is a Consuming Fire!

1. He consumed Israel.
2. He consumed the antediluvians.
3. He will consume the wicked at the return of Christ.

B. Are You Ready to Meet God?

1. Have you believed? (Romans 10:10)
2. Have you repented? (Acts 2:38)
3. Have you confessed? (Romans 10:8, 9)
4. Have you been baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3, 4)
5. Are you living as you should without spot and blameless (2 Peter 3:14).